Dear Asian Studies Program members,

I hope this newsletter finds you well and engaged in your studies and research. As the summer season approaches, I write to share some updates from the Asian Studies Program at Bowdoin College.

**Letter from the Chair**

Shu-chin Tsui

After returning from my sabbatical leave last fall, I began to serve as chair of the Asian Studies Program. One year in the post has made me realize how challenging the position can be. With administrative guidance from the former chair, Prof. Tom Conlan, and with the support from my colleagues, however, I have learned to enjoy meeting the needs of both faculty and students and administering the program.

**The Program**

Prof. Conlan built a strong foundation and increased the size of the program. The 2007–08 academic year confirmed Tom’s statement, “We remain strong and growth continues.” A total of 25 students graduated this year with majors or minors in Asian Studies, a record high in our history. In addition, two students, Rong Li and Matthew Gray, conducted honors thesis projects under the guidance of faculty members Christian Potholm, Natsu Sato, Vyjayanthi Selinger, Kidder Smith, and Shu-chin Tsui. Each successfully passed the thesis defense. Rong Li’s was “Security Implications of Future Force Development in the Era of Revolution in Military Affairs: A Dialectical Comparative Analysis of the United States and the People’s Republic of China,” and Matthew Gray’s was “The Mount Oe Picture Scrolls: An Annotated Translation and Commentary.” In terms of enrollment this past academic year, we had a total of 488 students taking courses in Asian Studies, with 58 students taking Chinese, and 53 students taking Japanese.

I’d also like to share the good news that the college has authorized half-time lecturer positions in both Chinese and Japanese in support of our four-year-level language curriculum. In other good news for faculty,

I congratulate Belinda Kong for her reappointment as assistant professor in English and Asian Studies and Natsu Sato for promotion to senior lecturer in Japanese language. (Natsu will take a one-year leave for a teaching position at Canadian Academy).

**Lectures**

With generous support from the Luce Foundation, during the 2007–08 academic year we presented our largest-ever number of lectures, a concert, and other events. Dai Sil Kim-Gibson delivered a lecture on “Comfort Women: Memory and History.” Christopher Bolton from Williams College gave a presentation on “Anime’s Haunted Battlefield—Blood: The Last Vampire.” Nicholas Young from Great Britain spoke on “China’s Struggle to Contain Citizen Activism.” Susan Burggraf visited Kidder Smith’s class to discuss “Psychology in Tibetan Buddhism.” Douglas Brooks gave a talk on “Ways of Learning: An Apprentice Boat Builder in Japan.” In May, Joy Kogawa engaged the audience with “Joy Kogawa in Conversation,” and E. Valentine Daniel from Columbia University offered a talk on “The Long Walk: Tamil Coolies in Sri Lanka.” In addition to this long list of lectures, Asian Studies invited renowned pipa player Min Xiao-Fen and her trio to conduct a Blue Pipa Trio concert. One audience member said that this was the best concert he had attended at the College.

**Departures and Arrivals**

As the spring semester drew to a close, we said good-bye to a number of faculty members, and especially Prof. Kidder Smith, who retired to Ann Arbor, Michigan, after 25 years of service to the College and leadership in the program. Kidder’s contributions to the program are immeasurable and irreplaceable. We will always remember Kidder as a renowned scholar in Chinese history and a true gentleman. We
also said good-bye to Professors Sunil Goonasekera, Mitch Numark, Lili Selden, and our language instructor, Hongyun Sun. We cannot thank them enough for coming to us at a time of great need due to leaves or replacements. We wish them all the best as they return to their home institutions or relocate to new positions. Meanwhile, we welcome Ms. Karen May-Shen Teoh, a Ph.D. from Harvard, who will join us as a post-doctoral fellow for two years. In the fall she will offer “Making Modern China,” and next spring “The Modern Girl and Female Citizen in China and Japan.” A welcome also goes to Xiaoke Jia from Beijing Normal University, who will be on board as a lecturer in Chinese language, and to Jun Ono as a full-time lecturer in Japanese language.

