Three years ago, Deborah Peterson and Jermay Jamsu discovered they had a common goal: to provide access to education and environmental protection in Tibet. Jamsu, a former KU student from Tibet, was already working to provide solar cookers to families in his home country. Together, he and Peterson, a lecturer in East Asian Languages and Cultures, took on some community relief projects and were successful. “So we just decided that we would really like to have our own organization,” Peterson said. “It grew out of that.”

Thus Tendel Group was formed, a not-for-profit, charitable organization that works to alleviate poverty and environmental damage in Amdo, now in modern-day Qinghai Province in China. Tendel, a Tibetan word referring to interdependent connectedness and origination, as well as celebration and any sort of auspicious sign or link, is the guiding principle of the group.

“It’s a term commonly used in Tibetan Buddhism,” said Peterson. “For us, it’s a link between the resources here and the need there. It’s a joint organization made up of Tibetans and friends. It’s an international endeavor.”

All of the projects in Amdo are initiated by Tibetans living there. Project directors at the grass-roots level contact Tendel Group—which is not affiliated with KU—regarding a need in their area. They then work with the population in the targeted villages to carry out the project.

Since the beginning, Tendel Group has worked to disperse solar cookers to villagers. A large disk with a small platform extending on a stem in the center, the cookers can do nearly anything from boil water to bake bread. “They’re very simple technology, very durable, and they’re very inexpensive—$25,” said Peterson.

The ramifications of the solar cookers spread beyond the home. “If they have to buy coal, because the landscape has been so denuded of trees,” Peterson explained, “that often means someone in the family has to go off and work seasonal labor, so it breaks apart families. Children are kept out of school so they can collect yak dung.”

The solar cookers provide fuel security for families, help keep children in school, preserve the landscape, and lessen the respiratory diseases that can result from burning yak dung.

While on a recent Tibetan visit that included “a horrific, 21-hour bus ride,” Peterson saw the need at ‘phrosgang Primary School. “They have nothing there,” she said of the desperately poor, very remote school established by monks to educate the children of nomads. “They have no tables, no chairs, no beds. Right now, there is no education there for girls because there are no facilities to board them.

“The teachers, monks, and Tendel came up with a proposal for a three-year plan to expand the school and build dormitories for girls,” she said.
The following courses are being developed with grants provided by Title VI.

**LING 572/EALC 572: Structure of Chinese / Jie Zhang**
A detailed study of the linguistic structure of Mandarin Chinese, including its phonetic, phonological, morphological, and syntactic properties.

**GEOG 571: Globalization / So-Min Cheong**
The course will unfold the multifaceted notion of globalization by examining why and how globalization occurs, and will be divided into three parts: theory, practice, and case studies in East Asia.

**EALC 418/618: Sexual Politics in Dynastic China / Keith McMahon**
The course will use myth, literature, history, biography, and other documents to discuss sexual politics in China from ca. 1500 BCE to the end of the last dynasty in 1911.

**TH&F 302/702: Asian Media Studies / Michael Baskett**
Provides students with a general understanding of the basic theories and issues concerning contemporary television, gaming, advertising, and cyber industries of East Asia including brief comparisons with relevant markets in Southeast and South Asia.

**EALC 888/POLS 888: Research in the Field: Conducting and Analyzing Fieldwork in East Asia and Developing Countries / John Kennedy**
Designed to teach graduate students and advanced undergraduates how to conduct fieldwork in China, Central Asia, and similar developing countries.

**Eastern Civilizations: Tibet and Central Asia / Deborah Peterson**
Expanding the teaching of Tibet and Central Asia in the curriculum, this undergraduate course will be designed to focus on the culture and history of this region.

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**CEAS COURSE DEVELOPMENT GRANTS**

**CEAS EVENTS ROUNDUP**

In addition to the myriad ways in which the CEAS outreach teams took East Asian culture to K-12 schoolteachers and the schools, CEAS also sponsored these events and programs targeted at KU students, faculty, staff, and the community.

- 26 presentations by Chancellor’s Lecturer Takao Shibata, including the Law School’s prestigious Diplomat’s Forum Lecture
- A unique graduate seminar on East Asia taught by Takao Shibata
- A 5-week Aikidō-in-Japanese class taught by dōjō master Andrew Tsubaki
- 6 lectures in Japanese for the Advanced Language Maintenance Lecture Series
- 8 calligraphy workshops taught by Sanae Eda

- A new East Asian Studies Graduate student Research Forum, mentored by Eric Rath
- “Green Tea and Bamboo” events, including a lecture on bamboo and a performance on the shakuhachi; a lecture-demonstration on bamboo used in sculpture and furniture-making; a lecture on the medicinal effects of green tea; an Urasenke tea ceremony demonstration; the erection of a tea house by KU architecture students; a lecture on sencha; and a lecture-workshop on the sensory analysis of green tea
- A Visualizing Globalization Through Film series featuring 12 international films with commentary by faculty (and the Provost)
- Presentations on China’s economic expansion: an engineer’s lecture on China’s construction boom; an economist’s lecture on the economic integration of East Asia; a lawyer’s lecture on doing business in China; film director David Redmon’s talk on making the documentary “Mardi Gras: Made in China”; a photographer’s presentation on China’s factories; and a photography exhibit on Chinese manufacturing
- Presentations on Japan: the annual Grant Goodman Distinguished Lecture delivered by NYU historian Harry Harootunian; a JETRO symposium on anime; two lectures on Shinano by Stanford historian Karin Wigen; and an evening of song by a Japanese opera-singer

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In 2006, donors helped raise $2,000 to build a school library of over 1,000 books in Tibetan and Chinese. Tendel Group also supplied blankets, bedding, stoves, and solar cookers to the school.

