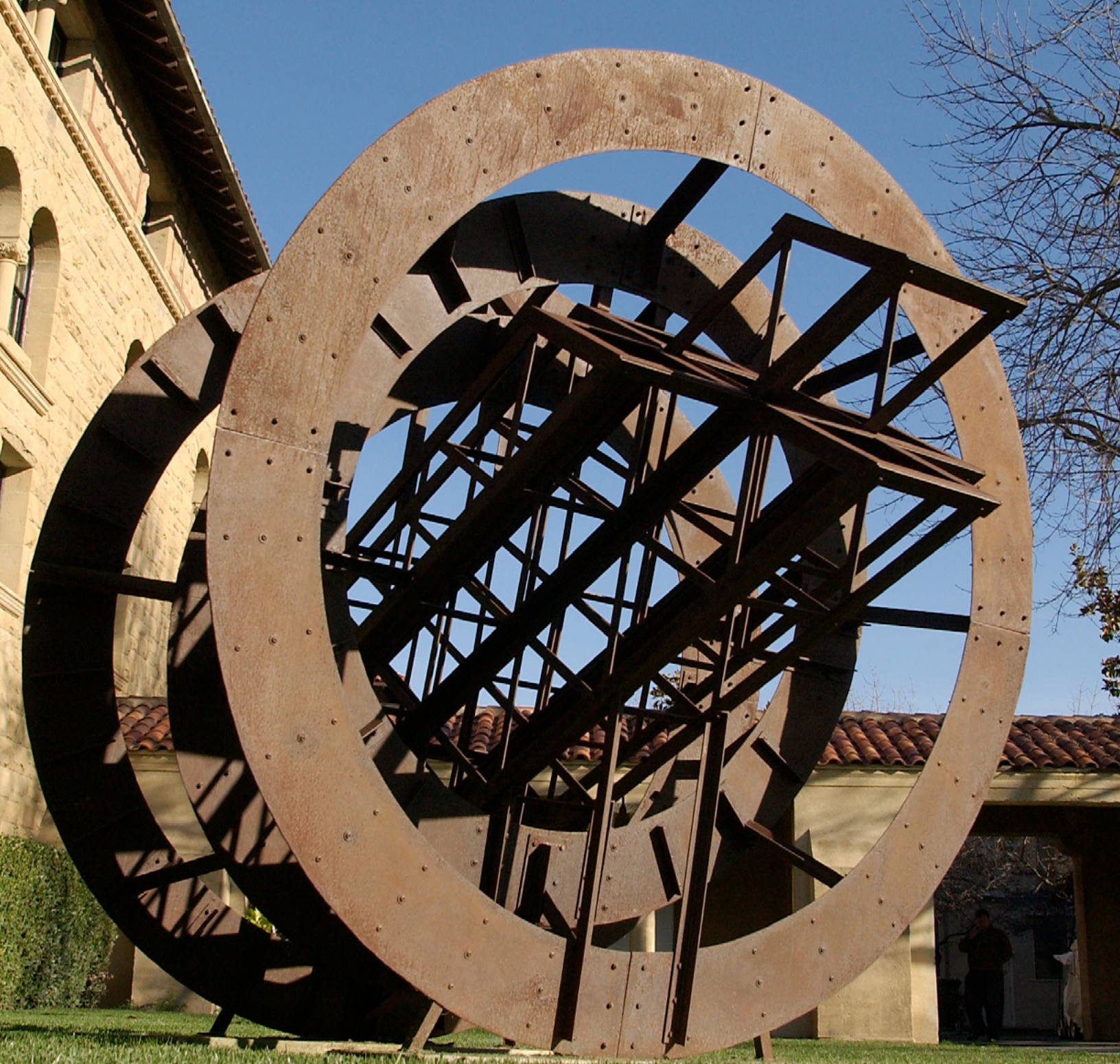


WALTER H. SHORENSTEIN
ASIA-PACIFIC RESEARCH CENTER
ANNUAL REPORT 2025–26



Stanford

Walter H. Shorenstein
Asia-Pacific Research Center
Freeman Spogli Institute



Director’s Message

Dear Friends,

My first year as APARC director has brought the full gravitas of this role into relief. For more than four decades, the APARC community has been driven by a commitment to deepen understanding of Asia and advance U.S.-Asia relations. Generations of scholars, students, and supporters have carried this mission forward through rigorous research and intellectual dialogue. Leading APARC today means honoring their legacy while building on it to keep the center dynamic, resilient, and prepared for the opportunities and headwinds ahead.



Our enduring mission matters more than ever as the challenges before us grow more complex. We are at an inflection point where changes spurred by frontier technologies spanning advanced materials, robotics and autonomous systems, cyber, defense, digital communications, science, space, and sustainability — all augmented by AI — rapidly cross thresholds and transform the very infrastructure and principles that shape and define power, security, mobility, governance, economies, and everyday life. The Asia-Pacific region is pivotal to these developments, as a hub of manufacturing and semiconductor dominance, a center of global supply chains and trade, and ground zero for the impacts of climate change, cultural innovation, the demographic transition, and geopolitical shifts.

The research, events, and analysis highlighted in this annual report demonstrate how APARC and our programs address these developments, with new initiatives already taking shape. To meet this moment of monumental change, we must extend our work beyond academic and policy circles, connect with the next generation of Asia experts, and experiment with fresh ways to share our insights and findings with them. That is why we launched APARC Briefing, a video podcast series that enables us to respond quickly to fast-moving issues with timely, accessible analysis. Featuring APARC scholars, Stanford colleagues, partners, and guest speakers, as described in this report, the series brings the center’s expertise to wider and new audiences where they are increasingly discovering and engaging with ideas and content.

This is an electrifying and consequential time for university research and education as we reimagine our fields of inquiry and grapple with intricate challenges about truth and facts, authenticity and creativity, safety and justice, accelerated innovation, and our responsibilities in creating and disseminating knowledge. I am confident APARC will continue to contribute to this undertaking with the rigor, openness, and interdisciplinary approach that have defined our center since its founding.

Thank you for being part of our community and joining us on this journey. Stay connected, and I look forward to seeing you at Stanford or in Asia.

Kiyoteru Tsutsui
DIRECTOR, SHORENSTEIN APARC

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Access this report online

ABOVE: Sculptor Linda Fleming’s “Space Lace,” installed outside Encina Commons. FRONT COVER: Encina Hall, rendered in manga style by Gemini 3.