Special Thanks
My special thanks go first to our alumni, Daniel A. Heyler ‘87, Mark S. Tannenbaum ‘88, and Mary Beth McNamara Watt ‘92, who generously donated individual gifts to the Asian Studies Program. Their funding has been well used according to their wishes. I’d like also to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to our coordinator, Suzanne Astolfi. The program could not function smoothly without her care and skills. Thanks to Lorna Lavigne, our housekeeper, for keeping the building cleaner and more comfortable than anyone has done before. Thanks to Sharon Whitney, Dian Petty, Bowdoin Friends, and the Keepers of the Garden group for their commitment to the care of the Japanese garden for many years. My special thanks go to our alumni and former students for their continued support. Please share with us your stories and news. Stop by when you return for a reunion or a visit, ideally when the weather is warm. Looking ahead, I see numerous challenges relating to expanding, strengthening, and enhancing the program and the curriculum. I’ll keep you informed wherever you are in the world.

Tom is having a most enjoyable and productive sabbatical. He completed a book entitled Weapons and Fighting Techniques of the Samurai Warriors to be published by a popular press, and also plans to have his manuscript From Sovereign To Symbol: Regalia, Ritual and the Struggle for Secrecy in Fourteenth Century Japan under contract soon. In addition to wrapping up these projects, Tom wrote three book reviews, and gave talks at the University of Pennsylvania and in Atlanta during the Association for Asian Studies Conference. He also spoke about Japan for a battalion departing from the Brunswick Naval Air Station to Japan, and discussed the Mongol Scrolls as part of the Primary Source lecture series “Imaging Modern Japan.” He spent a month conducting research in Japan this spring, and hopes to finish his article about medieval Japanese warfare for the Cambridge History of War before returning to teaching at Bowdoin in the fall. Tom feels fortunate that he, his wife Yuko, and son George remain happy and healthy.

Songren taught three courses again this year, which left him little time to do research. He is, however, delighted to see that all Chinese language students in his classes, from first year to third year, have made noticeable progress. In addition, while we have had a stable enrollment, more and more students have gone, or are going to China or Taiwan to study. He hopes that we can keep this momentum and have more students studying Chinese language and culture.

Chinese language and culture.
Sara has been on sabbatical this year and has used her time to write, to read new literature on class and on cinema in South Asia, and to set up some projects in India. She has been working on three projects this year:
1. An initial exploration of the ways in which Tamil film-watching and the meanings of film consumption have changed since economic liberalization in India.
2. A review of the voluminous scholarly literature on Indian cinema published in the past 15 years. Interestingly, almost
all of this literature focuses on “Bollywood” (a term that loosely refers to Hindi films produced in Mumbai, especially those aimed at relatively elite audiences), even though a greater number of films are produced annually in some of the other languages, especially Tamil and Telugu.

3. A continuing exploration of class identities and relations in urban South India, now expanding to a comparative study among three different cities in Tamil Nadu.

Sara spent the fall and (early) winter reading and writing about scholarship on South Asian film. During this time she also organized an upcoming volume of South Asian Popular Culture on cinemas in South Asia, and is really looking forward to reading a wide range of submissions on aspects of film consumption that haven’t received much attention before. In March and April Sara was able to spend five weeks in India, first reviewing an IES study-abroad program in Delhi, then catching up with acquaintances and films in Madurai, and finally investigating future research contacts in Coimbatore and Chennai, two cities that are seen as more “modern” than Madurai and where class identities vary accordingly.

Back in the U.S., she worked on completing articles on changing middle class identities in urban Tamil Nadu, and on indigenous Tamil concepts of “class.” This summer she and her son Daniel will spend their usual month in Boise with her family, and then in the fall Sara will teach Indian Cinema and Society and Class and Culture. Next spring she will be back in Madurai, Coimbatore, and Chennai, carrying out what she expects will be the final stages of her research project on class identities and relations. She will also spend some time interviewing film personnel in Chennai (including film directors, music directors, and signboard painters and printers) in order to explore their perceptions of class divisions within the industry and in the region at large. This will be a way of pulling together the two major threads of her research.

