

EAST ASIAN STUDIES

Alumni Newsletter



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*In memory of Meiqing Zhang
22 November 1955 - 19 February 2011*



Contents

Letter from the Chair	8
Remembering Meiqing Zhang	10
Faculty News.....	20
Toshiko Wilkner & Fumiko Yasuhara.....	30
Class of 2011.....	36
Summer in China.....	38
Alumni Notes	44

Letter from the Chair

We are a very different department this fall than we were a year ago. Meiqing Zhang's death in February, after a long and hard fought battle with cancer, shook us all. She had been so much a part of the Department and the Chinese language program, for so many years, that it has been hard to imagine either without her. This year's annual newsletter celebrates Meiqing's life and contributions, and offers her colleagues and students an opportunity to share some of their favorite memories and stories about her. As you'll see, there are a great many. Thanks to all of you who shared something with us. We'll make sure that Meiqing's daughter and husband receive copies as well.

Meiqing had been so much a part of the Department and the Chinese language program, for so many years, that it has been hard to imagine either without her.

We're also pausing to reflect on the contributions of two other colleagues. Toshiko Wilkner and Fumiko Yasuhara, both Teaching Associates in the Japanese language program, retired this past spring. Like Meiqing,

both had been at Brown for many years. Toshiko started teaching for East Asian Studies in 1989, and Fumiko joined her two years later. Their enthusiasm and creativity in the classroom shaped the learning experience for students of Japanese across more than two decades, so it is only fitting that we take some time in this year's newsletter to reflect on how much they have meant to their colleagues and students.

We also note, and are grateful for, the continued generosity of Brian Leach. His support made it possible for thirteen undergraduates to participate in language programs and internships in China this past summer. Lists of pro-

grams and excerpts from their experiences appear later in the newsletter.

Current concentrator Nicholas Cavell's report on the research project he pursued in Nanjing, regarding private and public care for the elderly in China, is also featured in this issue. Nic's summer project was made possible by the Arun Stewart '11 Memorial Fund. Established by Arun's parents, Sunita Mahtani Stewart, Ph.D. and William Anthony Stewart P'11, this Fund exists to provide support for East Asian Studies concentrators who share Arun's commitment to the study of China, and who hope to spend time there pursuing independent research projects, internships, or intensive language study. Applications for awards from the Fund, and for short-term language programs and internships, will be available later this year, for travel, study and research to be conducted in 2012.

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Finally, if you're in the Providence area, or plan to be, and willing to talk with Brown undergraduates about your experiences after graduation, in East Asia or elsewhere, please get in touch. The Department and the DUG have a few such events planned for the year ahead, but would be happy to host others. [Send me an e-mail](#), or call (401 863-2796), if you'd like to participate. And, as always, we'd like to hear about what you've been up to even if you won't be in Providence, so please do keep us up-to-date.

—Kerry Smith, Associate Professor, History
Chair, East Asian Studies

Remembering Meiqing Zhang



Retired Department Manager Ann Devine and Meiqing Zhang in 2007.

I was extremely saddened to hear about Zhang Meiqing. Unquestionably, she had more of an impact on my undergraduate life and subsequent path than any other faculty member. She was my first Chinese teacher in CI 10-20, and my last Chinese teacher with CI 91-92. A small amount of maternal warmth always slipped through her professorial sternness. Toward the end of my senior year, it became clear to me that my graduation gift would be dedicated to her.

—Alexander Richardson, Class of 2007

I was very sad to hear about the passing of Meiqing Zhang. She was my teacher for my first year of Chinese, and every day I spend in China I am grateful that she

was so emphatic about correct pronunciation and tones! She was a wonderful, kind teacher and I think it would be hard for me to overestimate the impact she and my other first-year Chinese teachers have had on my life since then. I've spoken to a number of Brown classmates and I know they all feel the same way, too.

—Charlie Custer, Class of 2008

I have had the pleasure of being taught by Zhang *Laoshi*, Wilkner *Sensei*, and Yasuhara *Sensei* during my time at Brown. They not only made learning difficult grammar and seemingly impossible-to-memorize characters fun and interactive, but shared their culture with students, enabling us to experience a whole new world, beyond what many of us had experienced before. Thanks to the influence of Zhang *Laoshi*, Wilkner *Sensei*, Yasuhara *Sensei*, as well as all the *Laoshis* and *Senseis* I studied under, I took my language and cultural studies a step further and studied in Tokyo and Shanghai. These study abroad experiences deeply impacted my understanding of East Asia, my view of the world, and my goals for the future. I am truly grateful to Zhang *Laoshi*, Wilkner *Sensei*, and Yasuhara *Sensei*, and to the entire EAS department for shaping my 4 years at Brown and beyond. Thank you!

—Christine Lee, Class of 2009

Whenever I am climbing to my third floor office, passing the second floor, I think of Meiqing, our respected Zhang *laoshi*, taken from us so suddenly. It is very hard for us who have worked with her to accept the cruel reality that she will not be working with us, laughing with us, enjoying all the good things with us any-

I think it would be hard for me to overestimate the impact she and my other first-year Chinese teachers have had on my life.

more. Meiqing's integrity, courage, kindness and modesty touched our lives in so many ways.

I am honored to have been given opportunities to work with her several times since coming to Brown. Meiqing

It was her voice, and her example, that reminded us, again and again, of what was most important to us as teachers, as colleagues, as friends.

was very strict and expected a lot from her students and her colleagues as well. She led first year Chinese for many years. She always insisted that grading of the final exam be done on the day it was held, so all the co-instructors would start working the minute the test papers were brought into the confer-

ence room - like a race beginning as soon as the bell rings. But those who were in the race also knew that Meiqing had prepared her yummy signature soup, with delicious homemade meat balls and veggies, the night before and had it ready very early in the morning. She kept it warm in a very special container until the end of the day, which was greatly appreciated after battling with students' final exams on a cold winter night.

In 2009-2010, Meiqing resumed her teaching after one year's treatment of her illness. Though co-teaching third year Chinese with me, a less experienced junior, Meiqing's full support, respect and humble attitude made her more a mentor than a colleague to me. Despite her being weak physically, Meiqing wished not to receive less workload than others. She set a beautiful example for all of us.