By the Numbers

62

Media mentions, interviews, and commentaries

8

Pre- and postdoctoral fellows funded

226,200

Video views, or 1,080,000+ minutes of watch time

24

Books and papers published

56

Events held

32

Visiting fellows and scholars hosted

FEATURE STORY

Recalibrating to Changing Geoeconomics



The past year has witnessed an accelerated shift toward a more fragmented world order, anchored by a U.S. administration actively rewriting the rules of global engagement. Washington's strategic reorientation across trade, migration, and foreign policy — compounded by the pressures of the war in Iran, geopolitical volatility elsewhere, and a fierce race for artificial intelligence supremacy — is forcing

a scramble for agency in a governance architecture defined by transactional leverage.

Our center's new video podcast series, [APARC Briefing](#), hosted by Director [Kiyoteru Tsutsui](#), translated academic expertise into a public explanatory resource on these developments, unpacking headline news as it unfolded and capturing thousands of views.

CLOCKWISE, FROM ABOVE LEFT: A man walks past a mural depicting former Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro in January 2026, in Caracas; a highway destroyed by storm surges brought about by Super Typhoon Fung-wong in November 2025 in Aurora Province, Philippines; President Donald Trump addresses the World Economic Forum in January 2026 in Davos, Switzerland; Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi arriving at the Prime Minister's Office, February 18, 2026.

The Rise of “Sana-Mania”

One of the year’s most striking political stories emerged in Japan, where the Diet voted in Sanae Takaichi as the nation’s first female prime minister in October 2025. A social media-savvy, hardline conservative trailblazer who once drummed in a college heavy metal band, Takaichi captured the public imagination.

In the first two episodes of the APARC Briefing series, Tsutsui discussed what to expect from Japan’s “Iron Lady” and assessed Takaichi’s first month in office, which included a meeting with President Donald Trump, the unveiling of a major economic stimulus package, and a first foreign policy test amid increasing tensions with China.

In February 2026, Takaichi took a high-stakes gamble by calling a snap election for the lower house. A youth-led cultural phenomenon dubbed “Sana-mania” propelled her to a landslide victory, and she made history once again by securing a stunning supermajority for her Liberal Democratic Party. Tsutsui explained how she would use her sweeping mandate to tackle Japan’s fiscal challenges, tensions with China, a debate over constitutional change, and diplomacy with President Trump.

Climate Crisis in a Swing Region

While Japan found renewed political equilibrium, South and Southeast Asia confronted the destabilizing impacts of extreme weather. In late 2025, a convergence of intensified monsoons and historic cyclones unleashed catastrophic flooding across Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, and Vietnam. The disasters affected nearly 20 million people and claimed more than 1,600 lives.

On APARC Briefing, Gita Wirjawan, former minister of trade of Indonesia and a 2022–24 APARC visiting scholar, examined the causes of Southeast Asia’s devastating floods, ongoing recovery efforts, and strategies for building more resilient communities. Wirjawan also linked the region’s ecological crises to broader geopolitical realities, highlighting how

Southeast Asian nations increasingly view themselves as a geopolitical swing region in the U.S.-China competition.

Washington’s Strategic Reorientation

Geopolitical uncertainty intensified in January 2026, when the Trump administration launched “Operation Absolute Resolve” in Venezuela, capturing and removing President Nicolás Maduro. In back-to-back APARC Briefing conversations, Stanford political scientists Larry Diamond and Oriana Skylar Mastro analyzed the implications of U.S. actions in Latin America for Taiwan, Indo-Pacific security, and U.S. alliances in the region. They agreed that the U.S. operation in Caracas emboldens Beijing and that Washington’s refocus on the Western Hemisphere, as outlined in the Trump administration’s 2025 National Security Strategy, risks diminishing the U.S. strategic position in the Indo-Pacific.

America’s shifting priorities also underpinned an APARC Briefing conversation with Rahm Emanuel, a former U.S. ambassador to Japan and a potential 2028 presidential candidate, who considered what’s at stake in American politics and for U.S. allies and partners. He warned of squandered strategic gains in the Indo-Pacific while reflecting on political rupture in America and lessons from Japan.

“Can China and the United States overcome the ‘Thucydides Trap’ and establish a new paradigm for relations between great powers?” President Xi Jinping presented this question to President Trump when the two leaders met in Beijing in May for a highly anticipated summit. As the world was watching to see if they could stabilize a U.S.-China relationship strained by disputes over trade, technological race, the future of Taiwan, and the rippling effects of the war with Iran, Tsutsui sat down with Susan Thornton, a China expert and former U.S. diplomat, to probe what’s next for the bilateral relationship and for diplomacy in a fragmenting world order.

Democratic Reordering and Resilience

In tandem with geopolitical fragmentation and multipolarity, deep structural forces are reconfiguring political authority and statecraft from within. University of Chicago sociologist Kimberly Kay Hoang reflected on this dynamic.

Drawing comparative lessons from East and Southeast Asia to understand the Trump era, Hoang argued that contemporary populist movements are driving a profound “democratic reordering,” weaponizing corruption to consolidate executive power and shaping a global order dominated by oligarchic governance rather than concepts of nation-states.

The year’s final APARC Briefing episode offered a message of resilience as Thai democracy icon Pita Limjaroenrat shared lessons from his political journey. Despite leading his progressive party to victory in Thailand’s 2023 elections, Limjaroenrat was blocked from forming a government and subsequently banned from politics. But his fight continues. Reflecting on his role as a symbol of democratic reform, he emphasized the staying power of the people’s mandate.

It was a fitting conclusion to a year of shared analysis and a reminder of the power of grassroots activism to dismantle electoral autocratic networks and revitalize democracy.



Watch the APARC Briefing series on our YouTube channel



OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Director Kiyoteru Tsutsui talks with APARC Briefing guest Susan Thornton; the podcast’s guests included Oriana Skylar Mastro, Rahm Emanuel, Pita Limjaroenrat, Kimberly Kay Hoang, Larry Diamond, and Gita Wirjawan.