**Sara Padma**

Belinda completed her third year at Bowdoin with two new courses, the first-year seminar Shanghai Imagined and the 200-level Asian-American Female Gothic. These two courses complemented two previously offered ones, Asian Diaspora Literature of WWII and Writing China from Afar, to round out her teaching for the year. Belinda continues to be impressed by, and learn from, the intellectual vibrancy of students at Bowdoin.

On the research front, two of her articles appeared in print this academic year, “Traveling Man, Traveling Culture: Death of a Salesman & Post-Mao Chinese Theater” and “The Asian-American Hyphen Goes Gothic: Ghosts and Doubles in Maxine Hong Kingston and lê thi diem thúy.” She also presented a paper at the Logics of the Living conference at Cornell in October and, closer to home, a paper on “Narrating the Comfort Women” as a faculty seminar at Bowdoin this April. All in all, it has been a stimulating and productive year. Next academic year, Belinda will be on sabbatic leave (which she is keenly looking forward to) and finishing her book manuscript on the Chinese literary diaspora.

**John Holt**

John was in Sri Lanka during this spring semester directing the ISLE Program for the fourth time since he established the program back in 1982. He was interviewed recently by Newsweek, the Austrian Broadcast corporation, as well as several academic online news sources regarding the rise of politically militant Buddhism in Asia.

In the fall, he was named the University of Chicago Divinity School Alumnus of the Year and traveled to Chicago to deliver a public lecture. The book manuscript he recently finished, *The Spirit(s) of the Place: Understanding Buddhism in Lao Religious Culture*, has been accepted for publication by the University of Hawaii Press and will appear in 2009. His tenth book, *Sri Lanka: History, Politics and Culture*, will be published by Duke University Press in 2010.

**Henry Laurence**

Henry is enjoying life on sabbatical at the Nissan Institute of Japanese Studies at Oxford University where he has been working on his manuscript for a book on the BBC, NHK, and PBS.

**De-nin Lee**

Thanks to a junior sabbatic leave in 2006–07 supported by a Fulbright grant and by Bowdoin, De-nin has completed her
She was happy to be back teaching, and the past year was exciting. In addition to offering a new course on Arts of China, she instructed a museum-based seminar on Chinese painting. Together with her colleague at Colby, Ankeney Weitz, and her students, they are curating an exhibition, *Ink Tales*, to open at the museums of both colleges in Spring 2009. Their seminar has also been enriched by participation of numerous professionals including Andrew Hare of the Freer and Sackler Galleries of the Smithsonian Institution, Cary Liu of the Princeton Museum of Art, and Joe Scheier-Dolberg of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Bowdoin's Community Service Resource Center also helped put them in touch with Brian McPherson at Woodside Elementary School to advise them on creating a children's guide for the exhibition. Numerous internal and external grants along with the dean's year-long program, "Visual Culture in the 21st Century," were instrumental in making this seminar possible. Finally, they have received excellent assistance from the staffs at the museums of both colleges.

The re-opening of the Bowdoin College Museum of Art has had a tremendous impact on her work. Apart from the seminar, De-nin curated one of the opening exhibitions, “Transformations: Traditional and Contemporary Chinese Art in Dialog,” which featured several new acquisitions alongside paintings and prints that have rarely been seen. She assisted with additional new acquisitions including 67 Japanese prints, primarily from Hiroshige’s series of *One Hundred Views of Edo* and a sutra dated to the Heian period. It has been enormously satisfying to see the museum’s collection of Asian art grow.

Finally, De-nin is pleased to have helped bring Shahzia Sikander to campus as this spring’s Santagata lecturer. Ms. Sikander’s extraordinary body of socially and politically charged art asks us to think deeply about the complex confrontation of religious traditions, gender roles, and modernity.

