From the Editors

ASIANetwork Conference, 2006:
Teaching with Technologies—Old and New

This issue of the ASIANetwork Exchange reflects the success of the 14th annual ASIANetwork Conference, held this past April in Lisle, Illinois. With a registration of some two hundred participants, the gathering was the largest in the history of the Network. However, the conference was also significant for its programming, which included an emphasis upon the use of various media to enhance the teaching of Asia.

Richard Bresnahan (see photo), who delivered the conference’s initial keynote address, set the tone for the event when he described how he molded ancient Japanese pottery-making techniques together with his unique aesthetic perspective to create the artistic pieces that have won him world renown and the prestigious title of “Master Potter.” Bresnahan’s vision includes combining an appreciation for Japanese cultural sensibilities with a commitment to environmental sustainability.

Saturday evening’s keynote by PBS journalist Fred de Sam Lazaro described the challenges—and satisfaction—he has found in bringing stories of Asia to American audiences through the modern medium of television.

A number of other outstanding presentations from the conference appear in this issue—all centering on the use of electronic and print media.

John Williams, for example, describes how he has encouraged students to make their own short video documentaries as they conduct research about modern Chinese history. In so doing, they learn how to evaluate historical photographs in ways that are reminiscent of the methods professional historians employ in their evaluation of written sources.

Panel members Hong Jiang, Tamara Bentley, and Rashna Singh examine how the use of word and image can be creatively employed to teach about Asia. Professors Jiang and Bentley describe how they have developed a team-taught course focusing upon the interconnections between Chinese poetry and art, culminating in
**ASIANetwork** is a consortium of over one hundred seventy North American colleges and universities that strives to strengthen the role of Asian Studies within the framework of liberal arts education to help prepare succeeding generations of undergraduates for a world in which Asian societies play prominent roles in an ever more interdependent world. The unique teaching mission of the undergraduate liberal arts institution poses special opportunities and challenges in the development of Asian Studies. ASIANetwork seeks to encourage the study of Asian countries and cultures on our campuses and to enable our students and faculty to experience these cultures first hand. In a time of fiscal constraints, ASIANetwork facilitates conversation among faculty and administrators concerning the development and strengthening of Asian studies programs, as well as ways to foster collaboration among institutions.

The ASIANetwork EXCHANGE, *A Newsletter for Teaching About Asia*, is published three times a year. As an important venue for communication among members, the newsletter includes information and articles in its sections Network News, Teaching about Asia, Media Resources, Research of Note, For Our Students, and New and Noteworthy.

We welcome submissions of materials for any section of the newsletter. **Deadlines** for submission: **November 1** for the Winter issue, **February 1** for the Spring issue, and **July 1** for the Fall issue. The editors reserve the right to edit all materials submitted for publication.

Materials may be submitted electronically to <anexchange@iwu.edu>, or disks may be sent to Patra Noonan, ASIANetwork EXCHANGE, Illinois Wesleyan University, P. O. Box 2900, Bloomington, Illinois 61702-2900. For further information contact the editors at the above e-mail address or by telephone at (309) 556-3420.

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From the Executive Director

ASIANetwork 2005-2006 Report:
Last Year’s Highlights, This Year’s Challenges
Teddy O. Amoloza
Illinois Wesleyan University

Network Advances
This past year set records for ASIANetwork in two aspects: we ended the year with an all-time high in membership—176 institutional members, 138 full members, 27 associate members, and 11 affiliate organizations (see list on inside back cover); and for the first time, attendance at the spring conference reached 200.

These records are again a testimony to the increasing vitality of the consortium and the affirmation of ASIANetwork’s role in promoting Asian Studies at liberal arts institutions. And as we continue to attract new members, we continue to deliver the different programs that have defined the kind of benefits that are available to faculty members at ASIANetwork member institutions. At the beginning of this calendar year the various selection committees chose the recipients for the different grants: the eight schools that will receive arts consultancy visits, the four schools that will host visiting Vietnamese scholars and the 13 research teams comprising 65 students and faculty mentors who went on their research to Asia this past summer.

At the beginning of this calendar year the various selection committees chose the recipients for the different grants: the eight schools that will receive arts consultancy visits, the four schools that will host visiting Vietnamese scholars and the 13 research teams comprising 65 students and faculty mentors who went on their research to Asia this past summer.

Responding to Setbacks
We also had our share of setbacks last year: we did not receive funding from the Department of Education for a second Pearl River Delta faculty development seminar, and we were not able to secure funding for the second volume of our book series that focuses on missionary archives. At the April meeting, the Board accepted these setbacks as a challenge and responded accordingly. Instead of pursuing funding for another Pearl River Delta faculty development seminar, the Board decided to be more pro-active and consider other potential areas in Asia for such kind of seminar. Thus a new committee, the Future Faculty Development Projects Committee was formed, chaired by board vice-chair Don Clark with Bob Eng, Jim Kodera, Mary-Ann Milford and Cathy Benton as members. This group will develop ideas for group faculty development seminars at various sites in Asia. Once a program is approved by the Board, a subcommittee will write a proposal that will be passed to the Development Committee to search for funding.

Our inability to secure funding for the second volume of the book series and our difficulties identifying a potential benefactor to fund the entire book series (with six volumes in addition to the Asian Art in the Undergraduate Curriculum that is funded by the Luce Foundation) have inspired us to consider alternative ways for producing the book series. Discussions are now on-going about the possibility for web-based publication of some, if not all of these volumes for our Resources for Undergraduate Teaching series. Still, the challenge will be to identify a potential benefactor for this ambitious project. Hence, the Development Committee has quite a formidable task ahead.

On a more cheery note, ASIANetwork is on solid financial footing. As of the end of June our Vanguard funds totaled $866,000. This plus the $390,000 of the Asian Arts grant and other monies that were placed in certificate of deposit last April, the $433,000 of the grant money from the Freeman Foundation to run the 2007 Student-Faculty Fellows program, and the $74,000 in checking and savings—all these add up to assets of nearly $1.763M. With this financial picture, our challenge is to develop programs that meet our needs and to find funding agencies that will support those projects so that we will continue our financial viability after the current grants run out. I am confident that our Board of Directors and Development Committee will do their utmost best to ensure that this happens.

It is simply a pleasure to work with such a dedicated, creative, and stimulating Board of Directors. I am particularly grateful to Richard Bohr, who helped and encouraged me as I wound my way through my first year on this job and who continues to be a key player in his current capacity as ex-officio Past Board Chair; to Phyllis Larson, whose brilliance and foresight is evidenced by her leadership in the strategic planning process that we (continued on next page)
have embarked upon (see her piece for more details on this undertaking); and to all the members of the Board, the Development Committee, the Past Chairs Council, and the Council of Advisors for their continued encouragement and faith in me. They each bring their unique strengths and perspectives to the table, and ASIANetwork is so much richer from the dynamism and contributions of these energetic folks. I look forward to another year of whirlwind and exciting activities.

**Thank you to the Illinois Wesleyan ASIANetwork Team**

ASIANetwork’s first year of being headquartered at Illinois Wesleyan University was marked by a flurry of activities: managing membership records, organizing the Fall Board meeting, selecting grantees for different initiatives, organizing the Council of Advisors meeting and the first Past Chairs Advisory Council meeting at the AAS conference, running the Spring conference, organizing the Spring Board meeting, working on different grant and project initiatives, managing our finances and investments, and producing the three issues of this newsletter.

Taking on these many responsibilities, the Illinois Wesleyan ASIANetwork team delivered on their tasks exceptionally well. Thus I end this piece with an expression of gratitude to all of them: to Linda Tuttle, our controller, who expertly handled the flow of our finances, even through the several weeks that she was on maternity leave; to Patra Noonan, administrative assistant, who always stepped up to the plate and very capably provided assistance whenever and wherever needed, and whose expertise in PageMaker is evident in the three issues of this newsletter; to Roxy Ransom, student assistant, who cheerily worked as our office gopher and patientely helped in preparing for the conference; and to Tom Lutze and Irv Epstein, co-editors of the ASIANetwork Exchange, whose abilities to find just the right materials for publication and whose editorial acumen have raised the quality of the newsletter to new heights. I applaud them all for catching the ASIANetwork spirit, and I sincerely thank them for their dedicated work during this past year. Thanks very much, gang!

* * * * *

...Reflections on my Asia Travels

I wrote this piece after having returned from a productive and invigorating 40-day trip to Asia, visiting the Philippines: Kunming, Lijiang and Guangzhou in southern China; and the Hong Kong and Macao Special Administrative Regions. During this trip the cultural and economic diversity and the vibrancy of this region of the world again became very evident to me.

