Good evening and welcome to this celebration of the launching of East Asian Studies at K College. I am David Strauss and I am the College's first and so far only director of East Asian Studies—a position created along with the program 2 and a half years ago. While East Asian Studies is new as a program at the College, the Kalamazoo connection with East Asia goes back to the early part of this century. Some of you may have come to understand this as I did while talking to Japanese university colleagues. When the conversation comes around to hometowns and Kalamazoo is mentioned, you expect your interlocutor to respond with either a smirk—as he might in the U.S.—or a blank expression. Instead he nods knowingly and explains that one of the greatest 20th-century Japanese novelists, Nagai Kafu, attended K in the early 20th century and wrote about the College in his Amerika Monogatari, a collection of short stories. The news is both surprising and embarrassing. How is it that our most distinguished alum should be such a well-kept secret?

In fact, Kafu came here to study French in 1904-05, though no one seems to know why. He stayed for a year, living at 121 Elm Street by the railroad tracks in a house that still stands and we gather from his Diary that he enjoyed his time here—regarding Kalamazoo as a kind of pastoral wonderland. He left his mark on College history by performing a bamboo flute (shakuhachi) solo and reading an essay entitled "The Japanese Newest Play of New Japan" (sic.) for the Century Forum, one of the College's literary societies. In this program he collaborated with his
fellow countryman, Katsuji Kato, the first East Asian to graduate from the college. Kafu's impressions of the College might be better understood if only the three short stories in which he records them were to be translated—a project which we're hoping to undertake soon.

It is important to remember that Kato and Kafu came to study western subjects. Had they wanted to take courses in the language, history and culture of their own country, they would have been stymied. K had no East Asian curriculum, though college newspapers and yearbooks provide ample evidence that East Asian art, music and customs were a matter of interest among certain students, especially those who would pursue missionary careers in the Orient.

K College continued to view its mission exclusively in terms of instructing students in their own western heritage until the postwar period. Then, two developments altered this direction ever so slightly. The first was the arrival of Wen Chao Chen in 1950. Chen offered the first courses on Asia at the College, teaching Contemporary Problems of the Far East beginning in 1960 and Far Eastern History beginning in 1971; he also helped to build the library collection in this area. The second development, the fruit of the K's membership in the Great Lakes Colleges Association, was participation in an exchange program which the GLCA negotiated with Waseda University in Tokyo—one of the most prestigious institutions in Japan. Through Waseda—and a similar center in Hong Kong—K College students could study in East Asia provided, however, that they
could teach themselves a year of Japanese or Chinese. This obstacle kept student participation in the Waseda program at an average of two students a year from 1964 to 1986, while even fewer students opted for Hong Kong. Meanwhile, each year the College hosted one Waseda student.

The arrival of Tim Light as Provost in 1986 gave an impetus to what was already a rising interest among faculty and students in East Asia. One of Tim's first steps was to appoint a faculty committee to consider the kind of East Asian program which would be appropriate and possible at the College. The committee devised a plan which included the following basic elements. 1. Regular classroom language instruction in Chinese and Japanese. The committee believed that, if there was to be a serious engagement with East Asian culture, language instruction would be fundamental. 2. The recruitment of professionally trained East Asian scholars. A sound program would require a critical mass of scholars in the field. Since there were none on the faculty, they would have to be recruited. 3. The retooling of current faculty members to teach courses on Japan or China. Such faculty development would maximize the impact of the program by involving many departments of the College. At the same time, it would make available to students who did not wish to take East Asian languages, a number of courses in English. In this way, East Asia would not be ghettoized in the curriculum. 4. An emphasis on foreign study for both faculty and students. As a significant way of understanding foreign cultures this approach would be applicable to East Asia as it always has been to Africa.
and Western Europe. 5. A rich offering of films, lectures, concerts and the organization of language houses. Classroom offerings would be enhanced by such cocurricular activities.

In the past two years, we have moved more rapidly toward the implementation of this plan than many of us had imagined would be possible at the time. In the first year, the College with the support of our colleagues, Byron Earhart, Andy Nahm, Professor Soga and President Haenecke at Western Michigan University was awarded a Japan Foundation grant to fund a position in Japanese language. In the fall of 1987, Lindsay Amthor began the first regular classroom instruction in a non-western language in the College's history. The demand from both Western and K College students exceeded expectations so that a second section of beginning Japanese had to be offered. From this first Japanese class, 10 K College and 2 Western students continued their language study as foreign students in Japan. Even before the Japan Foundation grant expired, the College received an anonymous gift which will support the teaching of Japanese on a regular basis from this time forward. With an additional matching grant from the NEH, it will also be possible for the College to bring a Japanese national trained by the Hokkaido Foundation to the campus next year to serve as a teaching assistant.