Zhang *laoshi*, you will be greatly missed!

—Jialing Huang Hsieh, Visiting Lecturer in Chinese

The spring semester 2011 was marked by profound sadness as we lost our beloved colleague and friend, Meiq-

ing. Meiqing was a lively and high-spirited person with a clear, crisp voice. I have often wondered where she stored her boundless energy in such a small body. I miss her calling me with her cheerful voice - "Hi Yuko!" - especially in the morning. Her contagious energy always woke up my sleepy self. I miss hearing that voice and I miss her very much. I also think about her - how brave and strong she was. I am truly fortunate to have known such a special person. I was also very touched to witness the kindness and caring hearts of people who were there for Meiqing as she faced her most difficult challenge. Thank you, Kathy and the members of the Chinese program.

—Yuko Imoto Jackson, Senior Lecturer in Japanese

Meiqing joined the faculty in East Asian Studies in 1988, at a time when we were a much smaller department. In the more than 20 years that we were lucky enough to have Meiqing with us in the Department - years of great change for us, and of tremendous growth for the language program - it was her voice, and her example, that reminded us, again and again, of what was most important to us as teachers, as colleagues, as friends.

I am truly fortunate to have known such a special person.

Meiqing was a teacher of immense talent, enthusiasm, and compassion. She brought a tremendous energy, and a quick, brilliant smile to the classroom, and to all her encounters with students. Firm, even strict when she needed to be, Meiqing's every instinct and method was focused on making absolutely sure that her students were given every opportunity to succeed, to make the Chinese language part of their lives. Nothing, it seemed, could prevent her from pursuing those goals. We all have stories, episodes that for us epitomize Meiqing's dedication to her craft, and to her students. Meiqing's insistence on getting the lesson right, on getting the homework graded,

Meiqing's meticulousness in work and passion for life left a great impression on me.

on meeting with just one more student to give them the help they needed, on going to class, even as her illness made difficult what had once been simple tasks.

And students? Students loved her! We heard from them at the end of every semester, variations on a common theme: "Prof. Zhang is great. I loved being in her class. She is always enthusiastic and also very approachable." "Prof. Zhang is a wonderful teacher," wrote another. She is "enthusiastic, kind, understanding, knowledgeable, funny." Here is what some others wrote:

Zhang *laoshi* is adorable.

Zhang *laoshi* is strict, yet fair, helpful and friendly.

Awesome professor; best class I have taken at Brown.

My favorite class and professor.

I liked Zhang *laoshi's* examples about her family and about Michael Jackson.

And one final quote, this one from a student who addressed Meiqing directly:

You're an amazing teacher. All your students are lucky to be taught by you.

Meiqing was also a teacher of teachers. In her many journal articles, invited lectures, and conference presentations, she sought to share what she had learned about teaching Chinese, and the techniques she herself had pioneered, with her colleagues, and with a new generation of teachers. This she did at Middlebury to great acclaim. But this was a role she also embraced at Brown, with characteristic intensity.

Meiqing was a mentor to so many of our faculty, from those who were here for only a short while, to those

for whom Brown is now home. To them she showed the same commitment, the same conviction, the same attention to every detail, and the same kindnesses - and more - that she bestowed upon the students in her classes. She was more than just a good teacher - she was the teacher we all wanted to be, that model of skill, humor, and depth of knowledge that wasted no time, and left us, her students, wanting to learn still more. Those of us in the Department, from very different fields, who watched in something like awe and amazement as, year after year, Meiqing worked her magic in the classroom, owe so much to her.

Meiqing would be so embarrassed to find us paying this much attention to her. "You must have better things to do," she'd say. "Why all the fuss?" I'm sure she'd ask. We know why, of course. We can answer that question. Even as we celebrate all that she did, all that she accomplished - sometimes through the sheer force of her will - we mourn her passing. We miss her bright smile, her kind words, her warmth and her generosity.

—Kerry Smith, Associate Professor of History,
Chair of East Asian Studies

I still clearly remember teaching Japanese to Meiqing's daughter Rindy, for one year. Rindy continued to study Japanese in college and we met in Tokyo with Meiqing's sister. One time we had sushi and the other time we went out to an organic food restaurant. It was difficult for me to express my sadness to Rindy at Meiqing's funeral. I really believe Rindy will become a happy and successful person, and that Meiqing wishes that for her from Heaven.

—Hiroshi Tajima, Lecturer in Japanese

You're an amazing teacher. All your students are lucky to be taught by you.

Despite all [the excitement of this past academic year], I've been grieving for the loss of our wonderful and irreplaceable colleague, Meiqing Zhang, with whom I had worked since 2007. Over the past four years, Meiqing's meticulousness in work and passion for life left a great impression on me. I miss Meiqing dearly, and will do my utmost to carry on Meiqing's legacy.

—Hsin-I Tseng,
Lecturer in Chinese

They set a wonderful example for all of us with their love for life and students and their enthusiasm and professionalism for their work. I'll cherish the memories that we shared together dearly.

At the end of this past academic year, EAS had to say a good-bye to three of our most devoted teachers and wonderful colleagues. I have known Meiqing Zhang, Toshiko Wilkner, and Fumiko Yasuhara during my entire career at Brown. They were here when I

first came to Brown. Although I was not fortunate enough to have had a chance to teach with them, since we taught different languages, I certainly have been blessed to know them as colleagues. They set a wonderful example for all of us with their love for life and students and their enthusiasm and professionalism for their work. I'll cherish the memories that we shared together dearly. I pray for a peaceful rest for Meiqing whose untimely death left us in deep sorrow. I wish the best of luck to Fumiko and Toshiko who must be enjoying their life after Brown as happy retirees.