Introducing Taiwan Expert Pei-Chia Lan



We are delighted to introduce sociologist **Pei-Chia Lan**, the [Wang and Chen Senior Fellow in Taiwan Studies](#) at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies (FSI) and director of the Taiwan Program at APARC, effective September 1, 2026. Appointed after an extensive international search, Lan is the first to hold FSI’s new chair in Taiwan Studies, which was endowed by Steve and Jamie Chen and other generous donors.

Before joining Stanford, Lan was a distinguished professor of sociology at National Taiwan University. A leading scholar in her field, she explores the complexity of intersecting social inequalities in everyday life, shaped by macro power dynamics such as globalization and international migration.

Hailed as analytically innovative and meticulous, her transnational, cross-class research makes complex social issues accessible and resonant and has firmly established her as a sought-after expert by national agencies and global organizations.

We are excited for the new avenues of research, training, and intellectual exchange that she will pioneer at the university and APARC’s Taiwan Program.

“Taiwan’s stories deserve to be heard, studied, and understood around the world. The Taiwan Program will serve as a bridge between Taiwan and North America, bring greater visibility to the rich scholarship of the Taiwan studies community, and place Taiwan in dialogue with other Asian societies through a transnational and comparative lens.”

Pei-Chia Lan

Welcoming New Staff Members

Meet the latest additions to our team:



Natalia Slavney
Research Associate, Korea Program



Meg Harrington
Finance Manager

Thomas Fingar Retires

In August 2026, we bid a [fond farewell](#) to **Thomas Fingar**, a Shorenstein APARC fellow and a foundational member of our community for many years.

A political scientist trained at Stanford University, Fingar has devoted his career to advancing the U.S.-China relationship and building connections between the two countries, both in academia and government. After a decade of research and teaching at Stanford, where he was instrumental in launching the university’s initial U.S.-China Relations Program in 1975, he spent 23 years in Washington, D.C., at the center of high-stakes policy and national security decision-making. Rising to the top ranks of the U.S. intelligence community, he served as the first Deputy Director of National Intelligence for Analysis and Chairman of the National Intelligence Council.



“Personal and institutional ties must be rebuilt every day Diplomacy is like gardening. You pull weeds, you trim rosebushes, and you’ve got to do it every day.”

Thomas Fingar

Since his return to Stanford as a scholar and teacher in 2009, Fingar has made numerous contributions to the university and to APARC, building an intellectual legacy that guides academics and practitioners. We are grateful for all he has done and wish him the best in his retirement.

Gi-Wook Shin and Cheryll Alipio Honored

Gi-Wook Shin, the director of APARC’s Korea Program, and **Cheryll Alipio**, the center’s associate director for program and policy, received the [Mongolian Presidential Commemorative Coin of Honor](#) for their contributions to the “Sustainability Dialogue 2025—Climate Action: Billions of Trees” conference and their leadership in promoting international dialogue on climate change, sustainability, and global cooperation.

The conference is part of the annual Trans-Pacific Sustainability Dialogue, a joint initiative of APARC and the Ban Ki-moon Foundation for a Better Future, which has expanded to include a subregional conference series in Mongolia. Read about the latest dialogue convenings on p. 18.



RIGHT: Begzjav Munkhbaatar, Consul General of Mongolia in San Francisco, presents commemorative coins to Gi-Wook Shin (ABOVE) and Cheryll Alipio (BELOW).

Fellows and Scholars

Each year, the center and our programs offer prestigious [fellowships and training opportunities](#) to emerging scholars, established faculty, and experienced professionals of exceptional promise and accomplishment. Here we spotlight some of the remarkable individuals from the 2025–26 cohort.

Gaea Morales
SHORENSTEIN POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW ON CONTEMPORARY ASIA

In field research across Bangkok, Jakarta, and Metro Manila, political scientist Gaea Morales studies how cities navigate between “thinking globally” and “acting locally,” building climate resilience by drawing on local knowledge and global networks to drive change even in the absence of central government support. Morales is now the Helen Houlahan Rigali Assistant Professor of Political Science at Loyola University Chicago.

Isabel Salovaara
APARC PREDOCTORAL FELLOW

Isabel Salovaara, a Stanford doctoral candidate in anthropology, investigates the ecosystem of private tutoring and coaching around India’s competitive government entrance examinations. From coaching hubs in Kota to job prep centers in Bihar, her ethnographic research reveals how India’s “shadow education” industry shapes youth aspirations, reproduces or mitigates inequality, and spurs relationships to the state.

Seok-Jin Eom
APARC VISITING SCHOLAR

South Korea’s public administration is an original, evolving tradition rather than a U.S. import, argues Seok-Jin Eom, a professor at Seoul National University. Tracing influences from Japanese colonial rule, the Minnesota Project, and 1960s developmentalism, he shows how Korean scholars synthesized ideas into a distinctive, state-led governance model that endures via democratization, globalization, and digital policy.

Eunjung Lim
APARC VISITING SCHOLAR

A professor in Kongju National University’s Division of International Studies, Eunjung Lim’s research focuses on international cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, comparative and global governance, and energy, nuclear, and climate change policies in East Asia. In her recent writing, she examines how the Arctic is rewriting energy geopolitics and testing South Korea’s strategy.

Yuli Xu
ASIA HEALTH POLICY PROGRAM POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW

In resource-constrained health systems, patients’ choices of where and from whom to seek care affect individual health outcomes as well as the efficiency of the healthcare systems. Economist Yuli Xu studies the value of patient-physician bonds in China and how institutional structures shape individual behavior and inequality in labor and health markets, influencing outcomes for families and workers.

Minyoung An
KOREA PROGRAM POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW

Gender inequality in South Korea shapes migration pathways and return decisions among the country’s highly educated women, pushing them to leave and keeping them away, according to sociologist Minyoung An. Her research reveals that treating talent flows as gender-neutral obscures a core driver of brain drain, which alarmingly coincides with Korea’s record-low fertility rate and rapid population aging.

Ruo-Fan Liu
TAIWAN PROGRAM POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW

Ruo-Fan Liu, our Taiwan Program’s inaugural postdoctoral fellow, studies how families across social classes navigate uncertainty in Taiwan’s college admissions. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork and mixed methods, her research reveals how class privilege endures even as educational reforms aim to level the playing field. After two years at APARC, she is now an assistant professor of sociology at National Chengchi University.