**Mitch Numark**

During the 2007–2008 academic year, Mitch taught three courses new to Bowdoin, *The Jewish Diaspora: Unity and Diversity, India to 1707: History of Traditional India, and Religion and Modernity in South Asia and the Middle East*. He presented papers at the Politics of Religion-Making Conference in October 2007 and at the Association for Asian Studies Conference in April 2008. In addition to presenting a paper, he organized a panel for the Association for Asian Studies Conference entitled, “Colonial Bombay in Indian History.” In March 2008 he gave a talk on Jewish life in India at Beth Israel Synagogue in Bangor, Maine. He is currently completing articles and book chapters.

**Sree Padma**

Sree Padma did a lot of travel this spring. In the last issue, she mentioned traveling in Laos in the month of February. After that, she returned to Bowdoin for six weeks to prepare for the annual ISLE board meeting. In April and May, she and her husband, Prof. John Holt, spent four weeks at the Rockefeller Foundation’s study center in Bellagio, Italy, and traveled a couple of weeks in northern Italy as well. At the study center, they had a very productive and enjoyable time writing up their research projects, listening to various lectures and entering into discussions with scholars of an international caliber.

Sree Padma spent most of last summer in Maine orienting the fall ISLE students. In the fall, she offered a course on Women and Goddesses in Hindu Religious Tradition. This course is connected to her research project on goddess traditions in Andhra Pradesh on which she is currently working whenever she can find some spare time.

**Natsu Sato**

Natsu Sato had another wonderful year teaching highly motivated students. She is happy to report that more and more students are utilizing their language skills in their studies (writing an honor’s thesis on classical Japanese texts or doing research on a Fulbright scholarship) as well as careers (teaching English in Japan through the JET Program).

Outside teaching, Natsu was busy serving on the Maine-Aomori Sister-State Advisory Council to Gov. John Baldacci. In October, she traveled to Japan with the governor and his
delegation on their trade and cultural exchange missions. She also enjoyed working with children’s book authors Toshiki Sawada and Scott Nash as their mediator/translator in their effort to create a bilingual picture book sponsored by Maine and Aomori governments.

Natsu will be on leave next academic year, teaching Japanese at Canadian Academy in Kobe, Japan. She has been invited to participate in the strategic planning process at the academy and is looking forward to this new experience.

**LILI SELDEN**

Lili Selden, freelance translator and premodern Japan specialist, was a visiting scholar during the spring semester. Despite this being one of the longest, hardest winters in recent memory, Lily greatly enjoyed her stay in Brunswick, thanks to the friendly and intellectually rewarding environment on campus. In addition to teaching 20th Century Japanese Film & Fiction and Advanced Japanese, Prof. Selden co-edited a book translation for a Japanese publishing house and translated an article for a social science journal. Her next project is to annotate translations of selected wartime film criticisms by three prominent Japanese film critics.

**VYJAYANTHI SELINGER**

This was a special year for Vyjayanthi Selinger. She saw the students she first encountered in second-year Japanese three years ago walk in their graduation gowns. Having watched them grow as thinkers and global citizens through three years of coursework in Asian Studies and Japanese language, she is excited to see the multiple ways in which their career paths will involve Asia.

She kicked off the year by presenting at an international symposium on Japanese literature at Harvard University in August 2007. The paper she presented then grew into an article on how sword tropes were used in medieval Japan to legitimate the samurai order. This essay appeared in the premier Japanese journal, *Kokubungaku*, in a special issue on the literature of the samurai. Vyjayanthi intends to continue publishing in both Japanese and in English, thereby reaching scholarly audiences in both Japan and the United States.

Vyjayanthi gave birth to her second child, Issac Anand, in April. The summer promises to be a busy one, as she continues work on her book manuscript and takes care of the new addition to her family.

**HONGYUN SUN**

Hongyun Sun has enjoyed being a part of the Bowdoin community for the past two years. She had a wonderful time. She truly appreciates her colleagues, friends, and students who enriched her life in Maine. Now she is moving to Boston where she will start teaching at Harvard University.