—Hye-Sook Wang, Associate Professor,
East Asian Studies

As we share with each other many of Meiqing's life stories, I would like to focus a bit more on the professional

legacy she has passed on to all teaching faculty in our department. Her dedication to teaching Chinese language and culture, her devotion to the Chinese program and students, and her determination and desire to constantly improve herself in knowledge, pedagogy, and teaching skills have set up a professional model for all of us. I was lucky to have the opportunity to observe Meiqing's fifth year Chinese class during the last semester she taught at Brown. I'd like to share the following excerpt of my class observation with the EAS community:

Meiqing spent the next 30-40 minutes introducing background knowledge of the new essay assigned for this class. The essay was written by a well known linguist and translator at Beijing University, Ji Xianlin (1911-2009), on the beauty and character of the lotus. Meiqing began the new lesson with a power-point introduction of 1) the author, 2) the four literary genres in Chinese culture, 3) Chinese prose in particular and its most significant characteristics, and 4) a special Chinese literary tradition of using plants and flowers to stand for certain moral characters and spiritual longings.

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The power-point presentation was powerful and successful as it brought vivid and concrete images, colors, linguistic expressions, and certain Chinese aesthetic values directly to the classroom. I noticed that all students fixed their attention on the big screen. Meiqing was extremely skillful in integrating layers of background materials into her class and her students were thus able to obtain the most relevant yet rich context-

悼念美青

美丽总被那雨打风吹去，
 青春多献于传道授业中，
 师业未竟叫众友好
 痛断

嚴蕾
 张淑

足踏中西
 師範厚澤
 杏壇彝教
 永長青

曾心怡
 敬輓

tual information about the essay they were studying. As she introduced the biography of the author, for example, Meiqing also touched on some important historical events and social transformations in modern Chinese history. When she talked about the symbolic meanings of flowers and plants in China, for another example, she went all the way back to traditional Chinese cultural history, putting together a short yet rich presentation on the topic. She also provided an intertextual approach to the new essay by introducing to students other well known short essays on the same topic written by pre-modern authors in classical Chinese. This is where the class differentiated itself significantly from a regular advanced language class. Meiqing's knowledge of the topic and her preparations for the class were truly admirable. In just about half an hour, she brought to her students in a vivid and highly accessible fashion a wealth of information concerning modern Chinese history and society, and traditional Chinese values and aesthetics.

I walked away from Meiqing's class with great admiration for the instructor and unusual confidence in our students. As a faculty member teaching literature and culture in the Department, I cannot appreciate more the existence of such a well-developed course that integrates so brilliantly the essentials of both language and content teachings. This is one of most fascinating Chinese classes I have ever observed at this level and I think it should be held as an exemplary model for all advanced Chinese courses.

—Lingzhen Wang, Associate Professor,
 East Asian Studies

Meiqing: You were the greatest mom, most dedicated teacher, and my beloved friend and confidant. I miss you, and I will do my best to preserve your legacy in EAS and make you proud.

—Yang Wang, Lecturer in Chinese

Faculty News

Ayumi Nagatomi joined the Department this fall, and has been teaching Basic Japanese and Advanced Japanese with Professor Yamashita and Mr. Tajima.

Ayumi has taught Japanese at various secondary and post-secondary institutions in the U.S. In addition, dispatched by the Japan Foundation, she worked as a Japanese-language advisor in Canada to contribute to developing provincial curricula, promoting second language learning and enhancing networking across institutions.

She is interested in ways to nurture better learner autonomy, by utilizing tools for assessment such as Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI).

Sam Perry has recently returned from a junior sabbatical in the San Francisco Bay Area, during which time he was a Visiting Scholar at the Center for Japanese Studies, at the University of California, Berkeley, and at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University. A dedicated and passionate translator of Japanese and Korean literature and criticism, he was recently awarded a 2010-11 Wil-

I now simply have a more realistic idea of life of a Westerner in Beijing, and a better understanding of my own limitations in the context of cultural learning. I have learned to accept these limitations and, instead of seeing them as an obstacle to realizing my goal of living in China, I now see them as an integral and important part of any future experience I may have in China.

Doron Shiffer-Sebba

liam F. Sibley Memorial Translation Prize in Japanese Literature, sponsored by the Center for East Asian Studies at the University of Chicago, for his translation of Sata Ineko's 1950 Japanese short story, "White and Purple." During his sabbatical Professor Perry delivered papers and invited talks at five different universities, including The University of Michigan, the University of California, Berkeley, The University of Southern California, Pomona College, International Christian University in Japan, and Tallinn University in Estonia. He is now in the final stages of completing his manuscript on the proletarian literary movement. Professor Perry looks forward to returning to the classroom this year, and especially to joining his colleagues in East Asian Studies to team teach second-year Japanese.

Janine Sawada is continuing her research into the religious texts and images associated with Mt. Fuji during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, especially the visual and auditory dimensions of their use in ritual. In March 2011 she presented a portion of this work in a paper called "Mt. Fuji Religious Texts" at the Society for the Study of Japanese Religions, held in conjunction with the annual Association for Asian Studies meeting in Honolulu. In August she travelled to Tallinn, Estonia to present a paper at the European Association for Japanese Studies on the therapeutic and apotropaic aspects of these texts, titled "Healing Talismans in Early Modern Japan: Uses in Mt. Fuji Devotionalism." Her translations of and commentaries on the writings of several early modern Japanese Confucian and Buddhist

Previously, I had viewed the Chinese language as a useful tool for my future career – but now as I realize the faces of people and the culture that are attached to this language, Chinese has truly grown and taken shape.

Juhee Kwon

teachers were published in the long-awaited *Sourcebook of Japanese Philosophy* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2011). During the 2010-11 academic year she taught courses on Japanese religion and culture, Buddhist scriptures, and Neo-Confucian interpretations of the Chinese classics.

Hiroshi Tajima: Last year, we lost Meiqing, and Fumiko and Toshiko retired. I miss them very much. I have wonderful memories with all of them. They were all great teachers.

In the beginning of the program, we could talk about small things like where we came from and what we did during the day. By the end of the program, we were able to carry on conversations about China's one child per family policy, urban development and the wealth gap between the big cities and the small villages, or the male-dominated society and its effects on society as a whole.

Cynthia Fong

This year I would like to research the use of polite and honorific expressions in the Japanese language between Senpai (senior) and Kouhai (junior). Because Japanese society has changed drastically over the last twenty years, I strongly feel that it is necessary for me to investigate how the use of polite and honorific expression has changed in the language between Senpai and Kouhai college students. I would also like to know how

much students are offended by a speaker during an argument in class discussion and how this has changed over time.

