

Information Note

Background

Recent decades have seen an increasing interest in the study of sign languages in Asia. Indeed, research on different linguistic aspects of Asian sign languages has enabled us to appreciate the rich varieties of sign languages used in Asia such as Cambodian Sign Language, Chinese Sign Language, Ho Chi Minh City Sign Language, Hong Kong Sign Language, Jakarta Sign Language, Japanese Sign Language, Korean Sign Language, Malaysian Sign Language, Sri Lankan Sign Language, Taiwanese Sign Language, Thai Sign Language and Yogyakarta Sign Language. While the field of sign linguistics is expanding in Asia, the number of sign language researchers remains small. In 2003, with The Nippon Foundation's generous donation to the Centre for Sign Linguistics and Deaf Studies of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the Asia Pacific Sign Linguistics Research and Training Program (hereafter: the APSL program) was established. Coordinated by the Centre for Sign Linguistics and Deaf Studies (CSLDS), the APSL program represents an unprecedented attempt in the region to support Deaf and hearing individuals intending to take on a career in sign linguistics research or Deaf development. The successful development of sign linguistics research depends on the participation of professionally trained Deaf individuals.

Since 2003, the APSL program has trained Deaf students from Cambodia, Fiji, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Vietnam. Applying the knowledge and skills in sign linguistics and sign language teaching they acquired through their training, the Deaf students engaged themselves in various research activities which culminated in the production of sign language dictionaries and teaching materials. Some of the trainees have also had opportunities to present their research findings at conferences. In 2013, the APSL program graduated its first class, consisting of Indonesian, Sri Lankan and Hong Kong students who have completed the higher diploma level training.

The APSL program also emphasizes the importance of Deaf and hearing collaboration in developing research and professional training in sign linguistics, sign language teaching, and Deaf studies. Two Indonesian graduates from the University of Indonesia and one Sri Lankan graduate from the University of Kelaniya have successfully completed the MA program in linguistics at the Chinese University of Hong Kong between 2012 and 2014. Receiving specialized training in sign linguistics in the MA program and working closely with Deaf researchers in compiling sign language dictionaries and conducting other research activities, the graduates now continue their research and training working with the Deaf researchers in their home countries. Two hearing Japanese students are now studying in the MA program in linguistics and are working towards completion of the program, which is expected to be in 2015.

With The Nippon Foundation's funding, the postgraduate scholarship has been set up to support postgraduate training in sign linguistics at the master's and PhD levels, which is conducted at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Our aim is to create a sign linguistics research and training community in Asia and the Pacific in order to support universities in developing disciplinary research and training in sign linguistics.

Postgraduate Scholarship

Value of Scholarship¹

The award for research postgraduate program covers the full tuition fee, postgraduate studentship and subsidies for research activities, conference attendance and training trips each year during the normative period of study.

The award for taught postgraduate program covers the full tuition fee, stipends and subsidies for research activities and conference attendance during the normative period of study.

There are four scholarship places available for the 2016/17 academic year.

Eligibility Criteria

Applicants should:

- a. be proficient in a natural sign language;
- b. preferably be a citizen of a developing country in Asia Pacific region;
- c. fulfill all admission requirements of the specific taught or research postgraduate program offered by the Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages, The Chinese University of Hong Kong;
- d. agree to pursuing sign linguistics research training at the MA, MPhil or PhD levels.

Condition of Scholarship

- i. The Scholarship is conditional upon the candidate meeting all the admission and graduation requirements stipulated by CUHK.
- ii. Successful candidates have to provide proof of successful admission into one of the aforementioned linguistics postgraduate programs offered by the Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages at CUHK.
- iii. Tuition fees will be paid on behalf of the scholarship recipients directly from the APSL program to the university in separate installments. The second installment will be paid upon satisfactory performance of course work and field training during the first semester².
- iv. Recipients are required to undergo field training at the Centre for Sign Linguistics and Deaf Studies while pursuing full-time study of the postgraduate program during the period of scholarship. The field training as prescribed by the director of the centre, includes working with Deaf and hearing researchers in documenting Asian sign languages as well as developing sign language dictionaries and teaching materials.
- v. Recipients are required to sign an undertaking, pledging a) to complete the specified taught or research postgraduate program at the Chinese University of Hong Kong; b) to support the research and training developments in sign linguistics through employment or voluntary services; c) to support Deaf development in Asia and the Pacific through partnering with Deaf people; and d) to undergo internship training offered by the Centre for Sign Linguistics and Deaf Studies while pursuing full-time, postgraduate study.
- vi. In the event of non-compliance with the conditions listed above, the centre reserves the right to prematurely terminate the scholarship and the recipient may be required to repay such sum, not exceeding the total value of

the scholarship so received, and upon such terms as the selection board of the scholarship deems appropriate.

Application

Applicants should complete application procedures of both scholarship and linguistics postgraduate program.

i. Scholarship

Application starts: 6 July 2015

Application closes: 18 December 2015

Application forms for the scholarship can be downloaded from the website of APSL program (www.cslds.org/apsl)

Completed forms must be returned to the Centre for Sign Linguistics and Deaf Studies **on or before 18 December 2015 by post or in person. Late/incomplete applications or applications by email/fax will not be considered.**

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to an interview by early-January 2016.

The announcement of result will be made by end of February 2016.

ii. Linguistics postgraduate program

Application details can be found at website of the Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages at CUHK:

http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/lin/new/en_admis_pg.html

Date of Commencement of the scholarship

Commencement Date: 1 September 2016

Support Services

I. Hong Kong Sign Language

Successful candidates will be supported in learning Hong Kong Sign Language (HKSL) through classes and tutorials, as well as through daily interaction with APSL program trainees at the hostel and at the CSLDS.

II. Postgraduate Study

Courses offered under the postgraduate program in linguistics at the Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages will be delivered in English. Deaf candidates will be provided with a note-taking service, video-recording of the lectures and the provision of FM system or HKSL interpretation if necessary to support their studies.

Remarks

1. The value of the scholarship will be adjusted accordingly in such case that the tuition fee for the postgraduate program is adjusted for the academic year 2016/17. Residence in the APSL hostel, free of rental charges, will also be arranged for the scholarship recipients.
2. Applications for the captioned scholarship and admission into the postgraduate program in linguistics are separate. Applicants must apply to the postgraduate program in linguistics through the Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and be responsible for completing all application procedures for the postgraduate programs stipulated by the Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages.

Further Information

Enquiries on the Nippon Foundation Scholarship for Sign Linguistics in Asia should be made to:

The Centre for Sign Linguistics and Deaf Studies

Address: Room 104, Academic Building No. 2, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shatin, N.T., Hong Kong

Email: **postgraduate-scholarship.apsl@cslds.org**

Tel: (852) 3943 4178

Fax: (852) 3943 4179

Please visit the following websites for more information about:

The Centre for Sign Linguistics and Deaf Studies (www.cslds.org)

The Asia Pacific Sign Linguistics Research and Training Program (www.cslds.org/apsl)

Postgraduate programs at CUHK (www2.cuhk.edu.hk/gss/)

MA, MPhil and PhD programs in Linguistics (www.cuhk.edu.hk/lin)