

Asian Studies Newsletter

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Program News

Kidder Smith

With this issue of the Asian Studies *Newsletter* we'll bring you up to date on recent developments at Bowdoin – the program, faculty and students. Next spring we'll once more compile news from alums as well.

Our program continues to grow. In September we'll be joined by De-nin Lee, holding a joint appointment with Art History. She'll teach a wide variety of courses on East and also South Asian art. Her research focuses on hand-scrolls and how they have been interpreted and re-interpreted over the last thousand years of history. Her husband, Jack Kline, is an accomplished scholar of Chinese philosophy, and he will also be offering some courses for us.

We have hired a remarkable historian of South Asia, Rachel Sturman, though she won't be joining us until the fall of 2004. Her appointment will regularize the South Asian part of our program. While Rachel is completing a post-doc at the University of Michigan next year, Lisa Mitchell will be teaching South Asian courses for us.

As our Chinese and Japanese language enrollments grow, we have come to need assistants to help out with instruction. Next year, on a trial basis, we will be joined by two language fellows, Shang Cheng and Reiko Yoshida. Their presence will allow us to offer four solid years of both Chinese and Japanese.

In the spring we will also welcome James Lee, who will be commuting from Harvard to teach a course on the history of Korea from the early twentieth century to the present.

The Freeman Foundation grant that we were awarded last year contained support for a half-time grant manager. The college has expanded this position to three-quarters time, and James Kim, most recently of the Education School at Harvard, will be serving as grant administrator and advisor to Asian-American students.

Congratulations to Shuqin Cui and Henry Laurence, the first newly tenured Asian Studies professors in ten years! We're delighted for them, and hope that their successes will be followed by many others. Henry will soon chair Asian Studies, starting his three-year appointment this summer.

Sad to say, Shen Rui will be leaving us after two great years teaching Chinese language and culture. She'll go to Gettysburg College, where she will pioneer their Chinese language program.

Every ten years or so the departments and programs of the college are reviewed by a team of outside evaluators. This year was our turn. In the materials we provided the team, we claimed that "Bowdoin has a damn fine Asian Studies program!" We're pleased

to report that they agreed enthusiastically with our boast.

Another new faculty hire is likely. In the fall we will begin looking for someone to teach in an area we are tentatively calling "East Asian diaspora studies." The intention is to address the ways that the things that make up culture – people, ideas, money, food – move back and forth between East Asia and the United States. This circulation has

certainly been the experience of most of you, as you travel, study, work, consume and enjoy in many "languages." More on that development in the next *Newsletter*.

Faculty News

Tom Conlan has returned from a productive sabbatical, mostly spent in Kyoto, and continues his research on esoteric Buddhism and political legitimacy in Japan from 1246-1466. He expects to complete a draft of this work within the year. His second book, *State of War: The Violent Order of Fourteenth Century Japan*, should be published from the University of Michigan, Center for Japanese Studies, sometime this fall. His first work, *In Little Need of Divine Intervention*, is about to go through a second printing. Returning to Bowdoin has proved invigorating. Tom taught two courses this past spring: his survey course on the origins of Japanese culture and civilization, and also explored Japan's relations with the rest of the world, beginning with Perry's nineteenth century contact with Japan, and going back to the eighth century. After an enjoyable sabbatical, Tom and Yuko are happy to be back in Maine with a new addition to their family, George Donald Conlan, who was born in October.

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Shuqin Cui: After a year teaching at Bowdoin as a visiting associate professor, Shuqin has decided to take the college and Brunswick as her home. During the academic year of 2002-2003, she offered courses on Chinese cinema and modern China and successfully went through the tenure review process. As one of our Dean's said, "Congratulations on your tenure! Not too many people can say that they have been awarded tenure twice in one year!"

The year of 2003 has also seen her book, *Women Through the Lens: Gender and Nation in a Century of Chinese Cinema*, released by the University of Hawai'i Press. In addition, two articles, one on

Zhang Yimou's *Raise the Red Lantern* and another on Ning Ying's *Urban Trilogy*, are forthcoming. She is eager to begin her second manuscript, tentatively titled: *Body and Text: Women & Writing in Modern China*.

This summer, Shuqin is going to serve as academic director for the CET Summer Program in Washington, D.C. In the fall, she will offer Women and Writing in Modern China and an upper-level language course. She is currently designing a course on Popular Culture in Post-Socialist China.

Besides her academic life, she is looking for a permanent home in Brunswick and needs to practice how to drive in the winter.

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Songren Cui is delighted to be back after a year of sabbatical leave. In February 2003, the intermediate Chinese textbook *Shifting Tide: Culture in Contemporary China* that he coauthored with Hong Gang Jin, De Bao Xu, et al was published. His second textbook *Business Chinese: An Advanced Reader* has already been under contract and will soon be published. While enjoying the luxury of being away from teaching during his sabbatical, he has been working hard on a major project, the development of a pedagogical grammar for teaching Chinese as a foreign/second language. Songren is excited to see the new changes to the Chinese program – the addition of a language fellow and the fourth year Chinese language course, thanks to the support of the administration and the effort of both faculty and students. He is looking forward to teaching again, particularly the new course.

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Sara Dickey's new course this spring, *Activist Voices in India*, allowed her to explore a number of new topics and methods in the class. It provided a chance to analyze contemporary social and political issues in India, to pay close attention to individual texts (including fiction, essays, and films), and to scrutinize the construction of political messages in those texts. Case studies examined environmental, gender, religious, queer, and labor activism and mobilization. Students also explored their own ideas about the goals and means of activism. Sara's research continues to focus on class identities and relations in India, and Sara is keeping her fingers crossed that a book draft will be finished this summer. Over the next two years she will be teaching half-time and helping to develop an undergraduate social science research center at Bowdoin.