My students should know how to counter argue against another person without offending her or him. Sometimes Japanese people feel they lose their face or personal digni-

ty when they are strongly challenged by a speaker during a debate. I suspect it is partly because classroom discussion has not been used as a primary teaching tool in pre-college education in Japan.

Hsin-I Tseng: Over the past academic year, in addition to teaching advanced-level Chinese language classes, I led a new course, "Introduction to Chinese Prose." Teaching classical Chinese essays to enthusiastic students and reading their own compositions was an amazing and inspiring experience.

Equally inspiring was the Second Annual Chinese Language Showcase, held this past spring. Thanks to the support from my colleagues and our students, we once again had an enjoyable afternoon. Students displayed their creativity and language achievements through singing, acting, speaking, and other performances. My colleagues and I are very proud of them.

Another promising undertaking is the Chinese-English conversational exchange, which was initiated in 2008 to help both Chinese and English learners find more opportunities for culture and language learning. During the past two semesters, thirty-four students in advanced Chinese classes were paired with native Chinese speakers through Brown's EINT course (English for

Although I had two wonderful and productive years studying Chinese at Brown, the experience of studying Chinese in China was a great contrast to the one in the U.S. Because of programmatic features such as the language pledge, host family, and local field trips in Beijing, I was no longer reluctant to speak to native speakers and ask what I used to consider "stupid" questions.

Phan Ha

international students). I'd like to express my gratitude to Barbara Gourlay and Jill Scott, director and instructors of the ITA (International Teaching Assistants) Program, for their feedback and encouragement.

As a new academic year approaches, we are all looking forward to Brown's Year of China (YOC)! The Chinese Program has created a "Phrase of the Week" section on the YOC home page. Check in every week for a Chinese phrase commonly used in daily life. Even if you've studied Chinese before, you still might find some new phrases on this site!

Hye-Sook Wang: I have returned to my regular teaching and research schedule after serving as the Interim Department Chair for one year. During the 2010-2011 academic year, I taught "Korean Culture and Film" and "Beginning Korean" in the fall, and "Korean Culture and Society" and "Beginning Korean" in the spring. I also sponsored two Inde-

I quickly realized how familiar I would become with this dance, an exchange combining strange gestures and repeated words and phrases, all in an attempt to ask an embarrassingly simple question. It would repeat with strange store workers, cab drivers, and even my language partner, a Chinese college student assigned to supplement my studies with daily conversation. To make matters worse, after four days I was expected to do the same with my program classmates. The short period in which we could take reprieve from linguistic frustration and enjoy the familiar motions of English in our mouths felt all too short. I was not looking forward to securing friendships with a meager vocabulary of weather conditions and food items.

Geoff Sedor

pendent Study projects, one on Modern Korean Women's Literature and the other on Korean language. There was a lot of reading and grading to do but I immensely enjoyed teaching all these courses as I had such a talented group of students in each class, who were extremely active, energetic, and engaging.

On the research side, the year has been full of activities. I edited another volume of Korean Language in America, the official journal of the American Association of Teachers of Korean (AATK), for which I have been serving as editor for six years. My recently completed paper "Culture in the Textbook, Culture in the Classroom, and Culture in the Korean Language Curriculum," is to be included in the book *Teaching and Learning Korean as a Foreign Language: A Collection of Empirical Studies* (forthcoming 2011). I also finished (with C. Lieu) another paper: "Mixed Koreans and Korean Language Learning: A Study of Half-Korean University Students and Their Approaches to Korean Language Learning." In addition, I gave a number of talks, including the National Flagship Conference at the University of Hawaii in May, at an annual conference of the AATK at Yale University in June, and at the International Association of Korean Language Education annual conference in Seoul this August. I have been a regular lecturer for the National Consortium for Teaching about Asia (NCTA) workshops and delivered several invited talks in CT and MA on Korean culture. On the Brown campus, I participated in the "After Empire: Road to the

I enjoyed taking advantage of the 6 hours of instruction per day as a chance to really internalize a lot of the language, and then venture into the local community to practice. I became very adept at combining my increased linguistic skills into some cultural practices I also came to enjoy.

Austin Whittaker

Reconciliation” panel sponsored by Strait Talk, held in last October, as a panelist representing Korea.

This May I was awarded a competitive research fund from the Academy of Korean Studies, which will enable me to work on a project on the history of Korean programs in America.

I also enjoy serving in various capacities, such as continuing to serve on the Emery/Baker Fellowships Selection Committee at Brown, the National Review Committee of Fulbright Student Program for the Institute of International Education, and the National Advisory Board of Korea-America Student Conference. For EAS, I have served as the Korea Area Advisor for the Concentration, in addition to several small committees.



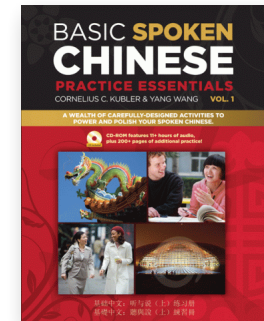
Lingzhen Wang's *Chinese Women's Cinema: Transnational Contexts* (Columbia University Press, 2011) received critical acclaim:

“If you thought gender was fading from cinema studies, prepare for a pleasant surprise. Lingzhen Wang's *Chinese Women's Cinema* puts the topic back under the spotlight. Ranging from mainland China to Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the diaspora, this mind-boggling array of explorations

and interventions sparkles with energy. Wang's excellent introduction anchors conceptions of female agency, transnational feminism, and transborder Chinese cinema. The result is a new starting point for gender studies on this subject.” — Chris Berry, coauthor of *China on Screen: Cinema and Nation*.

Yang Wang: I offered a new advanced Chinese course, “The Changing Face of China: Advanced Reading in Chinese Media,” last spring. In this class, students listen to and read current news and commentary from various Chinese media sources, including TV, print media, and websites. By interviewing native Chinese speakers and reading primary source material from Chinese-speaking societies, students are expected to gain a better understanding of a wide range of issues in a rapidly changing China. I felt that this goal was achieved last spring, and I too learned a great deal from students' discussions and writings.