Of course, I am familiar with the ethnic diversity in my own country, the Philippines, and the plight of its Muslim citizens, who have been displaced from their homes because of the volatile situation in Mindanao and who are now dispersed in different provinces in the country, trying to eke out a living as small merchants. But until this trip, I was far less knowledgeable about Chinese minorities. Thus, I was very pleased when the faculty development seminar sponsored by the School for International Training (SIT) that I attended took us to Kunming and Lijiang where 27 minority groups in China are represented.

**A Region of Contrasts**

In Lijiang, we saw the meeting of the old and the new—not just old neighborhoods being taken over by modern structures, but the old town of Lijiang preserved as a UNESCO Cultural Heritage City and the other half of the city replete with modern high rises and dotted by western fast foods.

...Reflections on my Asia Travels

And then there is economic diversity—world stratification replicated in each of the areas I visited. While middle and upper class folks stroll and shop at plush shopping malls and the newly constructed mega-structure that is the Mall of Asia in the Philippines, thousands of children ply the street selling bottled water and snacks to make a living, and millions of people get by on less than four dollars a day.

The economic boom in China similarly has left a number of people behind, especially those in the rural areas. A country that once prioritized providing for all of its citizens now has to deal with the growing economic inequality and the inability of some of its citizens to take advantage of the capitalistic market. There were disabled and homeless people panhandling, street musicians hoping for small donations, and plenty more who cannot afford health insurance coverage.

The industrial growth in Guangzhou is simply staggering: I saw luxury hotels, condominiums and big industrial buildings everywhere, and I also saw small merchants stringing beads at their little stalls in a market place called Yi De Lu.

Hong Kong of course is a vibrant financial hub, and now Macao is positioning itself to be the “Las Vegas of Asia.” The Sands casino, one of the biggest in Las Vegas, has been operating in Macao for quite some time and beckons to everyone who alights the ferry from Hong Kong. Modern hotels are sprouting along the way from the ferry dock to downtown. But behind this prosperity lie stories of human suffering, like those of domestic workers from the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka who left their families behind to work in oftentimes oppressive conditions in order to send home money to support their families.

But behind this prosperity lie stories of human suffering, like those of domestic workers from the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka who left their families behind to work in oftentimes oppressive conditions in order to send home money to support their families. The charm, the allure, and the contradictions of Asia are simply fascinating, and we want our students to be as excited about Asia as we are. But while we are able to pique their curiosity about Asia, our big challenge is to enable them...
From the Board Chair

ASIANetwork at Fifteen: Taking Stock, Meeting New Challenges
Phyllis Larson
St. Olaf College

At the time of our next annual conference, ASIANetwork will turn fifteen! This is a tremendous milestone for our organization. We have many achievements to celebrate: a membership that has grown to more than 170 institutions; a lively annual conference; an endowment fund that continues to grow toward our goal of one million dollars; well-run projects such as the Pearl River Delta Faculty Development Program, the Asian Art in the Undergraduate Curriculum Program, the Vietnam Exchange Program, and the very popular Student Faculty-Fellows Program, that have brought us national attention. We have done all of this and more under the superb leadership of three Executive Directors: Marianna McJimsey (1993-1999), Van Symons (1999-2005), and Teddy Amoloza (2005-).

We hold firm to the core of ASIANetwork’s original mission: infusing Asian Studies across the liberal arts curriculum by promoting curriculum development; advancing inter-institutional cooperation regarding study abroad, grant-writing and other concerns; enhancing faculty development; and providing a vehicle for substantive communication through the Exchange, the website, and the annual conference.

But we are forced to think about the role of ASIANetwork in new ways because the world, our institutions, and ASIANetwork itself have changed in the last fifteen years.

The world has changed:
- China, India and Korea have emerged as critically important economic and political forces.
- “Asias” more accurately describes our area of study than the monolithic term “Asia.” By the same token, we cannot ignore the vitality of the “Asias in America.”
- The Web dominates as a source of information, a medium for communication and research, a tool for teaching, a shared social space.
- The culture of American college students has fused with that in Asian countries in that they listen to the same music, see the same films, and eat the same foods as their Asian counterparts.
- Travel to Asia is easier than ever, and there is a plethora of study abroad programs available to U. S. students.

Liberal arts colleges have changed:
- Many now offer Asian Studies, including Asian languages, generally Chinese and Japanese.
- Our campuses espouse ‘new’ values such as internationalization, interdisciplinarity, and experiential learning.
- Many are feeling increased and sometimes intense pressure to provide more professional programs.
- Many are finding it more and more difficult to survive financially. Even those that are stable financially do not have sufficient resources to initiate new programs.

ASIANetwork has changed:
- It is a much larger network now with 176 members, compared to 45 founding members.
- It has become recognized nationally as the organization to contact regarding Asian Studies in liberal arts colleges.
- It has established a very successful record in conceiving, writing, and administering complex, multi-year, multi-country grant projects.

How should ASIANetwork think about its work now? What do we want ASIANetwork to look like at the end of the next fifteen years?

The 2007 Conference—Exploring the Tasks Ahead

The membership of ASIANetwork is invited to attend the 2007 Annual Conference in Lisle, Illinois, to think together about this theme, “ASIANetwork at Fifteen: Taking Stock, Meeting New Challenges.” Our keynote speakers will address aspects of this theme, and panels are being organized that will guide and provoke our thinking as an organization. We can expect that the world and our member institutions will change perhaps even more rapidly in the next fifteen years than they have in the last fifteen. Which changes are most significant for us as an organization? How can we continue to play a vital role in education about Asia? How can we best serve our members? We hope to organize a number of stimulating panels that will address issues like these that help us define our work for the next fifteen years.

Which changes are most significant for us as an organization? How can we continue to play a vital role in education about Asia? How can we best serve our members?
At the April 2006 Board meeting, we decided to form a Strategic Planning Committee charged with developing and implementing a strategic planning process that will result in a statement of priorities and goals for the organization for the long term.

McCarthy (Board member), Mary-Ann Milford-Lutzker (Board member), and Paul Watt (representing the Development Committee).

I am grateful that Richard Bohr, past Chair, has been willing to give generously of his time this summer to help me get the strategic planning process started. Drawing on his extensive experience as the executive director of the Midwest China Center, he has shared crucial advice and contacts. We hope to secure funding that will allow us to use the services of a consultant in developing our strategic plan.

The formation of the Strategic Planning Committee resulted from a process of planning that was initiated at the Fall 2005 Board meeting. The Board asked me, then Vice-Chair, to begin a series of conversations with various constituencies within ASIANetwork regarding concerns and future directions for the organization, and to report back at the April 2006 Board meeting. The first meeting was an informal gathering that took place in conjunction with the Freeman Asia Symposium in Honolulu on November 30, 2005. Six current and past Board members were able to attend. The second meeting took place when the ASIANetwork Executive Committee convened with the Council of Advisors during the AAS Conference in San Francisco on April 7, 2006. The third meeting, led by past Chair Joan O’Mara, was held the following day, bringing together the ASIANetwork Executive Committee and the newly formed PCAC (Past Chairs Advisory Council). A much longer meeting with PCAC took place before the annual ASIANetwork Conference on April 20, 2006, in Lisle, Illinois. Notes from all these meetings are available on the ASIANetwork web site, as well as a memo from Marianna McJimsey, who was not able to attend any of the meetings. Based on my report of the results of these meetings, the Board decided to form the Strategic Planning Committee. We expect that strategic planning will be an ongoing, regular activity of the Board, not a one-time event.

A second new committee that was also established by Board action at its April 2006 meeting, the Future Faculty Development Projects Committee, is described by Teddy Amoloza in her report in this issue of The Exchange.

