Mission: The UH Center for Chinese Studies is an administrative structure established by the Board of Regents to serve faculty and students in disciplines and programs related to China, with the explicit objective of further strengthening Chinese Studies within the university system. This objective is pursued through a broad range of activities: attention to faculty, program, and curriculum development; support for faculty research and publications; academic and fiscal support for students; national and international exchanges and visits; an active program of public lectures and research seminars; local, national, and international outreach activities; and enthusiastic support for student initiatives.

History: A Department of Chinese was created at the University of Hawai‘i in 1919, twelve years after the foundation of the university in 1907. Within a few years, a broad range of Asia-related courses were being offered. In 1935, the Board of Regents authorized the creation of the Oriental Institute, focusing on the languages and cultures of China, India, and Japan. Although WWII delayed the further development of Asian Studies, by the 1950s national interest in Asia was burgeoning. A formal program in Asian Studies was established in 1959; by the late 1960s, several disciplines were offering PhDs with a China emphasis. Faculty strength and resources continued to grow in the 1970s. In 1977, the University was recognized by the US Department of Education as one of about a dozen National Resource Centers for East Asian Studies. A year later, faculty specialists in Chinese Studies came together to form the first Council for Chinese Studies, under the leadership of Prof. Betty Yu-ho Tseng Ecke, to coordinate and support the various university resources related to the study of China. In 1980, the Council became a part of the Center for Asian and Pacific Studies (CAPS), and was charged with further strengthening the field of Chinese Studies. As the importance of Asia and the Pacific increased, the University elevated the old CAPS to the level of an independent School, with its own dean and administrative structure. Within this new School of Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific Studies (SHAPS), established in 1987, the old Council for Chinese Studies emerged as the Center for Chinese Studies. The Center’s first director was Prof. Daniel W.Y. Kwok of the Department of History.

Center directors
1978–87 Betty Yu-ho Tseng Ecke
(chair of the Council for Chinese Studies)
1987–91 Daniel W.Y. Kwok
1991–00 Roger T. Ames
2000–pres. Ronald C. Brown

Source: UH Center for Chinese Studies.
Faculty & programs

With a permanent faculty of 38 China specialists in 26 departments in the humanities, social sciences and the professional schools, the University of Hawai‘i offers greater breadth and depth in Chinese Studies than any institute for higher learning outside of Asia. Our faculty teach over 150 courses across the university curriculum, to over 200 mostly graduate majors in Chinese Studies. Students may obtain China-focused bachelor’s degrees in three departments, master’s degrees in 13 departments, and doctorates in nine departments. Our faculty is bolstered by a steady stream of visiting specialists from Asia, the US mainland, Europe and Australia (approximately 50 per year), who stay a few days or many months, to contribute to and benefit from the work in progress here. Chinese Studies at the University of Hawai‘i is supported by the Asia Collection located on the fourth and fifth floors of Hamilton Library, which includes a Chinese-language collection (150,000 volumes), a Western-languages collection (50,000 volumes), 3,000 periodicals, and thousands of pieces of microfilm materials. Through on-line databases and information networks, the Asia Collection also supports access to materials held at any research libraries nationwide.

The Center supports the work of the University’s China-focused faculty and students by raising external funding through grants and private donations for research, program development, student scholarships, and library support. It also encourages town-gown linkages through projects such as the compilation of this current volume, through a grant from the Clarence T.C. Ching Foundation. Internationally, the Center hosts individual and group visitors from Chinese communities overseas, who come to conduct research or receive programmed training in a range of fields. The Center also facilitates professional travel by US-based China specialists to sites in Asia, through its network of partner institutions such as Peking University and the National Taiwan University. The Center also supports an excellent exchange with the Chinese University of Hong Kong, funded by a generous endowment provided by local donors Eddie and Peggy Eu.