My book, *Basic Spoken Chinese: Practice Essentials*, came out last April (Tuttle Publishing). My current project is to finish the second volume, *Intermediate Spoken Chinese: Practice Essentials* (Tuttle, forthcoming).



Recently I've been focusing my research on the writing pedagogy of Chinese. I attended the 9th International Conference on Chinese Language Pedagogy in Beijing this June to present my paper: “Principles and Methods in Designing Intermediate-Level Writing Exercises: Comparative Research on the Textbooks *Integrated Chinese* and *Exchange*,” which was also selected for publication in the Conference proceedings.

I am also working on a digital presentation of EAS and Chinese Language Program alumni. Our graduates succeed in all kinds of fields; I would like to share their fascinating stories with the EAS community and encourage our current students to stay in touch after Brown.

Liu Wei: I have been teaching Chinese, in Beijing, China and in the US, since 2005. This is my first year as a Visiting Lecturer at Brown. I am already so impressed by everyone



here. I am currently teaching Beginning Chinese with Lung-hua Hu and Advanced Chinese with Hsin-I Tseng.

My research interests focus on the application of Chinese Thematic Units Teaching and how to develop content-based Chinese courses and textbooks for the college-level. I am compiling and revising my content-based textbook “The Transformation of Beijing” (北京变迁), which covers a wide range of topics, including Chinese history, politics, diplomacy, law, international

relations, aesthetics, architecture, economics and current social issues, to enhance students’ academic Chinese and cross-cultural awareness and understanding.

When I was talking to a woman working at our hotel she told me something that really changed my thoughts. She pointed out that China is an enormous country with a gigantic population, embracing many different cultures. As long as you speak standard Mandarin, you are just like any other Chinese person whose mother tongue is something other than standard Mandarin. Her words felt like a warm embrace, whispering into my ears I could be just like one of them.

Stephanie Koo



Brown’s Year of China: “China Through the Lens” Film Series

One of several Year of China events, this Film Series explores the history and art of Chinese cinema in different periods and geopolitical locations, featuring early Chinese cinema, Chinese film music across mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, and contemporary Chinese independent cinema. All film screenings are complimented by lectures with prominent film scholars. The Film Series is also part of Professor Lingzhen Wang’s course “EAST 1270: China Through the Lens.”

Toshiko Wilkner & Fumiko Yasuhara



“Retirement” ... I never imagined, but here I am. The main reason was that my daughter, who lives in LA, had twins (a boy and a girl). She already has an one and a half year old boy. That means she needed more than a little help; I will be flying back and forth to the West Coast quite a bit.

Being an “Obaachan” is, especially in this situation, harder than teaching Japanese. So I don’t feel like I retired to the relaxing, quiet life, just enjoying painting and drawing and reading books. Though I have to say it is a joy to have grandchildren. Watching their growth is kind of like teaching.

I do miss being with young students. I want to thank all the wonderful Japanese class members, every year, for almost 20 years. They made me discover so many things,

they taught me new ways of thinking. Being with young people kept me feeling young. So many of you, I can’t remember all your names, but faces, I do remember. Every year was fun, we laughed together, ate “osenbei” during office hours and studied and chatted. All good memories.

Thank you everybody,
Toshiko Wilkner.

Dear alumni and students,
I retired from Brown University at the end of June after twenty years of teaching Japanese. Department friends and students made my retirement really special with surprise parties. This summer, I have been enjoying visiting our grandchildren and helping our daughter’s family during their move from Philadelphia to Connecticut.

During the past twenty years, we proudly sent many of our students to Japan. When I looked through my file of recommendation letters, I found a letter from one of our students who was accepted into the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program as an assistant language instructor. He wrote: “Your enthusiasm and willingness to explain various aspects of Japanese culture, while exhibiting a reciprocal interest in the American culture that you have also become a part of, has been a source of great inspiration. Although we were raised in very different cultures, I find the way in which our differences align heartening. When you were young, you came to the United States in search of new experiences, and began teaching Japanese to American students. As a young man, I am headed to Japan to teach my language, English, to Japanese students. I admire what you have achieved and I will strive to emulate the example you have set.”

It was my great pleasure to see how much students accomplished during their Brown life.

Best wishes to you all,
Fumiko Yasuhara

I just wanted to wish Wilkner-*sensei* and Yasuhara-*sensei* well. What a loss to have them both leave at the same time. They were tough ladies, but wonderful teachers - they helped arm me well for my junior year abroad at Keio. And I appreciated that Wilkner-*sensei* would come to my Brown Orchestra concerts. I will always remember her whispering in my ear after one concert how she thought the cello (my instrument) was so “sexy”! All the best to them both.

—Amy Tunis Shinkman, Class of 1997

Back in the US, speaking Chinese was academic and sometimes seemed like a novelty—something fun to do but if I had to say anything important I could always fall back on English. This is obviously not so in China, and while I knew this cerebrally, I had not really felt the truth of the matter: the truth that without this language, I would have no way to communicate with the great majority of China’s 1.3 billion citizens. There is an untold power in something as simple as being able to communicate effectively, and I have gained a new appreciation for all language as a whole.

Richard Buesa

Thanks for letting us know about the recent retirement of Wilkner-*sensei* and Yasuhara-*sensei*. I wanted to thank them and the other instructors in the Brown East Asian Studies department for the language skills they imparted to me. Learning Japanese has shaped my career and personal life in important ways.

—Jason Rabbitt Tomita, Class of 1998

I just returned home from Tokyo where I photographed food for a Japanese cookbook emphasizing the aesthetics of “*Omotenashi*”. I was grasping to recall my language studies with Yasuhara-san and Wilkner-san!

Yasuhara-san and Wilkner-san were both very energetic and kind teachers. They were both gracious and attentive and I loved Wilkner-san’s sense of humor.

I return fairly often to Japan to visit family and more recently for work, and appreciate the efforts of all the Brown Japanese language professors. I wish I could remember more than I do, but it will be a lifelong learning process...