It is a privilege to work with our Executive Director Teddy Amoloza, with the ASIANetwork Board, and with all our advisory groups. All have given generously of themselves and their best energies to this organization. No wonder it is such an inspiring and creative group of people to work with. No wonder that Asian Studies is flourishing at so many liberal arts colleges today. But like any vibrant organization, we are not satisfied. We want to accomplish more, and I am confident we will, together.
ASIANetwork Initiatives

Asian Art in the Undergraduate Curriculum
funded by the Henry Luce Foundation

This project seeks to focus on significant but generally less widely known aesthetically and pedagogically important works of Asian art and material culture that exist on our college campuses. Asian art historians and professionals visit selected campuses as consultants to identify works appropriate to this project. In 2005-2006, eight institutions namely, Beloit College, Connecticut College, DePauw University, Dickinson College, Earlham College, Eckerd College, Guilford College, and Wittenberg University received consultancy visits. This coming year, eight more schools namely, Fairfield University, Luther College, Marietta College, Ohio Wesleyan University, Union College, St. Lawrence University, Wooster College, and Washington & Lee University will receive consultancy visits. Eight more consultancies are available for next academic year. Undergraduate liberal arts schools that have large, medium or even minuscule collections of Asian art and/or material culture are invited to apply. The application deadline for the last round of consultancies is January 8, 2007. For further information contact Dr. Stan Mickel, Project Director, Wittenberg University, 200 West Ward Street, Springfield, OH 45501 (smickel@wittenberg.edu, phone 937-327-6354).

Student-Faculty Fellows Program
funded by the Freeman Foundation

Now in its ninth year, this grant enables individual faculty at liberal arts colleges to take up to five students to East and Southeast Asia to conduct undergraduate research activities. Faculty mentor and students apply as a team. During the past eight years, 361 persons have participated in this program. Funding is available for up to sixty persons (mentors and students combined) to study in Asia during the summer of 2007. Deadline for application is December 1, 2006 with notification in March 2007. For additional information contact Dr. Van J. Symons, Program Director, Augustana College, 639 – 38th Street, Rock Island, IL 61201-2296 (hisymons@augustana.edu, phone 309-794-7413).

The ASIANetwork Consultancy Program

The ASIANetwork Consultancy Program is a service to ASIANetwork member institutions seeking outside advice on ways to strengthen the study of Asia on their campuses. Drawing from a pool of over thirty experienced consultants who have served in the program from 1994 to the present, the ASIANetwork Consultancy Program can recommend a list of possible consultants to interested institutions and help with the planning of the campus visit. ASIANetwork charges no fee for this service, although colleges who wish to make use of it should plan on covering the travel expenses of the consultants selected and provide consultants with a reasonable honorarium. For more information, please contact Professor P. Richard Bohr, College of Saint Benedict & Saint John’s University, St. Joseph, MN 56374 (rbohr@csbsju.edu, phone: 320-363-5918).

For additional details on all these programs, visit our website at www.asianetwork.org.
Notes on Richard Bresnahan’s 2006 Keynote Address
“Ancient Fires to a Humane Future”

Editor’s note: We want to extend our gratitude to Joseph Rogers, Julie Scegura, John Taylor, and Richard Bohr of Saint John’s University for their teamwork in the production of this article.

Richard Bresnahan is the artist in residence at Saint John’s University where he founded and has conducted a pottery studio for the past 27 years. He established the studio in 1979 after returning from four years in Japan where he apprenticed with the renowned potter Nakazato Takashi. He is known for his woodfired wares and his environmentally conscious approach to creating ceramics.

Bresnahan is the subject of a KTCA Public Television documentary entitled Clay, Wood, Fire and Spirit. Produced by John Whitehead, the documentary was nominated for four Grammy awards, winning two, including the award for best cultural documentary. Bresnahan’s work has been exhibited at many galleries worldwide, including the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA). In 2001 Dr. Matthew Welch, curator of Japanese and Korean Art at the MIA, published Body of Clay, Soul of Fire, a book which examines Bresnahan’s pottery and his methods. The book was one of three finalists for the prestigious Benjamin Franklin award. Bresnahan lives in Avon, Minnesota, with his wife, Colette and three children.

Richard Bresnahan gave the opening keynote address at the 2006 ASIANetwork Conference. His speech, entitled “Ancient Fires to a Humane Future: Asia as the Foundation to Twenty-first Century Environmentalism,” demonstrated how the sustainable systems for ceramics production that developed in Asia over the past 5000 years have not only inspired him and his work, but have also informed his methodology. Bresnahan employed a diverse collection of slides to visually represent and reinforce the various themes of the lecture. We highlight several of these themes and images below.

Theme 1: Use of indigenous materials. Traditionally in Japan, potters employed the concept of tsuchiagi, where local clays were used giving the ceramics they made a certain regional identity and tied them to the local environment. Very often glazes also were made from local materials. Unlike most potters in the United States, Bresnahan operates his studio using clay and glaze materials found on or near the campus of Saint John’s University. Bresnahan harvested clay from a field near campus that will sustain his studio for more than 300 years of pottery and sculpture making.

Right: The hammer part of the clay stamper crushing the hard iron clay at the Onda Pottery in Kyushu, which has been in operation for 280 years.

Theme 2: Connection to nature, the seasons and food. Bresnahan learned in Japan that a potter committed to a sustainable system of ceramic production harmonized his work with the natural order of things. The potter’s experience was closely tied to the passing of the seasons and the food cycle, as materials from plants, nuts and fruits became available for certain periods and then disappear again until the following year. The potters of Japan developed processes to take advantage of seasonally available materials. Efficiency was a highly prized attribute, as today’s lunch might be tomorrow’s source of glaze material.

Bresnahan maintains that to begin to gain any understanding of sustainable systems, a person must witness the passing of an entire calendar year to understand the interconnectedness of the artist, the studio and nature.

Left: The bowl depicting the spiraling bird image is entitled “Nature leaves humans behind” meaning that if we do not listen to nature, human beings as a family will be left behind.
Theme 3: Community. Bresnahan highlighted the importance of the communal model for ceramics production that is particular to Asia. Historically, kilns were designed to serve a public purpose. The ceramic work provided both the food storage and the aesthetic and ritualistic instruments upon which Asian communities developed and prospered. Multi-chambered kilns were developed to allow multiple family groups to fire their ceramics at the same time and render tremendous energy savings.

Bresnahan’s own three-chambered kiln, named for his mentor, Sr. Johanna Becker, OSB, was designed so that only a community of workers, working around the clock for up to 11 days, was able to fire it successfully. Twenty-seven artists from around the world have participated in a wood firing at Bresnahan’s studio. The kiln can hold up to 14,000 pieces at a time and is fired primarily with deadfall found on the campus of Saint John’s University.

Theme 4: Utility. Bresnahan demonstrated the importance of a connection between a potter and the use of the pieces he creates. In a sustainable system, the potter creates functional works to be used by members of the community. Therefore, Bresnahan focuses his work on pieces that not only are aesthetically pleasing, but also serve a specific function or utility.

In his speech, he demonstrated the destructive nature of a ceramics system modified to meet the needs of distant consumers with no connection to the potter. Bresnahan showed a photograph of an impoverished and suffering potter at a large ceramics complex in Jingdezhen China from the early 20th century. All of the pots produced were destined for European and American markets. Shard piles of discarded pots that did not meet the standard required for export created mountains of wasted materials.

Theme 5: Collaboration. Bresnahan believes that collaboration among artists is an essential ethic in sustainable systems. Every year his studio welcomes visiting potters from all over the world to work in the studio and produce objects for the annual woodfiring. Bresnahan also works with artists in other disciplines to create more durable, more functional and more beautiful pieces. For example, Bresnahan collaborates with his friend and fellow artist, Paul Krueger, to make some of the studio’s most remarkable works. Krueger applies rattan handles to Bresnahan’s ceramic teapots to give them the strength and resiliency they require for daily use.

Collaboration also serves another purpose in Bresnahan’s studio—efficiency. Many Master Potters from Japan, including Suzuki Goro and Koie Ryoji, have not only visited the studio to work, but have also sent unfired pieces by mail for firing in the Johanna kiln. The reason is simple: to fire a kiln the size of Bresnahan’s in Japan would cost more than $60,000 in wood fuel alone. By opening his studio and his kiln to artists from around the world, Bresnahan is allowing important pieces to be made that otherwise might never have had the chance to be fired in a wood kiln.
Standing at the nexus of history and modernity, photography is the “classic example” of what has come to be termed visual culture. Providing instant visual access to a given place and time, photography has since its birth been a vital means of preserving the past. The relationship of photography to history is intimate and complex, extending far beyond representation. Photographs operate historically: not only are the moments they depict irretrievably past at the instant of capture, but their ordering of reality is a negotiation between “passive surrender to the facts and active reshaping of them...the viewfinder is a political instrument, a tool for making the past suitable for the future.” Thus, like other historical documents, photographs are not self-contained, but require interrogation on a number of levels to establish their relationship to the phenomena they claim (or are claimed) to represent. Like other historical documents, photographs are not self-contained, but require interrogation on a number of levels to establish their relationship to the phenomena they claim (or are claimed) to represent. Like other historical documents, photographs are not self-contained, but require interrogation on a number of levels to establish their relationship to the phenomena they claim (or are claimed) to represent.