**RACHEL STURMAN**

Rachel Sturman had a productive and energizing junior sabbatical year. Spending much of the year engrossed in revising her book manuscript, *Law’s Subjects: Property, Personhood and Family in the Making of Modern India*, for publication, she nonetheless completed several other writing projects, including an article on the subject of “Marriage and Family in Colonial Hindu Law” for the *Cambridge Handbook on Law and Hinduism*, and an article for the journal *Feminist Studies* entitled, “Theorizing Human Value: The Colonial Jurisprudence of Hindu Marriage.” In addition, she enjoyed the opportunity to present her work at a roundtable on “Liberalism, Empire and the Formation of the Political Subject” at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association, and she began the process of organizing a forum in the journal *Gender & History* on the theme of “Gender and the Human.” She is excited to be returning to full-time teaching in the fall, bringing new texts and perspectives to her courses on modern South Asia.

**SHU-CHIN TSUI**

Returning from a sabbatical in 2006–2007, Shu-chin resumed a full load of teaching and stepped into the position of chair of the Asian Studies Program. Among the articles and book chapters completed during her sabbatical leave, she is happy to see two in print: “Negotiating In-Between: On New-generation Filmmaking and Jia Zhangke’s Films,” in *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture*, and “Kekexili: Moral Dilemma and a Man with a Camera,” in *Chinese Films in Focus-2*. In addition, she recently finished another article, entitled “Alternative Visions and Representation: Independent Documentary Filmmaking in Contemporary China.”

During the last academic year, Shu-chin experimented with designing the fourth-year Chinese as subject-oriented courses. She offered Business Chinese in Fall 2007 and Reading of Contemporary Chinese Cinema in Spring 2008. Approached as both content and language entities, each course has challenged her to find effective teaching pedagogy and create suitable learning materials. In addition to the language courses, Shu-chin offered Perspectives on Modern China in the fall.
and Cultural Topics in Contemporary China in the spring. The topics discussed engaged students closely with contemporary culture in China, where urban construction, experimental art, fashion/dress codes, and commercial trends exemplify how China has moved from Mao’s socialist state to a post-socialist society. Teaching, writing, and administrative responsibilities have kept her busy. The only authoritative force able to draw her back home is her two dear brother/sister kittens: Doudou and Diandian.

With an award from Bowdoin’s Fletcher Research Fund, Shu-chin is in China for a summer research trip, as well as to make any possible contribution toward alleviating the terrible suffering caused by the recent earthquake.
Ann Sargen Slayton
“I am living and working on the coast of Downeast Maine. I am enjoying life with my two children, Hattie (6) and Beckett (9). My work is not related to the field of Asian studies but I often draw on the invaluable experiences in Sri Lanka to understand the cultures within cultures in my region of the world. I work as the director of our local school’s adult education program. We program from basic adult literacy and ESOL to high school completion, college transitions, office skills, C.N.A. and college classes. I did start a series through our enrichment program of international cuisine in an effort to celebrate the diversity within our homogeneous society. We have Nigeria, Cameroon, Japan, Russia, Italy, Mexico, India all taught by authentic cooks, passionate about sharing their culture through food to the local community.”

Suzanne Fox
“Hard to grasp that I have been involved with China now for half of my life! Since 1985, as one of the three pioneers on that first study abroad program to Beijing, I have been working in China or with the Chinese. My company, Fox Intercultural Consulting Services, specializes in US–China understanding—helping businesses and individuals on both sides of the globe succeed in understanding the subtle cultural nuances, etiquette issues, and differences in communication styles between these two cultures. My Web site is www.foxintercultural.net and I would love to hear from any fellow Bowdoin folks.”

Katherine Shao
“I am enjoying life in Arlington, Mass. as I juggle many responsibilities as mom, musician, and my “day job” at Forrester Research! Haven’t been to China in years, but if you’re doing business there, I would love to connect with you as this is an area of interest for me.”