A second anonymous gift enabled the College to launch instruction in Chinese. This fall Madeline Chu began teaching Chinese to a group of 11 students. Next year, she will be assisted by a graduate of Beijing Language Institute who will be
studying as an exchange student at the College. Madeline is also teaching Chinese literature in translation to students interested in Asian culture. And we are exploiting the talents of our other China hand Tim Light who eagerly sets aside his administrative chores to teach linguistics and Traditional Chinese Thought.

A third specialist, who will teach in one of the social science disciplines will be added to the faculty after the full funding of the Chen Chair which honors our distinguished emeritus colleague.

In addition, a number of colleagues have leaped or been lured into the area of East Asian Studies on a part-time basis. These colleagues have taken advantage of leaves of absence and travel in East Asia to help them prepare their new courses. The following K faculty are already engaged in this retooling process. Nora Evers, after visiting schools in Tokyo and Morioka two years ago, has developed a course on Japanese education. Fred Strobel has visited Japan and China and converted a section of his International Commerce seminar to a consideration of the Asian rim countries. Herb Bogart is in the midst of a sabbatical leave which he is using to work up a course on the modern Japanese novel. He will be assisted in this work by a visit to Tokyo this spring. My own courses on Modern Japan and Japanese-American relations emerged from an experience as director of the GLCA-ACM Japan Study group. In addition, our new Russian historian, Michael Khodarkovsky, who studied Chinese history as part of his work on the Russian frontier, will give a
new course on China this spring.

The development of the cocurriculum proceeds as well. The College received an anonymous gift to fund a lectureship named after Nagai Kafu. With these funds and support from the College Forum and Film Society we have offered Japan Week, the third version of which you are now experiencing. It seems highly appropriate that Norm Carver, Kalamazoo's first professional East Asianist, whose photographic work on Japan dates from a Fulbright grant in 1953, should be this year's Nagai Kafu lecturer. Kafu and Carver make a good pair: the one an East Asian in hot pursuit of western culture, the other a westerner seeking enlightenment in the Orient. And Kalamazoo has a claim on both of them.

So much for the present. Where will we be going in the future? First off, we want and need additional courses from our current and future faculty. The eventual holder of the Chen chair will teach courses on the East Asian economy and society. We desperately need a course in East Asian art and invite your suggestions on how to persuade Billie Fisher to offer such a course. We also need to cover the pre-modern history of East Asia. In addition, efforts are under way to expand foreign study opportunities. The peripatetic Tim Light, who has just headed a GLCA group evaluating the Japan Study program at Waseda, is at this very moment traveling to Nagoya, Kobe and Beijing to investigate additional foreign study opportunities in China and Japan. If his efforts succeed, we should be able to offer students an array of foreign study options in East Asia.
comparable to those in Europe. Faculty foreign travel has not been ignored. In response to Madeleine Chu's proposal to conduct a group faculty foreign study trip to China, 16 colleagues--scientists and humanists--indicated a strong professional interest in going. We have just received a small grant to match the already available funds for faculty foreign study. It seems likely that 10 faculty members will make the trip to China. The Study tour will enable faculty to make contact with counterparts at Chinese universities and to investigate future faculty and student exchanges. Because of strong interest among students now studying in Japan, the College will open its first Japan House this summer in a location near the campus so that students can live together and speak Japanese while taking their regular classes at the College.

And what can we say about the impact of these developments, past, present and future on the institution? They are substantial. Most students will now have the opportunity to learn about East Asia by taking one or two courses during their undergraduate careers. Others will study East Asian languages so that they can become specialists and pursue careers in the field. Both options are now possible. But K College remains an institution which aspires to make our own western heritage meaningful to students. Most of the curriculum will continue to explore and explain western culture. With the introduction of an East Asian program, however, the task will be undertaken in a different setting. Students and faculty will bring to the
study of the west a greater knowledge of Japan and China. The nature of Western materials and approaches will be more clearly understood through comparison and contrast with non-western models. There will be more emphasis on encounters between western and non-western cultures. The study of such encounters makes particularly good sense in a world in which all of us will be experiencing them more frequently. It is then altogether appropriate that, while the College has been putting together the pieces of its East Asian program, it continues to have the largest undergraduate African Studies program in the U.S. and this fall was designated by the Department of Education as the only four year institution in the country to become a center for Western European studies. As these developments indicate, the College is committed to maintaining its strength in Western European studies while forging interesting and attractive opportunities to study the rest of the world. For now the East Asia program is well launched at the College and, on behalf of my colleagues, I thank all of you for your support in this important endeavor.