How do we train students to do this? This essay describes one method: having them use photographic sources to create documentary films, in this case for a course on Twentieth Century Chinese history.

The assignment’s goal is to train students to read and use photographs with the same interpretive caution and analytical precision written sources require. As documentary filmmakers building narratives about the past, students experience directly the construction and dissemination of historical knowledge through visual media, momentarily becoming practicing historians of the sort whose tremendous influence on collective memory goes largely unnoticed or questioned outside academia. Hopefully, they come to view documentaries more critically as well. Pedagogically, the project thus also promotes several of the information literacy standards promoted by the Association of College and Research Libraries. In groups of three, students are assigned a range of dates about which to create a three minute film, using photographs and archival footage as raw materials. Compiled on DVD, the films will span the entire 20th century, making this a collaborative project both within groups and among the class as a whole.

There are three potential sources of project materials: scanned images; digital images gathered from the internet, and digitized film clips—via the Video Encyclopedia of the 20th Century. Scanned images give the best resolution (and thus most visual possibilities) and usually the best metadata (information about the image). Unfortunately, scanning is time consuming, and copyright issues vague. Internet image collections are convenient, searchable, with licensing and use policies often explicitly stated. Good examples are the New York Public Library Digital Collection and Harvard’s Visual Information Access, both of which provide stipulations on use and licensing. The Associated Press’s photo archive is also available by subscription. The image sets, distributed on CD-ROM, should contain at least thirty photos and clips, preferably more. Presented with more material than they could possibly use in a three minute film, students must make editorial decisions about which to use. Large and varied image sets also reduce the ever-present hazard of sources overdetermining argument.

In the first phase of the project, groups choose their images and write their script. During this period, students write an essay analyzing one image, submit an annotated list of images selected for their documentary, and write their script (due to...
before production commences). It is important to focus solely on the research and writing process at this point, which will both determine the overall quality of the film, and prepare students for a compressed production cycle requiring a clear plan of action.

Next, instructional technologists help students record their script, and teach them to use Apple’s iMovie to assemble their film in a series of production workshops. Final cuts are compiled on DVD and viewed as a class. This concluding event should be equal parts peer review and class party, where students critique other groups’ films and explain the choices made in their own.

Photographs, students often assume, speak for themselves. They don’t. Captions, voiceovers, and the viewer’s understanding of historical context all ascribe meaning to the image.

Take for example Li Zhensheng’s 1967 photo of the Harbin Construction Institute Library (fig. 1).3 When asked to described what’s happened in the photo, students usually draw on their knowledge of the Cultural Revolution’s assault on learning, whether in the form of the Four Olds campaign or the destruction of subversive foreign books. Armed with this historical context, the image becomes self-explanatory: Red Guards have ransacked the library for pollutive works, now strewn across the floor.

This is only half-true. Red Guards have indeed ransacked the library, but with rather different search criteria. The soft cover books on the floor were not chosen for anything, but were instead discarded for their poor aerodynamic qualities. Hardcover books, conspicuous for their absence, made better projectile weapons, and the ones missing from this picture had already gone on to a new career as ammunition in the combat between rival factions.

Thus, the general “truth” this picture conveys differs from the one most students assume. “Destruction of learning,” or “assault on the past” is not the dimension of the Cultural Revolution the image directly references, but rather the anarchy and violence of the Red Guard movement.

The question confronting students therefore is this: given that the assault on the past was an undeniably central feature of the Cultural Revolution, and that few images convey the destruction of learning more viscerally than a library in ruins, would it not be an effective documentary style to choose such images in a documentary about the Cultural Revolution, rather than factional violence? If so, are ethics of representation violated by using a lesser half-truth in service of a greater one? Classroom discussion of this example is fruitful and often heated, but also increases student self-consciousness in the selection and use of images, heightening their awareness of the power of representation, Ken Burns-style. That is, if a photograph is assumed to accurately represent truth, and a voiceover assumed to accurately represent the photograph, then the voiceover comes to stand for truth. The process itself imparts discursive authority; awareness of this demonstrates to students that photographs (and other visual media) are not unmediated texts.

If a photograph is assumed to accurately represent truth, and a voiceover assumed to accurately represent the photograph, then the voiceover comes to stand for truth. The process itself imparts discursive authority; awareness of this demonstrates to students that photographs (and other visual media) are not unmediated texts. In fact, there are at minimum two layers of interpretation at work in a given image even before student filmmakers add their own. The photographer provides the first layer of interpretation, first by choice of subject and moment, then by framing and composition. The metadata provides the second—and subsequent—layers. For students undertaking this project, the metadata comprised the original captions accompanying the photographs. (Word and image are intertextual; they do not operate in a vacuum.) If publishers crop an image from its original dimensions, that adds yet another layer of interpretation.

In fact, there are at minimum two layers of interpretation at work in a given image even before student filmmakers add their own. The photographer provides the first layer of interpretation, first by choice of subject and moment, then by framing and composition. The metadata provides the second—and subsequent—layers. For students undertaking this project, the metadata comprised the original captions accompanying the photographs. (Word and image are intertextual; they do not operate in a vacuum.) If publishers crop an image from its original dimensions, that adds yet another layer of interpretation.
These interpretive layers have many effects. As a single image is reproduced and displayed across different contexts, the corresponding lineages of representation introduce difference to sameness.

Consider two versions of a photo of PLA soldier Wang Guoxiang, also taken by Li Zhensheng (figs. 2-3). The first is reprinted from the entire frame of the negative, with a caption supplying context in a fairly straightforward manner. The second has been cropped and given a caption interpreting this particular image with reference to general historical phenomena.

Note the differences in effect. In the first example, Wang is centered in the frame; he appears smaller because the room behind him provides scale; we see that he sits on a bed. The hand with pad in the lower left corner indicates context: this is an interview with a journalist, not a struggle session. In this visual context, his facial expression has an aspect of severity, but one that grows more from earnest explanation than anger or aggression.

Cropping has removed all traces of Wang’s surroundings from the second image, leaving him to loom threateningly, even angrily. The journalist and background details have vanished. The editors provide an interpretive framework by labeling him an anonymous “True Believer.” Bold face type heightens the imposition of archetype, while the withholding of Wang’s name completes the erasure of identity. The caption ominously describes Red Guards who have “fanned out” across the country to “hunt down ‘reactionaries,’” supplying a vocabulary for interpretation: “revolutionary passion and vigor” defines him; he “clasps” the Little Red Book, “points proudly” to his Mao badges, which he has received from peasant audiences “around China” who are “moved by his revolutionary zeal.” (Nowhere mentioned is the three-week conference where the photograph was taken.)

The point here is not that The Chinese Century has distorted history, but rather that its presentation of this particular image serves a clear rhetorical purpose. Many student films will, of course, engage in far more questionable discursive strategies, some overtly political or unintentionally Orientalist, others simply generated by lack of familiarity with course materials. As with written assignments, this is unavoidable, and indeed an integral part of the educational process. Practice may not make students perfect information producers and consumers, but it helps them to become more critical ones. ☟

Endnotes

1 These remarks have benefited from the feedback of colleagues at the 2006 AsiaNetwork conference in Lisle, IL, and the June, 2006 ACM conference “Introducing a New Generation of Students to Academic Inquiry,” as well as Colorado College’s Academic Technology Services staff.


6 This project should fall under the purview of “fair use,” as long as images are credited and student films not sold. For the current state of copyright law as regards educational and other use, see the website of the Library of Congress’s Section 108 Study Group (http://www.loc.gov/section 108/), especially the comments of Howard Besser.


(continued from page 4)

to look at Asia not simply through their Western lenses. In a discussion I had with a student from Yale who was participating in an SIT summer program in Kunming for example, he passionately argued that the best solution to the widening income gaps in China was for the poor rural folks to all go to the cities and work there. So much for agricultural development!

My experiences during this trip and my conversations with American students while in Asia further reinforced my conviction of the critical role that ASIANetwork plays in Asian studies in this country. We have our work cut out for us and I am confident that we will meet this challenge! ☟

(continued from page 1)

as a mainland tour of Chinese sites. Rashna Singh illustrates Edward Said’s concept of Orientalism to her students through her analysis of imagery that depicts India according to western preconceptions and stereotypes.

Karil Kucera, as part of a panel that focused upon the benefits and challenges of inter-institutional collaboration, discusses the Image Database to Enhance Asian Studies (IDEAS) project, whereby representatives from four ASIANetwork schools, have created a shared digital database, now available on the worldwide web.