Gaea Morales

Isabel Salovaara

Seok-Jin Eom

Eunjung Lim

Yuli Xu

Minyoung An

Ruo-Fan Liu



Teren Sevea

LEE KONG CHIAN NUS-STANFORD FELLOW ON SOUTHEAST ASIA

Harvard University historian Teren Sevea investigates Southeast Asia’s distinctive Islamic practices and intellectual traditions, revealing the region’s centrality to Islamic studies and why it has often been marginalized within the field, despite its vast Muslim populations. While at APARC, he advanced a monograph on Islamic Singapore and a project on how multispecies religious worlds help rethink life in times of climate crisis.

Gavin Shatkin

LEE KONG CHIAN NUS-STANFORD FELLOW ON SOUTHEAST ASIA

Understanding today’s urban crises in Southeast Asia requires reckoning with Cold War legacies, argues Gavin Shatkin. A professor of public policy and architecture at Northeastern University, his research illuminates how political and institutional structures imposed by U.S.-backed authoritarian, anti-communist regimes in the 1960s and 1970s established oligarchic control over urban development that continues to shape Southeast Asian cities.

Theara Thun

LEE KONG CHIAN NUS-STANFORD FELLOW ON SOUTHEAST ASIA

How do countries rebuild education systems in the aftermath of mass violence? The question is personal for historian Theara Thun, who grew up in post-war Cambodia. Thun studies the revival of Cambodia’s universities after the Khmer Rouge regime and subsequent civil war, showing how higher education can drive national recovery and serve as an arena where cross-sector actors negotiate influence and change.

“One of the major challenges I have encountered is the scarcity of Taiwan-based cases published in general sociology journals. That is why I cherish APARC and FSI as my institutional home at Stanford, where faculty members and mentors value international work and underrepresented cases and support researchers throughout the process.”

— Ruo-Fan Liu

Teren Sevea

Gavin Shatkin

Theara Thun



Global Affiliates Program Promotes U.S.-Asia Engagement

Our [Global Affiliates Program](#) (GAP) had the pleasure of hosting ten visiting scholars: **Myong-jin Bae** of the Republic of Korea Army; **Ping (Jane) Jiang** of NextG Tech Limited; **Yasushi Maruyama** of Egon Zehnder; **Taiki Oki** of the Japan Patent Office; **Kota Shimoda** of Japan’s Ministry of Finance; **Shinya Takasaka** of Japan’s Air Self-Defense Force; **Takuya Tsunoda** of the Development Bank of Japan; **Noriaki Wada** of Japan’s Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry; **Edward Qiang Zeng** of NextG Tech Limited; and **Yibin (Ken) Zhao** of Shanghai Narada Group.

Each year, GAP welcomes a cohort of accomplished professionals nominated by our affiliate member organizations, who send their talent to Stanford for a year of research and enrichment. Global affiliate visiting scholars immerse themselves in APARC’s academic and social life, contribute to the center’s intellectual community, and benefit from Stanford’s culture of excellence and bold ideas while gaining exposure to Silicon Valley’s entrepreneurial energy and innovation engine.

We are grateful for the enduring partnerships with our affiliate members and invite new organizations to join this dynamic network.

Selected Courses Taught by APARC Scholars, 2025–26

- China and Its Military **Oriana Skylar Mastro**
- China’s Political Economy **Andrew Walder**
- Debates and Methods in East Asian Studies **Xueguang Zhou**
- Democracy and Social Movements in East Asia **Paul Chang**
- Global Corporate Governance **Curtis Milhaupt**
- Global Futures: History, Statecraft, Systems **Stephen Kotkin**
- Health and Healthcare Systems in East Asia **Karen Eggleston**
- Social Movements and Collective Action **Kiyoteru Tsutsui**
- Sustainability, Governance, and Economic Development in Southeast Asia **David Cohen**

Research Highlights

Grounded in the social sciences, [APARC research](#) is policy-relevant and cross-disciplinary. Our scholars study critical issues shaping Asia-Pacific countries, in areas including economic transformation, societal change, health and aging, development, security, and international relations.

Advancing the Economics of Health and Aging in Asia

Asia Health Policy Program Director **Karen Eggleston**’s research cluster examines [how health systems across Asia can deliver value, equity, and sustainability](#) amid rapid demographic and technological change.

Even as health systems make gains in disease care, population aging is driving Asia’s disease burden, find Eggleston and colleagues. Their [analysis of two decades’ worth of data](#) from China, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan shows that total disability-adjusted life years — a measure combining both morbidity and mortality — increased across all five countries despite improvements in individual health outcomes.

Other recent collaborative studies by Eggleston investigate [patient preferences for diabetes care in Vietnam](#) and the [impacts of robot adoption on employment and productivity in Japanese nursing homes](#). The results offer lessons for improving

health systems’ responses to a disease whose burden is increasing rapidly in low- and middle-income countries and for adjusting aging societies’ workforces to support older adults.

With all these studies, the goal is to produce evidence-based recommendations to guide policies promoting healthier, more resilient, and more inclusive societies.

Understanding Corporate Governance in an Era of Geoeconomics

Firms today must navigate an environment in which economic and geopolitical considerations can override formal corporate structures, argues **Curtis Milhaupt**, a professor at Stanford Law School and an APARC faculty affiliate. Drawing on case studies including TikTok, Shein, and Nippon Steel’s acquisition of U.S. Steel, he explores the implications of [contested corporate identity in the age of “weaponized interdependence”](#) for corporate governance, investor protection, and global investment flows.



How China’s Local Governments Are Rewriting Their Development Playbook

Local governments in China have a debt problem: decades of the nation’s growth was powered by land finance, in which localities funded development using special-purpose entities called local government financing vehicles (LGFVs). But COVID-19 and central government constraints on real estate borrowing put localities into hidden debt that reached at least \$8 trillion by 2022. China Program Director **Jean Oi**’s 2024 [fieldwork in Shandong and Jiangsu](#) has uncovered the novel strategies local Chinese governments are using to make up for the loss of revenue.

Oi, a political scientist, finds that localities in these two provinces are shifting to developing integrated industrial parks by transforming their LGFVs into venture capital instruments. These parks use a key input — Oi gives the example of a county government that secured a reliable supply of bauxite from Guinea — to attract a major producer that will then draw in up- and downstream suppliers, forming a complete ecosystem.

