

## 2010 YCAR Award Recipients

### *Vivienne Poy Asian Research Award*

**Vanessa Lamb** is the recipient of the 2010 Vivienne Poy Asian Research Award. She is a second-year doctoral candidate in the Department of Geography with research interests in the politics of the environment and development, feminist political ecology and critical science studies.



Ms. Lamb received her Master's degree from the University of Wisconsin where she undertook research and study regarding interdisciplinary understandings of conservation.

Prior to attending York University, she worked for the organization *TERRA* based in Bangkok, a regional NGO that works on environment issues within the Mekong Region. As a doctoral student she has worked as part of the Challenges of the Agrarian Transition in Southeast Asia (CHATSEA) project team.

The award funds will assist Ms. Lamb in her dissertation fieldwork during the 2010-2011 academic year. Her research is situated at the Nu-Salween River, which supports an estimated six million people in China, Burma and Thailand as a source of livelihood and food. Her research looks at knowledge-making and claim-making practices around river resources and she will be conducting interviews with local residents, activists, engineers, and others connected to a large hydroelectric development project along the river at the Thai-Burma border. Specifically, her research considers how different knowledges produced about the river interact and influence decision-making processes around development.

*The award is named for the Honourable Vivienne Poy and assists a graduate student in fulfilling the fieldwork requirement for the Graduate Diploma in Asian Studies. YCAR is grateful for Senator Poy's support for this award.*

For more information: [www.yorku.ca/ycar/Awards/Vivienne\\_Poy\\_Asian\\_Research\\_Award.html](http://www.yorku.ca/ycar/Awards/Vivienne_Poy_Asian_Research_Award.html).

### *YCAR Language Award*

**Ei Phyu Han** and **Rae Mitchell** are the 2010 recipients of the YCAR Language Award. Ms. Han, a Doctoral Candidate in Geography, will study Thai and Ms. Mitchell, a Master's Candidate in Social and Political Thought, will use the award funding to study Hindi in anticipation of her 2010 fieldwork in India.

**Ms. Han** is examining gender identity formation of Karen refugees from Burma along the Thai-Burma border to learn how it is influenced by different actors and power groups at multiple sites of displacement. Her research aims to demonstrate how identity is influenced by place and therefore shifts during the process of being displaced because it is continually being renegotiated. This research has the potential to help improve resettlement programmes and she hopes it can play a role in future Canadian refugee policy changes.



*"Although I am now a Canadian citizen, I migrated to Canada at the age of six from Burma with my family in the aftermath of the brutal repression of peaceful demonstrations in 1988. I believe that this project is important not only for the ways that it can influence policy and resettlement program changes, and its engagement and contribution to academic knowledge but also because it is integral to learning more about the growing humanitarian crisis in Burma."*

Ms. Han completed her course work and set the foundations for her fieldwork in the summer of 2009 in Chiang Mai, Thailand by making contacts with non-governmental organizations and by taking Thai language courses. The YCAR Language Award will assist in the continuation of these studies. She will begin her fieldwork in June where she will be working with the Thai-Burma Border Consortium (TBBC), WEAVE and the Karen Youth Organization.



**Ms. Mitchell's** research interests include resistance, social movement theory, engaged Buddhism and social anarchism. Her current research focuses on Gandhian perspectives of the body, including the methods utilized by Gandhi to transform his body (and self) from British subject into revolutionary *satyagrahi*. She's also interested in the ways that Gandhian approaches to social and political transformation are being adapted and utilized by women members of the Mahila Shanti Sena (Women's Peace Force) in Northern India.

She will complete a four-week intensive Hindi language-training course at the Jaipur School of Hindi in Jaipur, Rajasthan. The school is run in affiliation with Shashvat Sansthan, a local NGO working for the welfare of Rajasthan's tribal-indigenous communities. Ms. Mitchell will also be traveling with Dr. Reva Joshee and Jill Carr-Harris throughout central India for three weeks in October 2010 to explore possible research collaboration on Ekta Parishad's struggle for land and forest rights for marginalized and indigenous peoples in India.

She holds a combined Bachelor of Arts Honours degree in Peace Studies and Anthropology with a minor in Religious Studies from McMaster University.

*The YCAR Language Award was created to support graduate students in fulfilling the language requirement for the Graduate Diploma in Asian Studies (GDAS) and to facilitate awardees master's or doctoral-level research.*

For more information: [www.yorku.ca/ycar/Awards/YCAR\\_Language\\_Award.html](http://www.yorku.ca/ycar/Awards/YCAR_Language_Award.html).