These articles represent only a portion of the conference highlights. Space limitations prevent us from including in this issue several of the excellent presentations from the 2006 conference, but we certainly will do our best to share them with our members in the Winter issue.

These conference presentations, along with the other articles we are publishing in the Exchange, are representative of the creativity and innovation that characterize the efforts of many of our ASIANetwork colleagues to teach about Asia with sensitivity and insight. Because outstanding teaching involves discussion as well as collaboration and sharing, we invite your comments and reactions to the articles presented here.

Tom Lutze and Irv Epstein
Co-editors
Using Word and Image to Teach a Course on Chinese Culture

Hong Jiang
Tamara Bentley
Colorado College

Summary of two related papers given at 2006 ASIANetwork Conference

Our team-taught course “Word and Image in Chinese Culture,” introduces students to the intercreative relationship between Chinese poetry and painting, or in some cases more generally between word and image. Professor Hong Jiang is a Chinese literature specialist, and Professor Tamara Bentley is a Chinese art historian, therefore we have tried to find ways in which our two fields inform each other.

The Roman poet Horace proclaimed: “as in painting, so in poetry,” and this point of view has been influential in the Western tradition. In 11th-century China, the Song poet-scholar Su Shi expressed his great admiration for the Tang poet-painter Wang Wei in the words: “There is painting in his poetry and poetry in his painting.” Perhaps even more so than in the West, in China, poetry, painting, and calligraphy have been considered integrated art forms. To fully appreciate these arts requires some understanding of their shared aesthetics.

In contrast to the imagery on the coffins, the T-shaped silk banner originally draped over the outer coffin of the interred Lady Dai depicts a sort of “passport” to the afterlife—with ordered stages rising from her funeral, to her greeting of ministers, to her passing beyond heavenly bureaucrats to the moon. Here the sense of decorum in Lady Dai’s portrait, the hierarchy of stages, and the recurrent picturing of officials—all resonate primarily with Confucian traditions.

The coexistence of Confucian and Daoist imagery in the Han dynasty shows that these two belief systems were not mutually exclusive. Rather than looking for black or white belief systems, then, we might more usefully concern ourselves with the relative level of each mode of thought in the writings of any given thinker, or within any particular set of objects. What aspects of the work at hand may be considered Confucian in orientation? What aspects may be considered Daoist?

(continued on next page)

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Figure 1: Daoist motifs on Mawangdui coffins

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Sima Xiangru (179-117 BCE) is perhaps the most important Han dynasty poet working in the fu format—that is in the form of long, embroidered elegies. Sima Xiangru was brought into the circle of poets working for Han Wudi, and his poem on Han Wudi’s Shanlin hunting park, scripted in about 130 BCE, reveals a lyric, unfolding line similar to the flowing dragon-line we saw in the Mawangdui coffin. In the poem, this qi line is initially associated with racing waters:

Eight rivers, coursing onward,  
Spreading in different directions, each with its own form.  
North, South, East, and West,  
They race and tumble,  
Pouring through the chasms of Pepper Hill,  
Skirting the banks of the river islets,  
Winding through the cinnamon forests,  
And across the broad meadows.

These waters are varied in their movement, and at times resemble cloud forms:

Darting and twisting,  
Foaming and tossing,  
In a thunderous chaos;  
Arching into hills, billowing like clouds,  
They dash to left and right,  
Plunging and breaking in waves  
That chatter over the shallows;

These rivers, with their free “left and right” movement “billowing into clouds” draw us back to visual representations of the qi force. If we look back at the Mawangdui coffin (fig. 1), we can, for example, relate this description to the sinuous dragons and to the cloud forms bordering the dragons—the crossed lines at times culminating in billowy forms. In fact, these line-to-cumulus forms date back to Shang and Zhou bronzes.

It is interesting that the four flowing rivers in the poem are seen as germinative—the way into the poem, almost as though we were riding the water. Reading through the long poem, the force of the transforming, moving line seems to transfer itself from the water to the mountains, to the vegetation, to roaming animals and birds, to paths around palaces, to trees with “limbs entwined,” to gibbons among trees “sporting among the limbs,” to the hunting chariots of the Son of Heaven and his entourage, which “race in droves./Rounding the hills, streaming across the lowlands./Like enveloping clouds or drenching rain.” (translation Victor Mair, The Columbia Anthology of Traditional Chinese Literature, p. 399-410.) It is on the momentum of this flowing line that the embroidered details are hung.

In terms of Han thought overall, it is interesting that this poem is comprised of a somewhat contradictory set of rhetorics—in substance it is very Daoist, yet it ends with a moralistic Confucian lesson. Towards the end of the poem, the Son of Heaven has an epiphany about this hunting, stating: “Alas! What is this but a wasteful extravagance?” He determines to reform himself:

He sports now in the Park of the Six Arts,  
Races upon the Road of Benevolence and Righteousness,  
And scans the Forest of the Spring and Autumn Annals.

Thus, in Sima Xiangru’s fu poem the ruler ultimately turns to learning for guidance and amusement, and spends his time hunting within the written classics and devoting himself to moral cultivation. In this poem, then, as in Han dynasty tomb objects, we see a mix of Daoist and Confucian thought.

2. The use of imagery in Tang dynasty poems

Tang poetry was built around emotions evoked through exterior scenery (jingjie “scene-and-emotion”). The emotional dimension of most Tang poetry is best expressed by way of poetic images, because the deepest meaning of the poem cannot be conveyed by words. (This concept is both Buddhist and Daoist.) Ironically perhaps, the formal requirements for parallel couplets in shi (regulated verse) poetry also demand a consummate level of skill with the language. Tang poetic language emphasizes word/image conjunction. These lines from a poem by Tang poet Wen Tingyun reveal no linkage of any kind from one word to the other. Rather, the nouns of each word work together in a compound fashion to create a visual scene:

ji sheng mao dian yue  
Cock (n.) crow (n.) straw (n.) inn (n.) moon (n.)

ren ji ban qiao shuang  
Man (n.) trace (n.) plank (n.) bridge (n.) frost (n.)

More fluidly translated this way:

Cockcrow, the moon above the straw inn,  
Footprints upon the frost covering the plank bridge.

The question to students is: What connects these isolated nouns together to create a poetic scene? We would argue that the poetic scene is created by means of visual imagery. It is an early winter morning. On the country road, there is a traveler, who is hurrying on his trip. The poetic language creates for the reader a cinematic visuality.

The following three couplets are from one of Wang Wei’s poems:

gu mu wu ren ji  
Old wood no human tracks appear,

ji sheng mao dian yue  
Cock (n.) crow (n.) straw (n.) inn (n.) moon (n.)

ren ji ban qiao shuang  
Man (n.) trace (n.) plank (n.) bridge (n.) frost (n.)
“A bell” in the first couplet seems to identify the existence of the temple, but it is the sound of a bell from somewhere in the deep mountains. In the second couplet, instead of presenting the brook and sun, the poet speaks of “brook voices” and “sun color,” which, as descriptions of the natural scene, are almost conundrums. The third couplet opens with “kong,” empty, a word that in Wang Wei’s poems indicates extreme stillness and remoteness; at the same time, the Buddhist connotations of “kong” suggests the illusory quality of the entire natural world. Following “empty hills,” there is a continuing emptiness – “no one in sight.” The second line seems to show a scene of human activity, “the sound of someone talking,” but there is still no definite subject: who is talking? Students concluded that “someone talking” may imply not the presence of humans, but the mountain/pure phenomena that is speaking in the poem. The poet becomes essentially a part of nature.

3. The reinvention of Tang poetry in later paintings

Many later Chinese paintings are based upon Tang poetry. Sometimes we find inscribed entire poems on paintings, at other times only single couplets. The Northern Song painter Guo Xi, for example, painted “Lofty Message of the Forests and Streams” based upon Tang poet Wei Yingwu’s poetic couplet: “Heavy rain, the spring flood rushes rapidly through the night; Not a soul on the bank, a solitary ferry lies aslant the water.” (chun chao dai yu wan lai ji, ye du wu ren zhou zi heng.) Later, the well-known Ming scholar painter Wen Zhengming used the same couplet to create a painting. Comparing these paintings brings out the ongoing influence of the poetic tradition; and also allows us to identify differences in the styles of paintings from different time periods.

In the Southern Song, the academy painter Ma Lin produced a fan painting for emperor Lizong that illustrated a famous couplet by Wang Wei (see fig. 2). This couplet, inscribed on the reverse of the fan by Lizong, is again profoundly Buddhist in its contemplation of the void:

Xing dao shui qiong chu, Walking to where the water end,
Zuo kan yun qi shi. Sitting to watch the time the clouds arise.