—Aya Brackett, Class of 2001

I was fortunate to have both Yasuhara *Sensei* and Wilkner *Sensei* during my first year of Japanese in 1999-2000. They were wonderful teachers and I learned so much from them. Now, more than 10 years later, I’m finishing up my PhD in Japanese Art History at the University of Pennsylvania and will be entering the academic job market this Fall, 2011. It has been quite a journey and to think that it all began with my Basic Japanese class in the EAS Dept. at Brown!

—Erin Kelley,
Class of 2002

The thing I remember most about Wilkner-*sensei* is the infectious energy she brought to her classes on a daily basis. I wish both Wilkner-*sensei* and Yasuhara-*sensei* the best.

—Catrina Joos,
Class of 2007

While at Brown, I had the great, great fortune of taking classes at different times with

I have a lot more confidence in my ability to live and work in China after having survived a summer there on my own. Renting an apartment, taking the bus to work every day, going grocery shopping and learning to cook some simple Chinese dishes for myself—all of these experiences made my summer fulfilling and helped me become more independent.

Dan Towne

Every Chinese person I run into at Brown and in Seoul asks me why I study Chinese. I, as most of the people in my Chinese class do, usually had the typically accepted answer, such as China's recent economic and social development or the high possibility of China rising to the world's leading power in a near future. Now I have a rather truisitic yet sincere answer of my own: I learn Chinese to go back to China.

Hye Rin Park

Fumiko Yasuhara, Toshiko Wilkner, and Meiqing Zhang. The quality of the language education at Brown played a large part in my decision to double up on both Mandarin and Japanese, and a great deal of the progress I made over the ensuing years I owe to them. I was such a terrible student at first, and it was nearly unbelievable the pace at which that was turned around. Their humor, enthusiasm, and skill as pedagogs will be sorely missed.

To paraphrase the words of Kerry Smith, it's hard to imagine the department without them.

—Daniel Perez, Class of 2009

We bid farewell to our colleagues, Fumiko and Toshiko at the end the spring semester. My fondest memories of working with Fumiko and Toshiko are related to food! At the end of each academic year, we would give a sushi party for our first-year Japanese class. I was not, and am still not, good at making sushi. That party was only possible because of the hard work of these dedicated teachers. They prepared sushi-rice and all the other ingredients and brought them to school. Most of our students made nearly perfect sushi under the skilled instruction of Fumiko and Toshiko. We were all full and satisfied thanks to them.

Final exams were always scheduled from 2 to 5 pm, and every semester, Fumiko and Toshiko waited for me to return from proctoring the exam with Onigiri, tamago-yaki (rolled egg dish) and other dishes with hot green tea! We all ate a delicious meal first, then started grading. That was just about the best way to end the semester. The daunting task of grading final exams was transformed into one of the most enjoyable times for me, and I was very lucky to have colleagues like Fumiko and Toshiko. They must be happily playing with their grandchildren by now, and I know their grandchildren are so lucky to have them as their "Obaa-chan."

—Yuko Imoto Jackson, Senior Lecturer in Japanese

There is something substantially different in the way Chinese people, and consequently China, function. Identifying this dissimilarity proved difficult while being occupied by an immersive language study experience because I had very little time to deeply reflect on the environment, but once I returned to America I immediately missed the feeling of freedom and possibility I had subconsciously begun to associate with China. I realized that a part of me is still in China, a country that I certainly don't fully understand but which has definitely enticed my interest and spurred a desire to learn more.

Jeremy Korn

Class of 2011

Sarah G. Bolling

Elizabeth D. Connolly

Phi Beta Kappa, Magna Cum Laude

Kevin P. Grubb

with Honors, East Asian Studies Prize

Eun-Young Jeong

*with Honors, Ying-mao & Anna Kau Prize in East Asian Politics
& Peace, Magna Cum Laude*

Harris T. Li

with Honors in Independent Concentration

Dana C. Mirsalis

with Honors, East Asian Studies Prize, Magna Cum Laude

Tho H. Phan

Marco A. Sanchez Junco

Arun D. Stewart

Degree Awarded Posthumously

East Asian Studies Annual Senior Forum

WATSON JOUKOWSKY FORUM | 9 MAY 2011 | 3:30-5:00

Redefining Shinto: *How Post-War Modernization Has Shaped Japan's Indigenous "Religion"*
Dana Mirsalis

Burden or Brethren? *Paradox in South Korean Society's Perceptions of Defectors and Defectors as Active Participants in the Creation of their Unimagined Identity*
Eun-Young Jeong

以語治民: *Japan's Language and Social Policies toward Linguistic Minorities and their Effects on the Successful Integration of Linguistic Minorities into Japanese Society*
Harris Li

Law as a Mirror of Society: *Late Qing and Early Republican Legal Reform in China*
Kevin Grubb

Sartorial China: *A Look at Chinese Fashion from the 1920s to Modern Day*
Liz Connolly

Some Prefer Nettles: *A Translation Attempt*
Marco Sanchez Junco

Street Angel: *A Short Play*
Tho Phan



Summer in China

Thanks to the generosity of Brian Leach, several Chinese language students and East Asian Studies concentrators were able to spend the summer of 2011 in China, intensively studying the language or pursuing independent research and internships.

INTENSIVE LANGUAGE STUDY

Princeton in Beijing

Cynthia Fong
Doron Shiffer-Sebba
Jeremy Korn
Juhee Kwon
Richard Buesa
Sime Luketa (*follow link for digital story*)

Duke Study in China

Caroline Guerrero
Geoff Sedor
Hye Rin Park

Alliance for Global Education at Fudan University

Austin Whittaker

Associate Colleges in China

Phan Ha

Interuniversity Program for Chinese Language Studies at Tsinghua University

Stephanie Koo

INDEPENDENT RESEARCH PROJECTS & INTERNSHIPS

City Weekend Magazine - Beijing

Dan Towne

Genetic Research - Kunming

Noah Elbot (*follow link for photo essay*)

I am most pleased with my experience in China and am looking forward to finding a job in which I am constantly flying to China and speaking Chinese to communicate with Chinese people and newly made friends.