This is a new twist in what has been called “local state corporatism,” but now, instead of helping firms secure loans, local governments are essentially becoming venture capitalists. Two clever moves have helped make this possible. The first is turning troubled LGFVs into holding companies by injecting them with profitable state-owned enterprises; the second strategy is tapping into Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) funding, normally associated with projects *outside* of China. Oi’s research shows that between 2013 and 2022, projects within China actually accounted for the largest number of BRI projects.

In Shandong and especially in Jiangsu, local governments are repurposing their LGFVs, transforming them from instruments of land finance into VCs.

— Jean Oi





Probing AI Bias in Japan and Public Opinion on Security and Immigration

Findings from the [Stanford Japan Barometer \(SJB\)](#), a public opinion survey platform run by the Japan Program and co-led by [Kiyoteru Tsutsui](#), director of the program and APARC, offer insights into AI bias in Japanese politics and the Japanese public’s attitudes to immigration issues and the question of military involvement in the Iran war.

Based on surveys conducted during Japan’s February 2026 lower house election, SJB research finds that, when queried for voting guidance, five frontier [AI chatbots overwhelmingly recommend the Japanese Communist Party](#), which has negligible parliamentary presence, in response to left-leaning positions.

A different SJB experiment reveals that invoking Japan’s energy dependence on Middle Eastern oil, rather than Japan-U.S. alliance obligations, increases [public support for deploying the Self-Defense Forces to the Strait of Hormuz](#), but that, overall, opposition to military action in the conflict persists.

And another series of SJB experiments shows that [Japanese public support for immigration is selective and conditional on policy framing](#), with economic arguments able to shift opinion toward a pro-immigration direction — results featured in the [Asahi Shimbun GLOBE+](#).

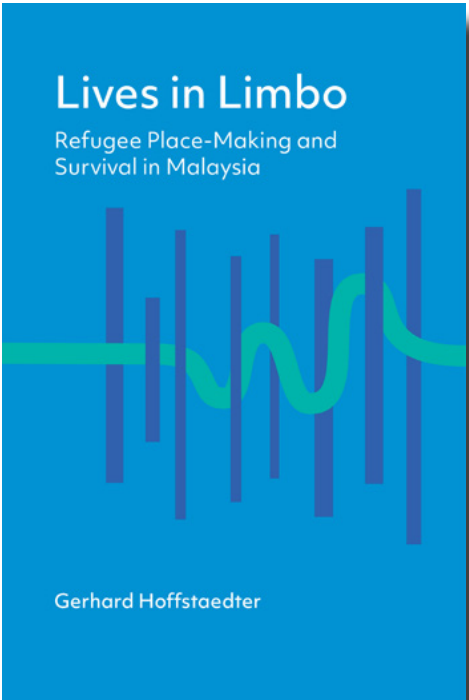
Spurring Dynamism and Growth in Asian Societies and U.S.-Asia Relations

Drawing on the talent flows and development framework outlined in his 2025 book, [The Four Talent Giants](#), [Gi-Wook Shin](#) provides data-driven [lessons from China and India for countering brain drain](#) through “brain circulation” and “brain linkage.” He also shows how the latter strategy — particularly [leveraging international students’ transnational social capital](#) — can help rebalance national talent portfolios in countries with strong ethnonational identities facing demographic decline, like Japan and South Korea.

This work is part of research from the [Stanford Next Asia Policy Lab](#) (SNAPL). Housed at APARC and led by Shin, the lab conducts collaborative research across four tracks tackling urgent issues in Asian affairs and U.S.-Asia relations.

Another SNAPL study published this year shows [how the geopolitical context of the U.S.-China rivalry affects public attitudes toward China](#), highlighting that alliances are more than security pacts and offering important policy implications for the United States, its allies, and China.

New Books



Lives in Limbo
Refugee Place-Making and Survival in Malaysia

Malaysia is Southeast Asia’s primary destination for displaced populations, yet it remains outside international refugee protection frameworks. Based on over 17 years of ethnographic research, including two years of ethnographic fieldwork in Malaysia, [Lives in Limbo](#) documents how Chin and Rohingya refugees in the country transform spaces of systematic exclusion into sites of possibility.

Drawing on the concept of the “polycrisis” and moving beyond simple narratives of victimhood, [Gerhard Hoffstaedter](#), an associate professor of anthropology at The University of Queensland and APARC’s former Lee Kong Chian NUS-Stanford fellow, reveals how refugees forge new forms of belonging under profound precarity and offers insights into developing more humane responses to migration.

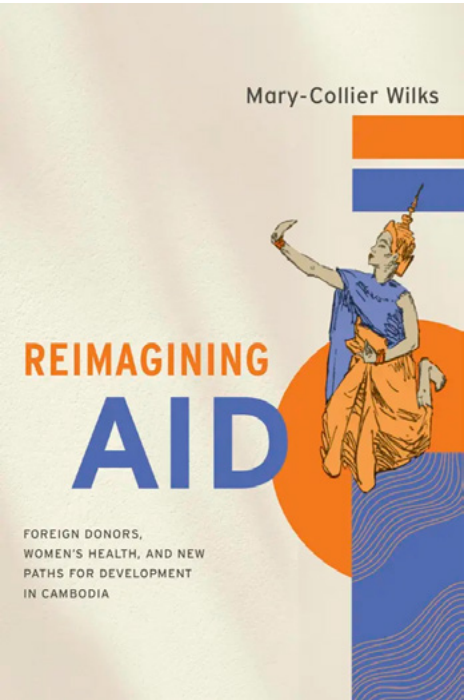
This title is part of APARC’s self-published book series distributed by Stanford University Press.

Reimagining Aid
Foreign Donors, Women’s Health, and New Paths for Development in Cambodia

The work of prominent international aid organizations today is still grounded in post-Cold War, Western development models. Amid growing inequality in a multipolar world, however, new players on the international scene have emerged to vie for influence. In [Reimagining Aid](#), [Mary-Collier Wilks](#), an assistant professor of sociology at the University of North Carolina Wilmington and APARC’s former postdoctoral fellow, takes readers to Cambodia, a country at the heart of this transformation.

Through a multi-sited ethnography, she investigates the intricate interplay between aid donors from Japan and the United States, examines their impact on women’s health initiatives in Cambodia, and illuminates how Cambodian development actors redefine national progress and international development.

This book, published by Stanford University Press, is part of the APARC-SUP joint monograph series.