This summer, Peterson will go to Amdo in July to oversee projects and pay another visit to ‘phrosgang Primary School. For more information on Tendel Group projects and ways to make a donation, please visit their new web site at www.tendelgroup.org.

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A solar cooker installed at a home in a remote nunnery.
This spring, Anthropology and Linguistics Professor Akira Yamamoto retired from KU, where he has taught since 1973. For the past three decades, he has worked with the Hualapai Indian community and with various language projects in Arizona and Oklahoma.

Although his primary scholarly focus was on Native American languages, he committed much of his career to East Asian studies.

Together with his wife, Japanese Language and Literature Professor Emerita Kimiko Yamamoto, he taught courses on folklore, popular culture, and lifestyles in Japan, and led seminars on Edo period culture and space in Japanese culture. He also taught Structure of Japanese and trained numerous graduate students in Japanese Linguistics and anthropological research on Japan. He participated in many conferences on Japanese studies, and in 1996 was the keynote speaker at the Northern Pacific Rim Linguistics Conference at Kyoto University. He is a member of the Linguistic Society of Japan and the Japanese Society of Ethnology.

In addition, Yamamoto chaired the Linguistic Society of America’s Committee on Endangered Languages and Their Preservation, and he co-chaired the UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages.

In 1978, Yamamoto helped found the American Indian Language Development Institute (AILDI), which hosts an annual summer school in language documentation and Native pedagogical materials preparation. AILDI’s primary mission has been to advocate indigenous language rights and to ensure linguistic and cultural diversity. The Institute was cited in a national study by the U.S. Department of Education as one of the 10 outstanding programs for minority teacher preparation in the country. Since 1990, AILDI has trained approximately 2,000 participants.

Yamamoto’s distinguished career has been recognized with many awards, including the KU Mortar Board Outstanding Educator Award (1989), the William T. Kemper Fellowship for Teaching Excellence (1997), sponsorship of the KU visit of Ambassador Mitsuhiro Kagami, formerly of the World Bank, and Heritage Foundation Peter Brookes’ talk, “American Foreign Policy Challenges in China and Eurasia” support for a lecture on mangoes as sacred relics in the cult of Mao and an exhibit of Mao’s mangoes at the Spencer Museum of Art; the development of Uyghur pedagogy materials and testing protocols; the Shawnee Mission Japanese Language Contest; the Greater Kansas City Japan Festival and much more….

Made possible by the Center for East Asian Studies Title VI Grant, in academic year 2006–2007 CEAS awarded 17 conference travel grants and two faculty development travel grants. Yi Jin traveled to Beijing in May to visit the headquarters of China Construction Bank and the China Center for Economic Research for research on nonperforming loans and the dissipation of state-owned assets during China’s economic transition. Jie Zhang will travel to Beijing in July to research whether Chinese tone sandhi patterns are productive and whether markedness generalizations made over the phonetics of modern-day dialects are relevant to the sandhi patterns.

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In May, our indefatigable student worker, Nathan Ladd, walked down the hill with honors. He was also one of nine students chosen for a prestigious Chancellor’s Student Award. Nathan’s Agnes Wright Strickland Award recognizes his academic, volunteer, and leadership accomplishments during his time at KU. As part of the 135th commencement, Chancellor Robert Hemenway hosted a reception to honor the students May 19. The honorees also sat on a platform with the chancellor during commencement May 20. Those of us who have worked with Nathan know that his Chancellor’s Award is well-deserved. His skills, optimism, and enthusiasm will be missed as he pursues a career in business as an Asian sales representative for Labconco in Kansas City, Mo. 

Maki Kaneko (History of Art) earned her PhD in World Art Studies and Museology from the University of East Anglia, United Kingdom. Her specialty is art and politics in the early 20th century, with an emphasis on 20th-century Japanese visual arts.

Yang Lu (History) has served as a lecturer at Harvard University and an Assistant Professor at Princeton University. He earned his PhD in East Asian Studies from Princeton, and studied at the University of Vienna and Peking University.

Kyoim Yun (East Asian Languages and Cultures) earned her PhD in Folklore from the Departments of Folklore and Ethnomusicology at Indiana University in Bloomington. Her earlier studies concentrated on Korean language and Literature.

Akiko Takeyama (Anthropology) earned her PhD in Sociocultural Anthropology from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her research interests focus on Japan, gender, sexuality, class, the body, popular culture, and globalization.

:: Please look for more detailed focus articles on these faculty members in the 2007 CEAS Annual Report. ::

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