Caroline Guerrero

ARUN STEWART '11 MEMORIAL FUND

The Arun Stewart '11 Memorial Fund was established by Sunita and Tony Stewart in memory of their son, the late Arun David Stewart, Class of 2011, to honor his passion for Chinese language and culture. The fund supports undergraduates in East Asian Studies who conduct independent research projects in China, or participate in low-paid or unpaid internships in China, or pursue intensive language studies in China. Concentrator Nic Cavell was the first recipient of this award; he reflects on his experience in Nanjing, China, below.

Stories

Walking through Nanjing the first day, it struck me just how green the city is. In the summer, you can easily find feathery green tendrils thronging for long stretches of main road. These naturally fold into one of the city's many university campuses, themselves flocks of green and statues of ancient objects and classical figures.

Nanjing's history is a long and rich one. The city was host to six dynasties in China's past. It served as inspiration for the most highly regarded Chinese novel of all time: *The Story of the Stone*. The man who wrote it was also in charge of the factories that produced Nanjing's famous "Cloud Brocade" and the silk—famous to this day—used to make the emperor's clothes.

But history and culture, it would seem, are finding it increasingly difficult to make an argument for their own relevance. The pressure on young people to find a job, buy a house, and—not before the other two—marry, is so great that there is little time for anything, or anyone, else.

Who else, exactly? Elder care in the home is particularly threatened by pervasive cultural change. While an overwhelming majority of elders are adamant that they want to live with their children, the pressure on the young to

actively care for themselves, their children and their parents can lead to decisions unthinkable even a few decades ago. The privilege of elders in Chinese society has been established over thousands of years, but it is now visibly eroding. Families crammed into two bedroom apartments begin to separate into layers, like something improperly cooked—and many times elders in a nursing home represent the layer that has been skimmed and cast off from the top.

I brought with me an Olympus recording device, and the urge to interview began to present itself in all of the weirdest places—when listening to street musicians; while waiting out the torrential rain with an old grandmother in a small crawlspace. I was amply rewarded.

My time in Nanjing was fixed around a sociological research project designed to understand the explosion in Nanjing's elder care facilities in recent years. What I encountered through a long series of interviews were stories, some as depressing as others were heartening. Believe it or

not, many elders have adjusted well to nursing home life. They have found many new friends and are able to spend their days—the time when family would be away with work, school—playing Ma Jiang instead of trapped alone with their thoughts.

The interviews were conducted in Mandarin, allowing me a direct opportunity to put my language skills to the test. There were many, many amateur mistakes. But with the help of some research students at Nanjing University, I handled a process I wouldn't have thought possible before I came to Brown, and my language came out the better for it.

My spoken Chinese bloomed away from the structured format of these interviews as well. Friends kept appearing

in the unlikeliest places: a car-and-bike mechanic several blocks from NJU campus; a poet who had been frequenting a tea shop in another district for nine years; a reporter fresh out of college, struggling against the weight and dread of censorship; the parents of a friend (of a friend of a friend) that agreed to host me; and the countless students of Nanjing's many universities, some of whom invited me to teach at their summer camp in my free time toward the end of July.

With everyone, I spoke Chinese and built the muscle I never quite developed when I studied French and German in the past. Using only Chinese, I can speak around any words I don't know if I remain aware of the solid foundation of words I do know. And it wasn't just to get by. You can bet I was having conversations about the nature of China's press, the disadvantages of forcing every child to study both English and Mandarin in elementary school, and what it meant to be born a poet in the middle of a cultural desert. And with everyone, I was also probing those feelings about elder care that could clarify some aspect of my research.

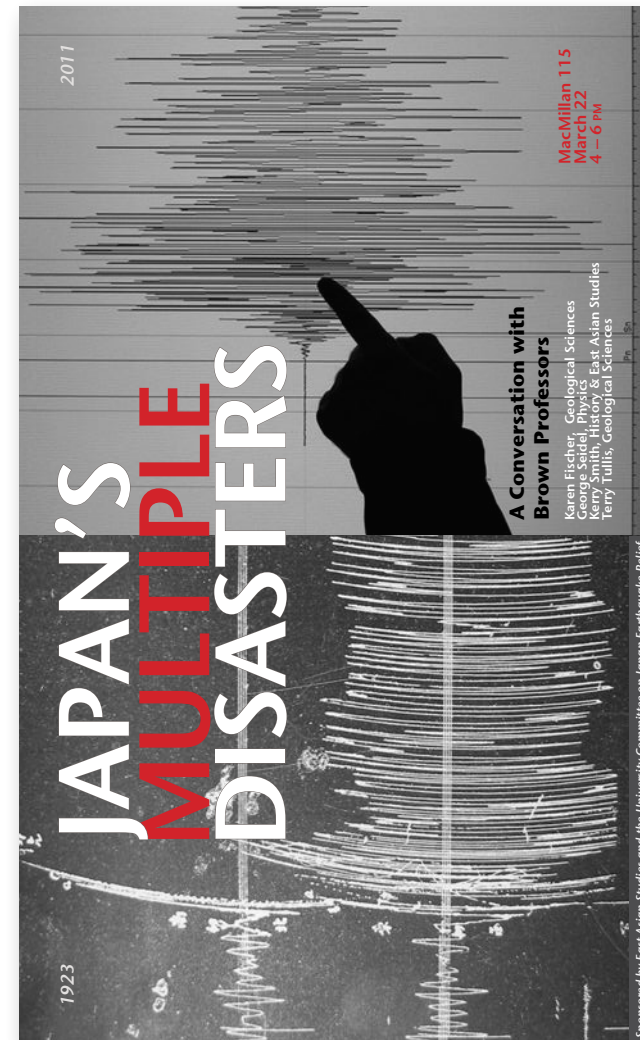
I found touchstones to Chinese culture in people's stories. It started with those of the elders in the homes. They are stories I go back to frequently as I prepare a paper with the research results—part of an independent study I'm enrolled in this semester. But it didn't end there. I brought with me an Olympus recording device, and the urge to interview began to present itself in all of the weirdest places—when listening to street musicians; while waiting out the torrential rain with an old grandmother in a small crawlspace. I was amply rewarded.