Recent APARC Working Papers

APARC’s policy and working papers feature research in progress, best practices, policy recommendations, and thought leadership by our visiting scholars.

The Co-Governance of Community in China’s Megacities

Peng Chen

Drawing on field research in four Chinese megacities, Chen analyzes their modes of co-governance, explains the framework they are constructing under Party-building guidance, and calls for a context-specific urban studies theory as the field shifts focus to the Global South.

Empowering Southeast Asia’s Young Adults

Yasmin Wirjawan

Analyzing a decade of data on mobile connectivity, Wirjawan investigates the relationship between digital inclusion and youth not in employment, education, or training across 11 Southeast Asian countries to help advance regional economic productivity and reduce disparities.

From Crisis to Confidence: Building a Pandemic-Ready Asia-Pacific

Sung Sup Ra

The Asia-Pacific region can turn its experience of the COVID-19 crisis into a model of sustained, inclusive health resilience for the world. Ra and his co-authors outline steps to do so by embedding pandemic readiness into fiscal and development planning, based on four pillars.

Human Rights and Democracy in the Local Community: The Case of South Korea

Joong-Seop Kim

Kim assesses South Korea’s efforts to establish regional human rights ordinances over the past two decades, identifying measurable strategies to construct a robust local human rights protection system and strengthen democracy in the absence of national human rights legislation.

Japan’s Economic Security and the Semiconductor Industry

Jun Akabane

Can TSMC Kumamoto and Rapidus fulfill Japan’s promise of reclaiming its semiconductor sovereignty? Akabane argues that without strong domestic demand for advanced chips, the two projects’ potential to pursue the government’s economic security revitalization strategy is uncertain.

Shorenstein Journalism Award Honors Netra News for Advancing Democracy and Accountability in Bangladesh

Founded in exile to investigate high-level abuse of power by Bangladesh’s regime and press for accountability, **Netra News** has established itself as the country’s premier independent media outlet. It has published courageous reportage, played a pivotal role in covering the 2024 student-led uprising that toppled the long-entrenched authoritarian government, and, as Bangladesh transitions to democratic rule, has helped establish press freedom and push for democratic norms.

APARC proudly recognized Netra News and **Tasneem Khalil**, the outlet’s founding editor-in-chief, with the [2025 Shorenstein Journalism Award](#) for championing accountability journalism at its purest: reporting that not only informs, but also confronts power and demands justice.

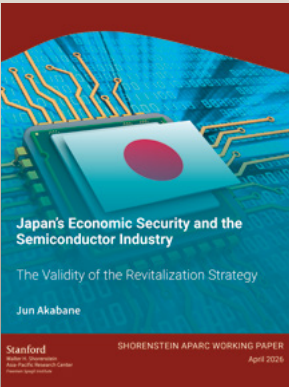
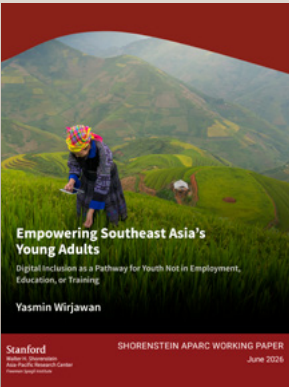
The October 2025 award ceremony included a discussion of the economics of investigative reporting and the dynamics of youth-led protests in Asia, featuring Khalil in conversation with

Shorenstein Award judges **William Dobson** and **James Hamilton**, and **Elora Shehabuddin**, director of the Chowdhury Center for Bangladesh Studies at the University of California, Berkeley.

As of this writing, preparations are underway for the [2026 Shorenstein Journalism Award celebration](#), to be held on October 20, 2026. This year’s award honors Singapore-based investigative journalist **Shibani Mahtani**.

“Comforting the afflicted and confronting power is at the heart of the kind of public interest journalism Netra News aspires to practice. . . . Its normative framework has four roles: monitorial, facilitative, radical, and collaborative.”

Tasneem Khalil



Envisioning Cities as Drivers of Sustainable Development

The [fourth annual Trans-Pacific Sustainability Dialogue](#) (TPSD), held in Manila, brought together social science researchers and scientists from Stanford and the Asia-Pacific region alongside policymakers, private and public sector experts, and emerging leaders to share lessons and strategies for strengthening cities’ capacity to survive and thrive amid complex crises—the vision captured in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11.

A joint initiative of APARC and the Ban Ki-moon Foundation for a Better Future, the TPSD aims to accelerate progress on the 17 SDGs underlying the United Nations–adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by spurring U.S.-Asia research-policy partnerships.

During the November 2025 dialogue, the Philippines experienced Super Typhoon Fung-wong, which caused extensive damage across two-thirds of the archipelago, hot on the heels of Typhoon Kalmaegi that had left nearly 500,000 Filipinos displaced. These disasters serve as a poignant reminder of the urgency of the dialogue.

In July 2026, APARC also joined the Secretariat of the State Great Hural of Mongolia and the Ban Ki-moon Foundation in co-organizing the [fourth sub-regional TPSD convening](#). Held in Ulaanbaatar, the event explored pathways to revitalizing partnerships for sustainable development (SDG 17), with a focus on the Altai region.

As of this writing, preparations are underway for the fifth annual TPSD. It will be held on October 25–26, 2026, in Singapore, to accelerate the implementation of SDG 12: ensuring responsible consumption and production patterns.



“Bringing the Trans-Pacific Sustainability Dialogue to Manila is both symbolic and strategic. . . . What is designed, financed, and implemented in Southeast Asian cities over the next years and decades will have lasting impacts on the planet’s future.”

Kiyoteru Tsutsui



Indo-Pacific Powers Diversify and De-Risk as Multipolar World Takes Shape

APARC’s [2026 Oksenberg Conference](#) gathered scholars and foreign service veterans to assess how regional stakeholders are confronting what Prime Minister Mark Carney of Canada had famously named “a rupture, not a transition” in the post-World War II order, as the United States has become fundamentally unpredictable, China pursues selective leadership, and Russia exploits Western divisions.

Held in March 2026—while Carney was in the midst of an Indo-Pacific trip to forge “middle power” trade alliances and the United States joined Israel in a war against Iran—the conference featured two expert panels. The first, moderated by APARC’s [Thomas Fingar](#), focused on China’s response to the new vulnerabilities and opportunities in the international system, with insights from [Da Wei](#) (Tsinghua University), [Susan Shirk](#) (University of California, San Diego), and [Mark Lambert](#) (former U.S. State Department).