David Herrmann
“I’m still plugging away at my dissertation here in Madison, under the critical eye of Professor Nienhauser (I guess I don’t get to use his first name as long as I am his advisee). I’m researching some tales from an important collection of Tang narratives—close readings like Glen Dudbridge did with “Li Wa zhuan,” searching for echoes in the Tang literary corpus.

I got to work with Charlie Hallisey (now back at Harvard) last school year, and then lectured (Genres of Asian Religious Writing) for Mark Csikszentmihalyi last Spring. This year I have mainly been a full-time stay-at-home dad with a six, three and one year old, so work time and continuity of thought are a bit scarce these days. I look forward to (one day!) having a job and actually getting paid for my work. Chapter 3 of 5 is about done, and I hope to be done and ready to revise by the end of the summer. And though I’m beyond ready to move on career-wise, staying in Madison is our top priority. We’ll see how it all works out.”

Lynn Moloney
“Last fall I married Kartik Seshan, a classmate from business school. His family hails from India, and his parents were thrilled that I had so much knowledge of their traditions and religion, all gained through the Asian Studies Program at Bowdoin (where I concentrated in South Asian religions). We had our first wedding in September in Connecticut, followed by a traditional Hindu ceremony in Bangalore, India, in November. It’s been great recalling knowledge of Vedic texts and various gods and goddesses as we’ve toured temples on our last few visits. Many thanks to Professor Holt!”
William Watt
“I am still in Fukuoka, Japan but will be moving to Tokyo soon to start a new position in business development for an Indian custom chemistry company. I left my previous position at a company called GNI Ltd., a Japan- and Shanghai-based drug development company, where I was engaged in global strategic alliances and licensing. India is looking like a real up-and-coming force and it will be exciting to help Oxygen Healthcare Ltd. build its presence here in Japan.”

Jill DeTemple
“I’m still teaching in the Religious Studies Department at Southern Methodist University, and enjoying life in Dallas. Husband Brian, big sister Molly, and I welcomed John Alexander into the family last May, when he arrived just on schedule after I had turned in my final grades for the year. We’ll all be headed to Brunswick this May for my 15th reunion.”

Justin Mallen
“SRT, the company I founded in 2000, continues to grow strongly in China. We are now the leading corporate wireless value-added-services provider in China, with over 600 employees in 16-plus provinces. We continue to partner with China Mobile and China’s other telecom carriers to provide our leading edge proprietary MEG (mobile enterprise gateway) solution. Over the last few years, I’ve spoken at the World Economic Forum in Dalian (dubbed the Davos of China), been interviewed by CNN and the Wall Street Journal, and have spoken to MBA students at Haas Business School. On a personal note, my wife and I have 2 wonderful children—who are growing up speaking both Chinese and English. If anyone is on their way to or already in China, please feel free to drop a line: jmallen@srt.com.cn. Also, we are more than happy to take interns for anyone who is interested in learning about China business.”

Elizabeth Dahm
“I married William Wang in September 2007, and am now Elizabeth Dahm Wang. My husband and I live in Los Angeles, where I work as a producer at Seven Studios, a video game developer, and my husband works at Activision. Shameless plug: If anyone is interested in getting more involved in games, shoot me an email—it’s a vibrant industry that is looking for talented artists, programmers, designers, and producers. Many companies have offices both in the U.S. and across Asia!”

William Bao Bean
“It’s been a year since we started up the Bowdoin Club of Asia and so far we have had 3 happy hours in Hong Kong and two in Shanghai. For me, I have taken on two interns from Bowdoin (one of whom successfully landed an internship the following summer with Deutsche Bank in Hong Kong), and with your help we hope to place more. Anyone willing to take people on or looking for an internship, please let me know. For updates sign up for the official Bowdoin email distribution list at http://list.bowdoin.edu/mailman/listinfo/careernetasia and you can also find us under Bowdoin Club of Asia on Facebook. As for me, I moved the whole family from Hong Kong to Shanghai at the end of last year. It’s been a year now with Softbank China & India Holdings, an early-stage venture capital firm backed by Softbank of Japan and Cisco and founded by a couple of colleagues from Deutsche Bank. We focus on early-stage investments in the tech, media, telecom, and consumer segments in China, India and Southeast Asia and I spend most of my time in China and Vietnam.”