Wang Wei (699-761 CE) was often paired with Tao Qian (365-427 CE) as a leading figure in the galaxy of nature poets. But Tao Qian saw himself as being at home in the world of nature. Wang Wei’s poems have a greater sense of emptiness.

4. Wai-lim Yip and “The Daoist Theory of Knowledge”

In his article titled “The Daoist Theory of Knowledge,” Wai-lim Yip discusses two aesthetic issues derived from Daoist thought that have significant impacts on how we see Chinese art. One issue is the multiple perspectives allowed in, for example, a Song landscape painting. As Yip writes: “In most Chinese landscape painting, the front mountains, the back mountains, the front villages, the villages behind the mountains, the bays in front of the mountain, the bays behind the mountains, all can be seen simultaneously. This is because the viewer has not locked himself into only one viewing position nor restricted his view of things from one, determinate visual category.” He provides this example: a man may be standing on a bridge looking out at the scenery, and that locus delineates his “scenic view.” However, another man may be standing on a hill looking down at the man on the bridge, and that bridge figure is thus incorporated into the “scenic view” of the man standing higher. In like manner, we find in landscape paintings a multiplicity of viewpoints.

A second issue concerns the dual meaning of the Chinese character jian. Jian means to see, or look at from here to there, but it also means to appear—the emergence of an object. The second meaning reverses the relationship of subject to object, letting the object essentially disclose itself. The implication of this idea is that the viewer and the viewed are in a non-dichotomous relationship. The lack of subject-object dichotomy also extends to the ability to “view things as things view themselves” (yi wu guan wu).

5. The experiential dimension: taking students to China for two weeks

It can be difficult to subject abstract academic themes to the concrete world of modern China and the vicissitudes of travel. On the other hand, the sense of space realized in situ—contrasting for example the narrow hutongs/alleys of Beijing to the vast courtyards of the Forbidden City—provides an experiential understanding that cannot be accomplished by way of one-dimensional powerpoint presentations or slides.

In our two weeks in China, we travel first to Beijing, and from there to Xi’an. We then travel to Shanghai, Suzhou, and Shanghai, Suzhou, and (continued on page 18)
Transmitting Orientalism: Pedagogical Implications

Rashna Singh
Colorado College

In Orientalism, his seminal study of how geographical sectors such as the “Orient” and “Occident” were essentially “man-made” (5) and thus any distinctions between them ontological and epistemological, Edward Said asks: “How does Orientalism transmit or reproduce itself from one epoch to another?” (15). This question is especially pertinent to those of us who teach courses that concern any aspect of Asian culture, and it becomes a significant pedagogical consideration. For Orientalism does transmit and reproduce itself from one epoch to another, and our students are certainly not immune from the effects of such reproduction and transmission. In teaching Asian or Asian-American literatures, a professor soon becomes cognizant of the fact that a student walks into the classroom trailing images that have attached themselves from a variety of sources. For the current generation of students, those sources are so often visual: cinema and television, computer and video games. But print media remains a perennial source of the production of such images as well.

Let us examine some of the images about India that may be embedded in the minds of students from a variety of media when they come into the classroom. These images are sometimes difficult to dislodge and certainly must be contended with in teaching Anglophone Indian literature. Preexistent images may come up against images in the literature we are reading in the course and the resultant clash is something both student and professor must examine in order to think critically about the material. Of course when images contend with each other the result is not inevitably a clash. There can be mutation and modification, adjustment and amendment in a continuing process of intertextuality and the result is a richer understanding of the complexity and composite nature of our imagistic apprehension. Texts exist in contexts, Said reminds us (13). Images do not exist in isolation but network with prior images.

Sometimes these images succeed in dislodging each other; sometimes they exist in simultaneity like the “consumed multitudes…jostling and shoving” that Salman Rushdie describes in Midnight’s Children (4).

The discourse of Orientalism, which, Said, drawing upon Foucault, reminds us is always a corollary of power, remains operative. This is hardly surprising since power still slopes from west to east, even if its points of equilibrium have shifted. For students this discourse operates in two important ways. First it reinscribes the positional superiority that underlay the building of vast empires. Second, it succeeds in sustaining the binary divisions on which this superiority is premised.

[S]lower still slopes from west to east, even if its points of equilibrium have shifted. For students this discourse operates in two important ways. First it reinscribes the positional superiority that underlay the building of vast empires. Second, it succeeds in sustaining the binary divisions on which this superiority is premised.
cultures to an essential set of characteristics. One of these characteristics is the unchanging nature of “Oriental” societies, the “timeless eternal” as Said terms it (72). “Oriental” cultures don’t progress; they stay still and stagnant. Leaving aside the problematics of definition for the purpose of this article, when ‘progress’ such as modernization and industrialization is evident and cannot be disaffirmed, it is often undercut representatively by overlaying reminders of the past.

For instance, the August 17, 1998 issue of Chemical & Engineering News features a cover story on “India’s Chemical Industry.” The cover portrays a modern steel and concrete chemical plant but foregrounds it with a picture of a somewhat skinny and indolent looking cow. The message is clear: the more things change, the more they stay the same. Inside the article is a picture of a labourer carrying a computer in a woven reed basket. The caption reads “In Bangalore, part of India’s new Silicon Valley, a laborer carries a new computer to a customer across town.” That this is factual, that labourers might actually carry computers in woven baskets is not being argued here. The point is that the juxtapositioning of atavistic symbols with symbols of advancement is not accidental. It is part of an Orientalist perception and projection of India as a country that straddles the centuries, where change, if and when it occurs, coexists with backwardness.

Roland Barthes calls “a familiar repertory of gestures” or a “gestuary” (1953, 13). As Said says, “Each work affiliates itself with other works” (20). A cartoon about U.S. civil nuclear technology depicts George Bush as a snake charmer and India as the cobra.

Now that the image of India is undergoing a transformation as it becomes a player in the global market, there are signs that this Orientalist mindset may finally be fading away. The March 20, 2006 issue of Chemical & Engineering News illustrates its cover story on “India: Scientific Powerhouse in the Making” with a picture of a lab worker in his state of the art lab. No sacred cow obtrudes. On the other hand, one cannot be too optimistic. The cover story of the March 6, 2006 issue of Newsweek is captioned “The New India: Asia’s Other Powerhouse Steps Out” and uses as its cover illustration not something new at all, but something quite stereotypically Orientalistic, not a high tech Call Centre nor a computer station, but an exoticized, sensual Indian woman, the actress and model Padma Lakshmi. Dressed in red and gold with flowing hair and mesmerizing eyes, her bejewelled hands are folded in greeting. Time, on the other hand, in its June 26, 2006 issue, where the cover story is “India, Inc.,” juxtaposes both centuries and perceptions. On the cover is a head shot of a fully costumed Bharata Natyam dancer, practitioner of a dance style that goes back 2000 years at least, but updated by a pair of speaker phones around her adorned head! The self-image of India, as represented in Westernized Indian magazines is, however, very different—it is one of a cosmopolitan, global, high tech, entirely modern society. No doubt this too is only a partial image, a distorted representation, but it is interesting to note the deviance between Western images and the country’s image of itself. However, there are also ample instances of self-Orientalization in internal images of the country, whether in writing or in photojournalism.

The basic though constructed difference between East and West becomes the foundation for a series of binary distinctions, one of the most tenacious of which is the positing of rational knowledge against superstitious beliefs. In a series of articles about India’s new highway system, New York Times correspondent, Amy Waldman, does not begin by discussing this ambitious infrastructure project but by describing the temple that sits under a peepul tree in the middle of the highway. After all, for Hindus, “trees are sacred,” we are told. Either the highway must go around it or risk the ire of Kali, Hindu goddess of destruction. So Waldman lays it out in a

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set of binary oppositions taken, it would seem, from some Orientalist primer: “Goddess versus man, superstition versus progress, the people versus the state—mile by mile, India is struggling to modernize its national highway system, and in the process, itself.” The article ends with a reference to the goddesses Durga and Saraswati, and lest we miss the significance, a reference to “idol-makers” clearly contextualizes the goddesses as belonging to a more primitivistic religion, one that stands in clear contrast, in Waldman’s prose, to the “highway overpass” and “the sound of speeding cars.” (New York Times, December 4, 2005).