A second panel, moderated by Amb. [Laura Stone](#) (APARC’s inaugural China Policy Fellow), explored regional strategies. It featured [Victor Cha](#) (Georgetown University), [Katherine Monahan](#) (APARC Visiting Scholar and Japan Program Fellow), and Stanford’s [Kathryn Stoner](#) and [Emily Tallo](#). The

panelists agreed that, while the U.S. retreat from the post-World War II order creates opportunities for China, regional powers are not pivoting toward Beijing but are instead diversifying and “de-risking” their security and economic partnerships.

“We have two leaders in Korea and Japan that normally we would think would not get along . . . but because of the very difficult situation they’re both in, they find a way to do it.”

Victor Cha

TOP RIGHT: Gita Wirjawan (R) in conversation with Ariel C. Lopez at the fourth annual TPSD in Manila. BOTTOM RIGHT (L-R): Kiyoteru Tsutsui, Kim Sook, Ban Ki-Moon, and H.E. Uchral Nyam-Osor, Prime Minister of Mongolia, at the Trans-Altai Sustainability Dialogue.

ABOVE LEFT: 2026 Oksenberg Conference participants (L-R) Thomas Fingar, Susan Shirk, and Mark Lambert. ABOVE RIGHT: (L-R) Laura Stone, Victor Cha, Katherine Monahan, and Kathryn Stoner.

How the Defense Tech Revolution Is Redefining New Alliance Strategies

Rapid technological advances in AI, cyber, and space are reshaping how nations project power, deter adversaries, and work with allies. At its conference, [Frontiers of Defense Tech in the Shifting U.S. Alliances with Japan and Beyond](#), the Japan Program gathered diplomats, military officials, scholars, and technology executives to examine the impact of this revolution on U.S. alliances in the Asia-Pacific as alliance commitments are tested and government leadership in stimulating innovation and technological cooperation is declining.

A keynote fireside chat moderated by FSI Director **Colin Kahl** and featuring retired Lieutenant General **H. R. McMaster**, the 25th U.S. national security advisor, and **Masataka Okano**, former national security advisor and vice minister for foreign affairs of Japan, underscored the core challenge: technological dependence has blurred the line between economic security and military security.

Discussions throughout the day analyzed lessons from the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, implications of the growing integration of commercial technology into military operations, the role of private firms in shaping cybersecurity governance, and the expanding role of space technologies in military and civilian infrastructure, among other issues.



Taiwan’s Quest for a Resilient Future and Enduring Innovation Edge

Taiwan offers a uniquely rich vantage point for studying how post-industrial societies can adapt to twenty-first-century risks and opportunities presented by forces such as geopolitical tensions, technological advancement, and cultural power.

At the third annual conference of the Taiwan Program, [Visions of Taiwan’s Future](#), esteemed experts from the United States and Taiwan examined the island nation’s evolving place on the world stage through three interconnected lenses: democratic resilience, technological transformation, and cultural influence.

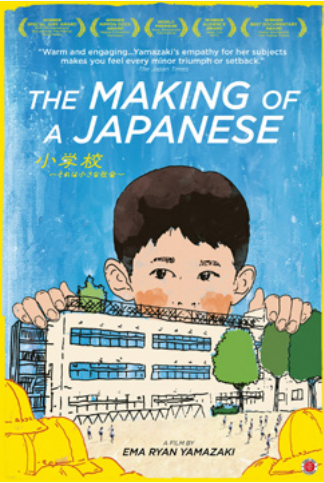
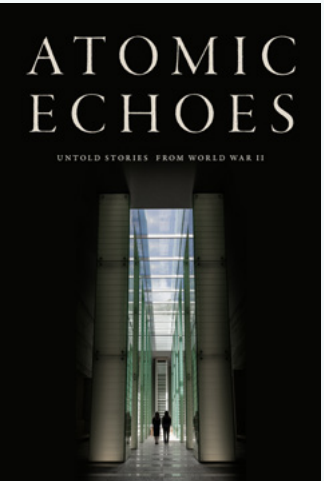
Featuring scholars, practitioners, and cultural leaders, the panels explored what democratic resilience looks like under conditions of polarization, disinformation, and external pressures of great power competition; how Taiwan can maintain its technological edge while navigating the opportunities and risks posed by AI, tariffs, and global economic restructuring; and in what ways cultural production and global storytelling shape how Taiwan is understood, represented, and remembered beyond its borders.

We were delighted to introduce **Pei-Chia Lan**, the Wang and Chen Senior Fellow in Taiwan Studies at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, as the incoming director of the Taiwan Program to the conference attendees.

LEFT: (L-R) H. R. McMaster, FSI Director Colin H. Kahl, and Masataka Okano take part in a fireside chat on Japan’s shifting alliance with the United States.

“What Taiwan shows us is that a relatively small society can have an outsized global influence through its technological sophistication, its democratic resilience, and its cultural vitality. That, I believe, is a powerful vision for the future of Taiwan.”

W. Brent Christensen, former director, American Institute in Taiwan



Cinematic Bridges: Human Stories of Asia through the Documentary Lens

Film possesses a unique alchemy, transforming abstract societal and geopolitical complexities into intimate human truths. APARC’s research programs harnessed this power to spark vital public conversations, pairing screenings of moving documentaries with filmmaker dialogues.

The China Program traced the untold stories of the Titanic’s Chinese survivors with a screening of [The Six](#) and a conversation with its co-creator, **Steven Schwankert**, who detailed the challenges of historical research in and about China.

The Japan Program examined Japanese elementary education and the delicate balance between self and collective identity as reflected in [The Making of a Japanese](#), from acclaimed filmmaker **Emma Ryan Yamazaki**. The program also presented a screening of [Atomic Echoes](#), in which producers **Karin Tanabe** and **Victoria Kelly** weave their intertwined family histories on opposite sides of World War II into a testament of the enduring trauma borne by the last remaining American atomic veterans and Japanese survivors of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings.

The Taiwan Program explored the spirit of innovation and resilience in [A Chip Odyssey](#), which chronicles Taiwan’s rise to semiconductor leadership through the stories of those who made it possible. A discussion with director **Hsiao Chu-chen** and producers **Ben Chen** and **Ben Tsiang** highlighted how a collective mission and the strengths of democratic values and global partnerships spurred Taiwan’s tech miracle.