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Lance Guo has branched out this year from his usual courses on China's politics and foreign relations to teach a new course on the politics of Southeast Asia.

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John Holt received an honorary doctoral degree (D.Litt) from the University of Peradeniya in Sri Lanka this past December in recognition of his contributions to Buddhist and Sri Lankan Studies. Bowdoin has also recently named him the William R. Kenan, Jr., Professor of Humanities in Religion and Asian Studies. Along with Jonathan Walters (Bowdoin, '83) and Jacob Kinnard (Bowdoin '85), Prof. Holt has edited and just published a collection of essays entitled "Constituting Communities: Theravada Buddhism and the Religious Cultures of South and Southeast Asia" (State University of New York Press). He also presented papers at the University of Wisconsin and Chulalongkorn University in Thailand this past fall, the first on the development of bodhisattva imagery in ancient Andhra (South India) and the second on the cult of Visnu in the Buddhist religious culture of Sri Lanka.

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Henry Laurence: I have very much enjoyed another year teaching Japanese Politics and seminars in East Asian Politics and Human Rights in East Asia. A high point has been discussing my recent research on media coverage of the Comfort Women issue in these seminars. I am working on a new book comparing

NHK to the BBC and the American networks, and still writing occasionally on financial politics in Asia.

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Laura Kim Lee: During the spring semester, I taught Asian American history, 1850-present, the first course in Asian American history offered at Bowdoin. The course surveyed the immigration, labor, and community experiences of Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, and Asian Indian immigrants, the Second World War and its impact on Asian Americans, especially the internment of Japanese Americans, post-1965 "new" immigration from China, the Philippines, Korea, and India, war in Southeast Asia and Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Hmong refugee communities, Asian American identity and politics, and other contemporary issues such as adoption and multiracial identities. For an oral history project, students interviewed an Asian American subject and wrote a paper placing his or her life within the larger trends of Asian American history. Many students found the challenge of reconciling individual experience with group patterns and historical narrative particularly rewarding. A small group of students also enjoyed a field trip to Portland to view the recently released *Better Luck Tomorrow*, the first Asian American film to be picked up by the Sundance Film Festival and the first film with an all Asian American cast to be widely distributed by a studio in a long time.

This summer I plan to enjoy the good weather with my husband and 10-month-old son in our new home.

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Takeyoshi Nishiuchi taught well-received courses on the Nô Theater and Zen Aesthetics. Sad to say, next year will be his last at Bowdoin, as he will be returning to live in San Francisco.

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Clifton Olds: We have hired De-nin Lee as our new Asian art historian, a joint appointment with the Art Department and Asian Studies. She will take over the teaching of Asian art, and will introduce a new course in the art monuments of Asia, including South and Southeast Asia as well as East Asia. I will teach my seminar in the art of Zen one more time, in the spring of next year, but that will be my last term of teaching at Bowdoin.

I have completed the revision and expansion of my website on the historic Japanese gardens of Nara

and Kyoto, partly as a result of my participation in a seminar on Japanese gardens held at the Kyoto University of Art and Design last October. The updated website has an additional seven gardens, bringing the total to 24. The new site is also easier to navigate and has a number of new features. The URL is the same: <http://academic.bowdoin.edu/zen>
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Nancy Riley has been on sabbatical leave during the 2002-3 academic year. She has spent the year in Honolulu, where she is a visiting scholar at the East-West Center and a Rockefeller fellow in the Gender and Globalization Program at the University of Hawai'i Women's Studies Program. (While she has missed the year's nasty winter in Maine, she has somehow managed to make it through in Hawai'i, in spite of the beautiful weather and wonderful food.) This year she has been working on a book-length manuscript dealing with women factory workers in Dalian, China and has done some other writing, including an article on China's population situation and one on India's use of survey data. She will return to Bowdoin in the fall 2003 and, among other courses, will be teaching another course on China which will include a 5-week trip to Asia. This year there were twice as many applicants for the course as in the

previous year. She is watching the SARS situation closely!
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Natsu Sato finished her first year at Bowdoin. She taught first through third year Japanese language courses. She proposed a new position for a Japanese Language Fellow and conducted the search. Starting the fall 2003 semester, we will be joined by Ms. Reiko Yoshida from the University of Westchester, PA.
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Kidder Smith taught two new courses this spring, on shamanism and on Chinese poetry. Wonderful new materials, wonderful students. In the fall he'll do another new one called "Investigating Subjective Experience," which examines the various ways we come to know things. His article on the earliest conceptualizations of Chinese schools of thought appeared this spring in the *Journal of Asian Studies*. After some years chairing Asian Studies he will relinquish that privilege to Henry Laurence at the end of June.
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Announcements about Current Majors

Andrew Dunn received high honors for his project entitled "*Market Reforms and the Rise of Consumer Culture in Beijing P.R.C.*" He began investigations while studying in China last year and returned last summer for further research, supported by a Freeman Foundation grant. His able advisors were Sara Dickey and Shuqin Cui. Congratulations, Andrew!

Special Thanks

We would like to express our appreciation to the Freeman Foundation for their generous Freeman-Undergraduate Asian Studies Funding Initiatives, and to Mark S. Tannenbaum '88 and Robert M. Sargent '58, for their generous support of the Asian Studies Program.

Asian Studies Alumni/ae List



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