While in Nanjing, I had a very specific research project and goals. But the environment leaked into my experience everywhere I turned; and because I let it, my language bloomed and stories appeared. I'm following the stories of the elders to their end right now in my independent study. But the sociological structure and focus are not

things that, after this project, I feel are necessary. When I go back to China next semester, I know that I'll be searching for new and different stories straight away. Maybe I'll even go back to the same homes I visited, but with a new focus on just the story. I would like my EAS thesis to be a longer nonfiction piece that brings these stories together.

My summer was a validation of all the work I've put into EAS so far, and has me excited to press even harder in the semesters to come. Of those, next semester and next summer term I will definitely be spending abroad in China. I plan to both study language and research for my project. I am strongly considering spending even more time abroad after that.

—Nic Cavell, BA expected 2012



*A Conversation with Brown Professors
about Japan's Multiple Disasters*

This event engaged the Brown community in a discussion of the historical and scientific contexts of the devastating earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear crises in Japan. In addition to providing an overview of the events themselves, specialists in seismology, nuclear physics and history (namely, Professor Kerry Smith) explored the implications of the disasters for their respective fields, and the road ahead for Japan.

Alumni Notes

.....1988
Peter Slater: After graduating Brown with an EAS major in 1988, I headed east to Japan to live and work for 7 years in the real estate and advertising industries. I came back to the U.S. to attend Columbia Business School, and joined Morgan Stanley's Japanese equity sales desk in 1998. Having lived away from home for 20 years, I finally clawed my way back to Boston in 2004, and joined Macquarie in early 2005 in a similar functional role, Japanese equity sales. I still speak Japanese with internal colleagues, clients, corporate managements and friends, and I travel to Japan several times a year for work. I look forward to taking my kids there one day.

.....1998
Jason Rabbitt Tomita: My first job out of Brown was working in Yokohama, Japan for the mobile phone infrastructure division at Panasonic. After graduating from Harvard Law School, I practiced law

in Tokyo for a number of years, with stints in California and Singapore. Currently, I'm practicing corporate law at the Palo Alto office of a major US law firm, where I continue to use my Japanese language skills to help service our Japanese clients, who form an important part of our international client base.

On a personal level, I got married while in Japan and we are raising two (hopefully bilingual) boys, 5 and 3 years old.

Recently, I got to see Professor McClain in Tokyo, where he gave a talk on his new book project. The talk was attended by Brown graduates, including several of his former students. It was heartening to meet with other graduates of the Brown East Asian Studies program – everyone seemed to be putting their language skills to good use!

.....2000
Meredith Shaw: I left the US for Japan back in 2003. I had 6 great years

living in Sendai and Kyoto, working in various roles: as an engineer, grad student, lecturer and translator. I moved from Japan to South Korea in September 2009, and for the last year I have been working as a translator and proofreader at the Korean Institute for National Unification. After almost 8 years abroad I am beginning to contemplate returning to the US to pursue a Ph.D. in IR or PoliSci. But in the meantime, I would love to hear from any Brown alumni in Seoul; you can find me through my blog, <http://tasotyosotbosot.blogspot.com/>

.....2001
Aya Brackett: I was in the class of 2001 and majored in East Asian Studies and Visual Arts. I now live in Oakland, CA and work as a freelance travel and food photographer for publications including the New York Times Magazine, Bon Appetit and Travel + Leisure.

.....2002
Emily Farrow: After Brown, I worked in Japan

and then the U.S. supporting exchanges and cultural programs for several years. Then, in 2006 I enrolled in the IUC Japanese language program in Yokohama, and after completing that I began my masters degree at The Fletcher School at Tufts University. I graduated with a Masters in International Business, and currently work at a financial firm in Boston.

Erin Kelley: I would like to announce the arrival of my daughter Elena Sage Schoneveld on June 5, 2011! Looking forward to visiting Brown next June, 2012 for my ten-year reunion and to sharing it with my daughter.



.....2004
Sara Novak: I have just returned to Crested Butte, Colorado from China where I was a China Instructor for Where There Be Dragons. As a China Instructor I helped 13 intrepid American high school students discover the craziness, diversity and beauty of China. We started in Kunming and spent a good deal of time traveling through Qinghai and Gansu, arranging homestays for the students with Tibetan nomads, Naxi and Yi people. My boyfriend of over four years, Ashton Hepburn, proposed before I left for China, and we are planning on getting married in Crested Butte, Colorado in July 2012. We will move to Montana to snowboard for the first part of the winter, before relocating back to the East Coast (Boston) at the end of January for the next few years. I'll love to reconnect with those in the Boston area! My email is sarajnovak@gmail.com.

.....2007
Alexander Richardson: I am still continuing on the path that Zhang Mei-

ing opened to me as I begin a dual program with Wharton/Lauder at the University of Pennsylvania, combining MBA degree work with an MA in China-focused international studies. I'd be delighted to be in touch with anyone passing through Philadelphia.

Catrina Joos: I am currently working on my M.A. in English at Bucknell University. I graduate in May 2012.

.....2008
Charlie Custer: I'm currently living in Beijing, writing about the Asia tech scene for [Penn Olson](#) and producing news segments on China for Link TV. Together with my wife — we just got married earlier this week — I'm also working on a full-length documentary film about kidnapped and street children in China that still doesn't have a title.

.....2009
Christine Lee: I am currently working at a fashion brand in NYC, but hope to transition to a field with

more of a correlation to East Asian Studies, and eventually work in East Asia.

Daniel Perez: I'm now starting my second year at Georgetown Law, where—though unfortunately doing nothing relevant to East Asia—I am having a good experience nonetheless. This past summer I interned with the U.S. Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, and have recently gravitated toward finance and banking regulation as a possible career.

.....2011
Liz Connolly: I'm currently working between Beijing and Shenzhen for AIC Education.

Dana Mirsalis: I will be starting a full-year Fulbright research grant in Japan in mid-September. I will be conducting research on Shinto and how it has adapted to modernizing forces.

We want to hear from YOU. Email [eas@brown.edu](mailto: eas@brown.edu) and keep us in the know!

Please also contact us if you're interested in speaking to concentrators about what you did with a degree in East Asian Studies... Good old-fashioned campus visits or new-fangled digital narratives are both more than welcome.