More Event Highlights

Explore insights from guest speakers our programs hosted over the past year and watch recordings from many of the events on our YouTube channel.

- [An Early Appraisal of the Lee Jae-myung Administration in South Korea](#)
- [The Future of U.S.-China Relations: A Guardedly Optimistic View](#)
- [How Southeast Asia Can Become a Leader on the World Stage](#)
- [How Trade Credit Spreads Shocks through Global Supply Chains: Lessons from Taiwan](#)
- [Island Tinkerers: Taiwan’s Journey to Computing Dominance](#)
- [Japan’s Global Content Industries Thrive in an Expanding Creative Ecosystem](#)
- [Pita Limjaroenrat Strategizes a Path Forward for Thailand](#)
- [Reactionary Politics in South Korea: Understanding Far-Right Ideas and Practices](#)
- [Reassessing the Rule of Law: How Legal Modernization Can Lead to Authoritarianism](#)
- [Six Lessons from Asia on Using AI for Aging in Place](#)
- [Subscription Models for High-Value, High-Cost Medicines](#)
- [Survey Reveals How Taiwanese Citizens View National Security](#)
- [Sushi Hackathon Mends AI, Sustainable Fishing, and Civic Innovation](#)
- [Thai Ambassador to the US Outlines ASEAN’s Truce, Tariffs, Technology, and Transnational Crime](#)
- [Three Decades of Universal Health Coverage in Taiwan: Achievements and Challenges](#)
- [A World Safe for Autocracy: How Chinese Domestic Politics Shapes Beijing’s Global Ambitions](#)



GET INVOLVED

Giving to APARC

Our work — advancing knowledge, training future leaders, and fostering dialogue on critical issues shaping Asia and U.S.-Asia relations — would not be possible without the generosity of our community. If you have attended our events, read our publications, or followed our programs, you are already part of that network.

By making a gift to APARC, you help ensure that insights from our research inform important policy debates about Asian affairs and U.S.-Asia ties; that emerging scholars of contemporary Asia gain the mentorship they need to realize their potential; that students, researchers, and innovators from Stanford and Asia deepen exchange and engagement; and that Stanford remains a hub for educating the next generation of experts on Asia. Your gift, at any size, helps us sustain this mission.

The role of Asian countries in the world has never been more vital, nor the need for informed U.S.-Asia dialogue more urgent. We invite you to join us in shaping the conversations and collaborations that guide the future of the Asia-Pacific region and its ties with the United States.

How to Make a Gift

Whether you make a one-time gift or give over time, your generosity powers our students, scholars, and researchers. We will help you make the biggest impact in your areas of interest and achieve your philanthropic and financial goals. We also offer engagement and giving opportunities for institutions and companies.

For more information about making a gift to APARC, please contact Noa Ronkin, Associate Director for Communications and External Relations, at noa.ronkin@stanford.edu or 650-724-5667.

For information about the Global Affiliates Program and becoming an affiliate organization, please contact Denise Masumoto, Global Affiliates Program Manager, at masumoto@stanford.edu or 650-725-2706.

Gifts to APARC are tax-deductible under applicable rules. The center and its parent organization, the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, are part of Stanford University's tax-exempt status as a Section 501(c) (3) public charity.

OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Composer Go Shiina performs for the crowd at the Japan's Global Contents conference; Jessica Chen Weiss at a China Program seminar; a chef prepares tuna at the Japan Program's Sushi Hackathon; at the Visions of Taiwan's Future conference, (L-R) Brian Hu, Ruo-Fan Liu (panel moderator), Jane Wu, and Shih-Ching Tsou; W. Brent Christensen listens in at the Visions of Taiwan's Future conference; audience members at the Japan's Global Contents conference; Visiting Scholar Byongjin Ahn lectures for the Korea Program; His Excellency Dr. Suriya Chindawongse, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Thailand to the United States, speaking for the Southeast Asia Program; Matthew Dolbow, China Program visiting scholar, at the Oksenberg Conference
OPPOSITE, CENTER: Takahiro Yagi demonstrates the precision engineering of Kaikado handcrafted metal tea caddies. RIGHT: Audience members at the Japan's Global Contents conference.

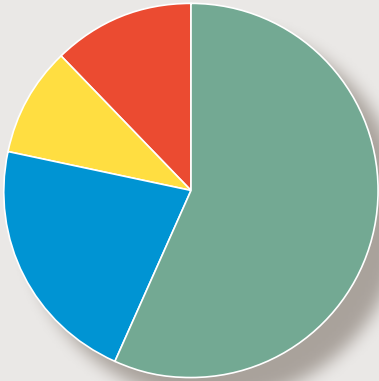


Finances

Shorenstein APARC’s revenue and expenses for the fiscal year 2025–26

Revenue

Endowment Payouts	\$3,876,112	57%
Gifts	1,479,230	22%
Income	638,710	9%
Interdepartmental Unit (transfer in)	883,617	13%
Support (transfer out)	(54,065)	-.8%
Net Revenue	\$6,823,604	100%



Expenses

Faculty, Research, and Administrative Staff Salaries	\$2,798,145	52%
Fringe Benefits	874,209	16%
Indirect Costs	330,568	6%
Postdoctoral Scholars and Visiting Scholars	458,093	8%
Student Support	87,479	2%
Conferences, Workshops, and Research Travel	728,867	13%
Research Materials and Other Research Expenses	9,539	<1%
Operations, Materials & Services	131,610	2%
Net Expenses	\$5,418,509	100%

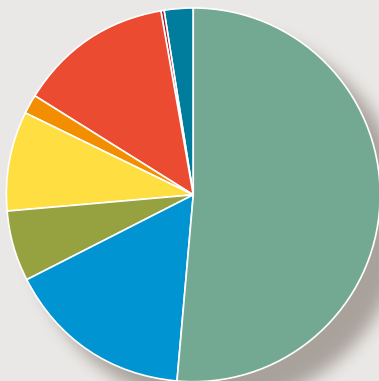


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RIGHT: Alicja Kwade public art installation in the Science & Engineering Quad Courtyard. BACK COVER: Go Shiina performs with junior and Stanford O-Tone member Tenzin Tara at the Japan’s Global Contents conference.



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