Again, whether the details are accurate or not is not the question. Such representations become tropes, part of the politics of representation: “knowledge no longer requires application to reality; knowledge is what gets passed on silently, without comment, from one text to another” (Said, 116). From a pedagogical point of view, such representations constitute a “second-order knowledge” (Said 52) that serves a hermeneutical function. Some images may have been embedded in students’ minds since childhood. Disney of course is one of the worst perpetrators of neo-Orientalism. “Aladdin” opens with Arabian Nights music that sounds almost like a spoof of itself. An image superimposed on flames would suggest either a sinuous woman or a snake. Protests from Arab American groups forced the producers to eliminate the original version of the fourth line of the song: “Where they cut off your ear/ if they don’t like your face,” but the line “It’s barbaric, but hey it’s home” was left in.

**Figure 3:** Giant rendition of Zhuangzi text at the China Art Academy in Hangzhou

Protests from Arab American groups forced the producers to eliminate the original version of the fourth line of the song: “Where they cut off your ear/ if they don’t like your face,” but the line “It’s barbaric, but hey it’s home” was left in.

Hangzhou, before flying back to America from Shanghai. As students walk along the paths of Suzhou gardens, and meander on bridges over water, the scene unfolds before them, like a scroll, gradually. They also see the buildings and trees reflected in the water. The colors of the flowers, the feel of pebbles underfoot, the scents around them, and the imaginative use of compressed space—all are part of this experience.

In Hangzhou, we were able to arrange a one-day class on traditional and contemporary Chinese art at the Zhongguo Meishu Xueyuan (China Art Academy)—previously the Zhejiang Meishu Xueyuan. Students toured this impressive campus and gallery; and more, they practiced painting mynah birds and writing calligraphy (such as the word jian “to see”) with a Chinese brush. We were amazed at the two-storey calligraphy of Zhuangzi’s Daoist text Xiaoyao you (freely flying) recently painted by an art professor at the campus (see fig. 3). The flowing line of the calligraphy, and the Daoist significance of the text, suitably returned us to some of the key themes of our course.

Works Cited


Believe the blurbs: Among much of the reading public, Jung Chang and Jon Halliday’s biography of Mao has set a new standard. Thanks in part to the work of reviewers like Nicholas Kristof—who miraculously found time to read the giant tome when he wasn’t rescuing Cambodian prostitutes or traveling to Darfur—Chang and Halliday’s book is selling briskly in the United States, the protests of the professoriat notwithstanding. For specialists, the book’s appearance creates a crisis of sorts. However, so long as the book sparks debate in classrooms, conference halls, and beyond, victory indeed can be said to “belong to the people.”

My experience with the text is linked to my role as a teacher at a liberal arts college and as a historian curious to find new points of entry into modern China. Having used the book as the core reading for a diverse class of sixteen students at Hiram College, in this essay I would like to make some suggestions based on that experience.

Seemingly hewn out of raw hatred, the text has been justly critiqued by leading scholars. (For a summary of these criticisms and citations to the relevant review literature, see The China Journal, January 2006.) The Unknown Story is indeed relentlessly bitter, impaired by a blind fury which manifests itself in anachronistic word choices (“Red bosses”) and ridiculous claims to omniscience (Chang and Halliday relay Mao’s “greedy” deathbed thoughts are relayed with utter confidence). Moreover, The Unknown Story is overly-dependent upon sensational reminiscence literature and anonymous interviews, while potentially amazing sources listed in the clumpy endnotes must remain questionable until verified by other scholars. The book thus represents a program of research whose impressive breadth is marred by narrow ends. As Timothy Cheek brilliantly notes in his review essay “Academic Biography as Mass Criticism” (The China Journal, No. 55, Jan. 2006) the book resembles the kind of protracted and public struggle session with which Mao attacked Wang Ming or Stalin levied against Trotsky. Like the ice pick that killed Trotsky in Mexico City, the book is intended to function as a weapon, sometimes sharp, more often bludgeoning.

In spite of these manifest flaws, the book possesses redeeming qualities which enhance its use in the classroom. Foremost, the galvanizing character of the biography makes for stimulating discussion. A number of new vignettes arising out of Soviet, East German, and Albanian archives enrich what we know about China in the Cold War, enhancing the book’s value as a portrait of the global dimensions of that conflict. The comparative cast of the text—Stalin being (continued on next page)
a touchstone—makes Mao more accessible for students unfamiliar with Chinese history. Most of all, the book is current, controversial, and influential both inside and outside of the academy. Thus, when students open up the New York Times to find that their intellectually voracious Commander-in-Chief is reading The Unknown Story at night, they tend to realize that they are becoming members of a wider community stretching beyond the confines of the classroom.

My method of mitigating the book’s excesses is rather simple: cut the worst chapters and broaden the palette of readings beyond The Unknown Story. This method allows instructors to work more effectively with the two parties which are likely to emerge in one’s classroom: those students who are prone to believe Chang and Halliday’s every word, and those who see the authors’ narrow agenda at work and are prone to disillusionment or disgust with the text.

Students with less experience approaching a text critically (typically freshman) may have difficulty coming to terms with the fact that the professor has assigned a book in which he or she does not wholly believe. Using supplemental readings ensures that students inclined to swallow completely the perspective of the authors are provided with reasonable safeguards. (Whether or not these students are able to break the pernicious bonds of the five-paragraph essay format is another matter altogether.) This method also provides an outlet for more critical students who might otherwise feel unduly harnessed by exclusive reliance on the Chang and Halliday text.

In my experience, the best companion reading to The Unknown Story is Jonathan Spence’s compact biography Mao, published by Penguin. Spence situates Mao within a rapidly changing Chinese society, showing the young man as a curious and often adrift lone spirit of his times. Spence’s Mao is pithy and quickly paced, qualities which allow instructors to assign chapters from both Spence and The Unknown Story simultaneously without undue guilt. Pairing Spence with The Unknown Story creates the opportunity for short response papers in which students analyze the differences between the two texts in terms of narrative emphasis, sources employed, and conclusions drawn. Additionally, both texts contain excellent maps of China as frontspiece, either of which can serve as the basis of map quizzes throughout the course.

In looking at young Mao, students should select for themselves a short document from Stuart Schram’s magnificent collection of Mao’s earliest writings Mao: The Road to Power. For the 1930s, I recommend skipping much of Chang and Halliday’s sledgehammer treatment of that decade (with chapters entitled “Fight Rivals and Chiang—Not Japan” and “Red Mole Starts China-Japan War,” perhaps the reasons are obvious). I would maintain, however, that it is essential to assign a short monograph or series of articles on the broader societal impacts of the war with Japan. For this purpose, I recommend Diana Lary and Stephen MacKinnon’s collection The Scars of War: The Impact of Warfare on Modern China (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2001). It may be also useful to assign a healthy excerpt from Mao’s Yenan period writings, such as On Guerrilla Warfare, to hedge against the notion that Mao was only concerned with womanizing or poisoning rivals during this period. The Mao online archive is useful in this regard (http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao).

For the civil war period from 1945-1949, I ask students to find and analyze documents from the Marshall Mission—depicted in The Unknown Story as the turning point in Mao’s fortunes—or an online collection of scholarly essays from the Marshall Foundation (http://www.marshallfoundation.org/china-mediation-mission.html). Chang and Halliday’s writing is swift here, and convinces the reader that only the intervention of George Marshall saved Mao and the CCP from extinction or permanent exile. Harbin becomes the modern equivalent of Tora Bora and the counterfactual “what ifs” flow freely. At this moment, The Unknown Story is pedagogically valuable because it strips from the communist revolution the aura of inevitability. This is, therefore, an ideal juncture to discuss China’s great alternative to Mao, Chiang Kai-shek. Since Chiang is treated with kid gloves throughout this otherwise bruising text, one might have to rely on one or two documentary films to expose to students the many problems facing the Nationalists in the late 1940s. As any casual observer of modern Iraq can attest, stunning military victories have little bearing on the success of the government that follows them. Had Chiang Kai-shek been able to triumph on the battlefield, was his reign (or Chinese democracy) thereby assured?

Since the book’s treatment of the 1950s is extensive, students might be asked to find alternate explanations for the Taiwan Straits crises, track down additional documents (www.cwihp.org), or learn more about China’s bilateral relationships with nominal allies such as North Korea. For students intrigued by the progress of the revolution within China during this period, they might profitably investigate the relevant chapters from Jung Chang’s, Wild Swans, which describes in a more balanced fashion why individuals were largely supportive of the Communist Party through most of the 1950s. Finally, why not go along with the authors’ (self) criticism of the Left of the 1960s by juxtaposing the book’s depictions of mainland misery in 1960 with Edgar Snow’s glowing tome of the same year, The Other Side of the River? Along the same lines, I recommend utilizing the Peking /Beijing Review as a fascinating means of allowing students to track for themselves the twists and turns of Party policy in the 1960s and beyond.

