Guide to the Stanford University, Walter H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center, Records

Daniel Hartwig
Stanford University. Libraries.Department of Special Collections and University Archives
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Overview
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Biographical/Historical note
A small group of Asia specialists at Stanford met for a retreat in the Wilbur Hall dorm complex in 1978, at the dawn of what later proved to be an era of transformative regional change, marked by the rise of Japan as an economic superpower and the early moments of China’s opening to the world.

By the end of the day, the seven scholars had set the groundwork for one of the university’s earliest interdisciplinary research organizations. Those early discussions led to the creation of the Asia/Pacific Research Center at Stanford–now the Walter H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center (Shorenstein APARC)–an institution dedicated to exploring the dramatic changes in the world’s most dynamic region.

Shorenstein APARC has evolved into a flourishing research center with five active research programs focusing on China, Japan, Korea, Southeast Asia, and comparative health policy in the Asia-Pacific. It also boasts a South Asia Initiative and a vibrant Corporate Affiliates Visiting Fellows Program, which has grown alongside the center.

Shorenstein APARC has brought hundreds of visitors to Stanford from Asia over the years for academic exchange and policy dialogue, and it sponsors an increasing number of activities in Asia, such as conferences at the Stanford Center at Peking University, the Kyoto International Community House, and the National University of Singapore.

Originally established as the Northeast Asia-United States Forum on International Policy, Shorenstein APARC counts its “official” beginning as 1983, the year it came under the administration of Stanford’s International Strategic Institute, which is now FSI. The Center for International Security and Arms Control, its sister organization and today the Center for International Security and Cooperation, joined the institute at the same time.

In 1992, the Forum became the Asia/Pacific Research Center in recognition of the growing scope of U.S. interests in Asia. The center was renamed in September 2005 after Walter H. Shorenstein, a prominent San Francisco-area businessman and philanthropist, who helped insure the center’s long-term success by establishing a permanent endowment.
In the twilight of the Cold War, Shorenstein APARC’s earliest research focused on Northeast Asia, then one of the most strategically and economically important regions for the United States. The center initially explored such issues as high-tech competition and security collaboration with Japan and the emergence of China’s budding economic reforms. Center research has responded to the impact of developments in the region on U.S. foreign policy, ranging from the growth of regional integration and a counter rise of nationalism, to the spread of democracy, the torrid pace of economic growth and the explosion of cross border movement of people, culture and ideas in Asia. Current initiatives are dedicated to understanding the implications of Asia’s unprecedented demographic change, reconciling the unresolved legacy of World War II memories in Northeast Asia, and finding solutions to the challenges posed by North Korea’s nuclear weapons program.

Shorenstein APARC maintains its own active publishing program, with books distributed through Brookings Institution Press, and a contemporary Asia series published in collaboration with Stanford University Press. Some of its most recent leading-edge publications have dealt with political and economic reform in China, the Fukushima nuclear disaster, and the issue of aging in Northeast Asia.

Center research initiatives come to life through talks and conferences, offering members of the Stanford community and public the opportunity to hear from prominent government figures, scholars, authors, journalists, business people and non-governmental workers. Its popular, long-running annual event series include in the Oksenberg lecture on U.S.-Asia relations, the Asia-Pacific Leaders Forum on critical regional issues and the Shorenstein Journalism Award, granted to journalists on both sides of the Pacific who are at the forefront of promoting mutual understanding.

In the past decade, Shorenstein APARC has hosted engaging talks by speakers ranging from top politicians such as President Jimmy Carter and South Korea’s first female president, Park Geun-hye, to key cultural figures including Clint Eastwood and Chinese independent media pioneer Hu Shuli.

Since its earliest days, the center has also regularly convened important policy-focused dialogues on a wide range of issues, bringing together scholars and government officials. Such closed-session dialogues include the early U.S.-Japan Congressional Seminars, which brought together members of the U.S. Senate and Japanese Diet, the current series of Stanford Kyoto Trans-Asian Dialogues, convened each year to address key issues in the Asia-Pacific region with global implications, and a long-running policy dialogue with South Korean scholars and policy makers.

Shorenstein APARC remains deeply committed to teaching and outreach. In collaboration with the School of Humanities and Science’s Division of International, Comparative and Area Studies, it supports a summer East Asia internship program for Stanford undergraduate and graduate students. It also regularly partners with the Stanford Program on International and Cross-Cultural Education on innovative Asia curriculum units for K-14 classrooms.

Scope and Contents

The materials consist of audiovisual recordings and handouts documenting the 30th anniversary of the Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center.

Access Terms

Asia --Study and teaching.
Asia/Pacific Scholars Program

Events

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Publications