Emily Kasper
“I moved from Asia to Europe last year.”

Ellen Chan
“I am in the middle of my pediatric cardiology fellowship at UCLA. I am engaged to Cali Tran, class of 1997, who is also an Asian Studies alum. He lives in Boston and has joined a venture capital firm there called Northbridge. We will be married in Vancouver in September 2009.”
ANDREW MUNTON
“I recently finished my MBA in global management at Babson College, and am now working at a strategic advisory and management consulting firm started by the famous futurist Alvin Toffler, called Toffler Associates. We do a variety of future-oriented strategy projects for a mix of commercial and government clients, with a heavy focus on clients in the defense, intelligence, and aerospace sectors. I work primarily from Boston and D.C., and would love to catch up with any alumni who are in either area. My wife Linda and I will also be traveling to China soon for the first time in over ten years, and are looking forward to seeing how things have changed.”

MEREDITH KUBA
“I will graduate with my Ph.D. in chemistry from the University of Hawaii in May 2008. The title of my dissertation is ‘Characterization and Mechanistic Studies of Titanium-Doped Sodium Alanate’.”

HAN JIN LEW
“I am working at Allianz Global Investors Korea and also doing club party promotion on the side.”

JESSICA FARMER
“I am beginning the second year of my master’s program at the Fletcher school, focusing on Pacific Asia and Public International Law. I worked for an environmental NGO in Beijing last summer, studying the impacts of land tenure reform on the bamboo sector and am hoping to move back after graduation assuming some kind person will give me a job.”

ZEKE YUSAH
“I’m currently a senior associate at H-Line Ogilvy, one of the main China offices of Ogilvy PR Worldwide. Since graduating from Bowdoin in 2002, I’ve been in China’s marketing industry for almost four years, having started off as an account manager for a local events planning firm, moving onto strategy consulting for China’s largest PR consultancy (BlueFocus, formerly part of Porter Novelli Worldwide), then later joining a global PR giant where I’m leading “issues management” for the Microsoft China corporate account.

I’ve seen a lot during my 5 years here in the ‘middle kingdom,’ having started my career as a humble schoolteacher at one of Hebei’s technical schools where they had me edit English legal documents and tutor local English teachers on how to properly teach ‘English for Business.’ The time I spent in the cramped and polluted city of Shijiazhuang (reportedly one of the world’s most polluted cities) was a life-changing experience. Almost like alchemy…

Now, I find myself in the middle kingdom’s dynamic business world, where I’m often asked to come up with strategic communications and creative marketing tactics for prominent multinational IT companies in China (like Microsoft, Samsung, Intel, and more). The project I’m most proud of was when I was consulting for Lenovo in their preliminary planning stages for the Beijing Olympics torch relay. I helped with publicity for the torch’s design (done by Lenovo engineers), co-drafted plans for Lenovo’s digital communications, and conducted think-tank sessions for crisis management for the torch relay’s global route.

I still think of Bowdoin a lot here. Having been a ‘mediocre student,’ I try hard to remember the valuable lessons of Asian Studies professors like Kiddier, Henry Laurence, and most of all Prof. Songren Cui. But in other ways, I’m also proud of committing a lot of time to Bowdoin’s extracurricular activities … knowing that my years as class president and Asian Students Association (ASA) head also contributed to my development here.
My newsletter entry this year is dedicated for Bowdoin students like my younger brother Willi Yusah who is graduating in 2008. I feel that, unlike the classic “PR storyline” I provided in the paragraphs above, we alums all have an in-depth tale of professional success and personal happiness defined exclusively by uncertainty, mistakes, and fears … things that could mar the paragon brand image of a Bowdoin alum. But amidst the challenges in the road ahead (after leaving the Bowdoin bubble), Willi, everything can turn out fine like it did for me and others out there right now. Congratulations class of 2008. You enter the real world in an Olympic year. Best wishes!”