### *David Wurfel Award*

**Ferdinand Dionisio Caballero**, a Master's Candidate in Social Anthropology, is this year's recipient of the David Wurfel Award, which will aid him in his Fall 2010 archival fieldwork in the Philippines where he will focus on the entangled relations between the Catholic Church and the Filipino people.

The David Wurfel Award provides financial support to an honours undergraduate or masters graduate student who intends to conduct thesis research on the topic of Filipino history, culture or society.

Mr. Caballero's major research paper will be an anthropological inquiry on religion, colonial subjects, postcolonialism, and history. More specifically, he is interested in exploring and understanding the dynamics of power relations between religious institutions and the people.



He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Anthropology with a specialization in ethnographic studies from Grant MacEwan University in Edmonton, Alberta.

*The Award was established in 2006 by Senior YCAR Research Associate Dr. David Wurfel. He wanted to contribute to the emergence of a new generation of Filipino leadership that is grounded in the country's history, culture and public affairs. Dr. Wurfel is a Philippine specialist who received his PhD from Cornell University's Southeast Asia Program.*

For more information: [www.yorku.ca/ycar/Awards/David\\_Wurfel.html](http://www.yorku.ca/ycar/Awards/David_Wurfel.html).

### *Albert C.W. Chan Foundation Fellowship*

**Heather Barnick** is the 2010 recipient of the Albert C.W. Chan Foundation Fellowship. She is a Doctoral Candidate in the Department of Social Anthropology at York University. Her current research interests are related to the anthropology of media, digital anthropology, and technoscience with a specific focus on the visual and material cultures of video games and Massive Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games (MMORPGs).

In May of 2010, Ms. Barnick will begin ethnographic fieldwork in Shanghai, China, following the ways in which online role playing games have become significant sites for the formations of new

national and cultural imaginaries in Mainland China. Her fieldwork is supported by the Albert C.W. Chan Fellowship and a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada doctoral scholarship.

This research follows on the heels of a project initiated by China's General Administration of Press and Publication (GAPP) to encourage the production of 100 domestically produced MMORPGs. The narratives and imagery integrated into games developed under GAPP's initiative frequently make use of famous fictional stories (eg. *Journey to the West*) and historical battles (eg. Genghis Khan's exploits, the Second Sino-Japanese War).



Focusing on the perspectives of youths from Shanghai, Ms. Barnick's research will examine how these adapted histories come to have new meanings for life in the present. The primary goal is to understand how notions of national and cultural belongings and identities are continuously formed, expressed, and re-imagined by Shanghai youths through their participation in MMORPGs produced in China.

She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology and Anthropology from the University of Prince Edward Island and a Master of Arts degree in Social and Cultural Anthropology from Concordia University.

*The Albert C.W. Chan Foundation Fellowship was established by the Albert C.W. Chan Foundation to encourage and assist York University graduate students to conduct field research in East and/or Southeast Asia. YCAR would like to thank the Albert C. W. Chan family for their support of York graduate students.*

For more information: [www.yorku.ca/ycar/Awards/Albert\\_CW\\_Chan.html](http://www.yorku.ca/ycar/Awards/Albert_CW_Chan.html).

### *Global Initiatives Symposium*



**Adnan Amin** was selected from a strong group of graduate and undergraduate applicants to represent York University at the Global Initiatives Symposium in Taipei in July 2010. This opportunity is provided by the government of the Republic of China (Taiwan).

Mr. Amin's winning essay was titled 'When East Meets West: A Personal Essay on Intersections of North American and East Asian Education' where he reflected on his experiences as an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher in Taiwan.

He has spent his post-secondary career at York University. Last year, he graduated with an Honours double major degree in English and History, completed his concurrent Bachelor of Education degree, and held a position as student senator for the Faculty of Education Student's Association. Mr. Amin has also held an international internship in the English Department of the Hong Kong Institute of Education and taught ESL in Taiwan. He is currently pursuing his Master of Education degree with York's Faculty of Education.

Mr. Amin's research interests are in teaching and learning strategies, immigrant experiences, English language learning, and digital media technology. He currently works as a school settlement worker (SWIS) in Toronto high schools, where he helps newcomer students and families with settlement needs.

The Global Initiatives Symposium will be held at the National Taiwan University in Taipei, Taiwan, from 12 to 16 July 2010. It brings together emergent leaders from around the world to discuss critical global issues. The topic for 2010 is The Emergence of New Giants: Evolution or Revolution. Participants will also participate in several days of cultural tours in Taiwan following the Symposium.

YCAR wishes to thank the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (TECO) and the government of government of the Republic of China (Taiwan).