ALISON RAU
“I’m in my second year of law school at UConn and will work at the Environmental Protection Agency in Boston this summer. I’m currently working on a project for an international law/human rights clinic focusing on Connecticut’s role in international adoption and child custody issues, in addition to courses on administrative, land use, and family law. I was recently elected to the legal abstracts editor position of the CT Insurance Law Journal. I can be reached at alison.rau@gmail.com if anyone is in the Hartford area or in Boston for the summer!”

MELISSA HUDSON
“After graduating from Bowdoin in ’05 I worked four months in Shanghai at the American Consulate in the Economic and Political Section. I left that to begin the Harvard Kennedy school’s Master in Public Policy program. I graduated in June of ’07. I completed my thesis on China/Africa relations dealing with oil and global security.

In September ’07 I entered the foreign service for the U.S. Department of State. I’m currently in D.C. getting some additional training in Mandarin before I head to Guangzhou in July. I will be there for two years. It has been a wonderful adventure and I am very excited to continue my time, service, and education in China.”

DANIEL BENSEN
“I am currently living in Boston, where I work as an ESL teacher at the EC Boston English school. I have also been accepted into the Applied Linguistics graduate program at UMass Boston, and I will begin taking classes there in the fall. In my scant free time, I play taiko with Odaiko New England, and I am learning Bulgarian. Best of luck to this year’s graduating Asian studies majors!”

CLASS OF 2004
CLASS OF 2005
CLASS OF 2006

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLASS OF 2008

- Andrew Steltzer has been awarded a Fulbright grant to support a year of study and research in Japan
- Matt Gray has been named an alternate for Japan and is waiting to hear further news of his application
- Grace Park has been selected for a Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship in Korea
- Robert Rezvani and Kenneth Akiha have been selected for the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) program to teach English in Japan
- Rong Li has been awarded the ACC Field Study Program, which supports field-trip research in rural China, for this summer

UNDERGRADS

- George Aumoithe ’11 is Freeman-ASIA Grant winner for study-away this summer
- John Burlinson ’10 received a Bridging Scholarship for study-away in fall 2008
The Bowdoin College Library is delighted to announce receipt of the gift of the personal book collection of Kidder Smith, Professor of History and Asian studies. The collection numbers approximately 3,400 volumes. All are in the field of East Asia, notably China. The core of the collection—some 1,400 books, mostly in Chinese—focuses on early China, the period from Confucius (ca. 500 B.C.E.) to the unification of the empire (ca. 200 B.C.E.), and the subsequent Han dynasty. Smith described his collection as “…a virtually complete research library for the period—I own 98% of the materials I’ve needed for my work, and most of the rest is available on-line. I built this library through repeated trips to China from 1985 to 2000, after which it was largely in place.”

An additional 2,000 volumes, which are mostly in English with about 30% in Chinese, constitute a general collection of materials relating to East Asian history and culture. These include materials related to Tibet and Japan, as well as all periods throughout Chinese history.

“Kidder’s magnificent collection will enrich the scholarship of future generations of students and faculty members, not only at Bowdoin but also at Colby and Bates. As our Asian Studies Program expands, the Library is delighted that Kidder’s rich collections, developed with thought and care over many years, will be available to support scholarship at Bowdoin. We are extremely grateful to him for his generous gift.”

— Sherrie Bergman, Librarian

In place of our Alumni Directory, we are suggesting you visit PolarNet, Bowdoin’s online alumni directory.

PolarNet is free and available only to Bowdoin alumni. Registered PolarNet users are able to:

- Search the Bowdoin alumni directory for classmates or friends.
- Search the Bowdoin Career Advisory Network to connect with other alumni to discuss career objectives and explore career interests.
- Update their own contact and personal information online.
- Establish a life-long alumni email forwarding address.

To sign up for log-in or register for PolarNet, go to: https://polarnet.bowdoin.edu/NETCOMMUNITY