Citations for additional reading selections, sample assignments, my analysis of Chang and Halliday’s use and misuse of sources, and a handful of student essays on Mao: The Unknown Story are available to viewers outside of China at: http://maocrit.blogspot.com/
Karin Muller, a National Geographic filmmaker, photographer, author, and personal friend, has recently completed Japanland, a four-hour documentary series that was first shown nationwide on public television in November 2005. The companion book (also called Japanland) is in bookstores and has been reviewed by, among others, the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, the Chicago Tribune, the Washington Post, the Atlantic Monthly (by James Fallows), Outside Magazine, Traveler Magazine, and Peace Corps Writers on-line. (Karin was a Peace Corps volunteer in the Philippines after graduating from Williams College.) Japanland was also one of the New York Public Library’s top 25 books of the year for 2005. Both the book and the video are products of a year that Karin spent traveling, filming, and writing in Japan.

The Book

Told with intimacy and humor, Japanland relates the story of Karin’s immersion into Japanese culture, filled with poignant moments of clarity and hilarious incidents of impropriety. As she seeks out the many unique and sometimes obscure subcultures of Japan—including sumo wrestlers, mounted archers, geishas, Buddhist monks, and even the now-iconic workaholic salariman—she experiences the great diversity and proud humanity of a nation rooted in the past but looking toward the future. Japanland is also a journey of personal growth for Karin as she is forced to adjust and acquiesce to—and comes to appreciate—some of the rigid norms of Japanese society. An independent, thirty-something, single American woman with a strong sense of curiosity—or as Lesley Downer said in her very positive New York Times review (October 30, 2005) of Japanland, “brash, intrepid and more than a trifle wacky”—Karin draws us into her struggle with the baffling intricacies and idiosyncrasies of her host culture. She emerges on the other side both wiser and more than a little humbled by the journey. See excerpt from the book immediately following this article.

(continued on next page)
**The PBS Video Series**

Visually breathtaking, the Japanland videos range far and wide through both the present and the past, from rural Japan to its major cities, exploring both the Japan we know and that which few foreigners get to see. Each of the four half-hour segments stands alone and yet fits seamlessly together as a series on a single topic.

Karin spent an entire year shooting in Japan and managed to capture many of the details and nuances that more conventional film crews often overlook: high-tech assembly lines churning out cars onto country roads barely wide enough to drive on. The world’s most punctual train system run by staff who often calculate change on an abacus. Vending machines that offer everything from batteries to used panties—and condoms that are sold based on the user’s blood type. Traditional monasteries stocked with soda machines and acolytes who excel in both sutras and video games.

Karin brought a unique set of skills with her to Japan. In addition to studying Japanese before embarking on her journey, she had spent the last nine years learning judo. Because martial arts are highly respected in Japan, this opened many unusual, often hidden doors into Japanese life. Her indomitable spirit and sense of adventure led Karin to follow dervish mountain-cults as they undertook shamanistic austerities like fire walking, icy waterfall immersion, and exorcism. She joined a samurai mounted archery team and learned how to handle a longbow on a galloping horse.

**Highlights of the Japanland Videos**

The price of tradition—and the struggle with difficult decisions...

In 1300 AD there lived a swordmaker in Kamakura, the ancient capital of Japan. His name was Masamune, and he developed a new technique of forging swords that was to change the course of history in Japan. Karin spent three weeks with his 24th-generation descendant, learning the ancient techniques of forging these extraordinary weapons. One day the 24th Masamune will have to choose someone to be 25th in line, but his only son wants to be an opera singer. By far the most skilled of Masamune’s five apprentices is a Brazilian named Roberto! But is Japan ready to pass such a revered name and tradition to a swordmaker with a foreign face?

Teamwork—the joy of being just another cog in the machine...

Once a year Tokyo hosts a great festival called the Sanja Matsuri. Forty portable shrines—each carrying a kami, or local spirit—are paraded through town for three days. Karin carried a shrine throughout the festival. Thousands of spectators chanted a rhythmic “ya-shoi, ya-shoi” while they marched hour after hour. The repetitious sound and palpable energy transformed the simple act of movement into an almost religious experience. Much has been made of the burden of Japan’s rigid social structure and endless rules and obligations, but Karin’s film shows us that there is a great reward to being a part of the system—experiencing human harmony in the purest sense.

A 350-year-old tradition that keeps a village warm...

The tiny town of Kuromori in northern Japan lies all but forgotten during spring, summer, and autumn. When winter comes the farmers of Kuromori exchange plowshares for wooden swords, break out tins of face-paint, and re-enact a 350-year-old tradition called winter kabuki. Teenage boys willingly dress up as girls sporting parasols and a thick crust of face paint, and everyone pitches in to rebuild the local shrine, sew costumes, and learn lines. The real heroes of this yearly event are the spectators, who sit in the snow—and sometimes in a snowstorm—for seven hours while listening to the players recite act after act in an ancient form of Japanese that none of them can understand.

Solo sumo and bull sumo...

Everybody knows what sumo wrestling is, but few have ever heard of one-man sumo. Each year on a tiny island of O-mishima in the Inland Sea, the best sumo wrestler in the village goes up against the shrine god. Best out of three. Guess who wins? Just a few miles south another ancient custom still flourishes. Each year twenty bulls—one ton apiece—are pitted against each other in Bull Sumo. The massive animals eye each other, then
slowly close the gap and lock horns. They may stand, unmoving, for an hour. Not so their handlers—teams of up to twelve Japanese men leap around like crickets, pounding their flanks and shouting encouragement. Eventually one bull turns tail and flees, and then the real excitement begins. Several men jump up to grab a passing nose, tail, and ears in a futile attempt to stop a thousand pounds of runaway, horn-tipped muscle.

An unusual place to think about retirement...

The *Yamabushi*—a 1400-year-old cult of pre-Buddhist mountain ascetics—spend the month of August in the sacred Dewa Sanzan mountains. While in training the *Yamabushi* are not allowed to shave, brush their teeth, or wash their clothes. They eat nothing but rice, watery soup, and pickles. They hike throughout the mountains, dressed in white and wearing brass bells that ring with every step. The *Yamabushi* worship stones, trees, mountain summits, lakes, and ancient sites. They are elusive folk, though if you hike deep into the sacred mountains and listen carefully, you may hear the haunting three-tone sound of their conch shells carried on the wind. At night they chant for hours, then seal themselves inside a temple and pour pepper powder and rice husks onto a fire. For fifteen minutes they inhale the fumes, sometimes passing out. This is said to simulate death and eventual rebirth as a sacred being.

Karin went through *Yamabushi* training with them only to discover that the participants were mostly *salarimen*, and almost all were about to turn 60. They had come to the training not for religious reasons, but to figure out what to do with the rest of their lives.

The New Human Beings...

It is a fact of life that every generation most everywhere, as it approaches middle age, is surprised and appalled by what the “young ‘uns” are up to. Middle-aged Japanese are so taken aback by the current crop of youth that they have labeled them “the New Human Beings.” They sport spiky green hair, metal plugs in their eyebrows, noses, tongues, lips, cheeks, and navels, and heavy leather in the heat of summer. A frightening sight, though they are in reality completely harmless. It will be interesting to see what changes this new generation brings to traditional Japan… or how they adjust to Japanese traditions as they get older.

A Valuable Teaching Tool

Karin’s films are uniquely suited to the American college classrooms because they open a window into Japan in a way that is particularly engaging for young people. They are also likely to strike a resonant chord with students who are themselves facing so many choices, opportunities, and unexpected turns in their own lives. And, ultimately, the film will give them valuable insights into the joys and pitfalls of intercultural exploration and the personal growth that invariably comes from taking up such a challenge.

Karin is available in the coming academic year to give a multimedia presentation on college campuses. You can contact her at Karin@karinemuller.com. Further information also can be found at www.japanlandjourney.com, which has some background on the making of the series and excerpts from the book. To purchase the book or the DVD set, see www.japanlandonline.com. Study guides will soon be available for both the book and the films.

Japanland: An Excerpt from the Book

I’m jogging in Osaka park, in the shadow of the castle, when a man on a park bench asks me for a light. I don’t have one, of course—but he catches my eye and motions to the seat beside him. He seems harmless and my run is over, so I sit.

He’s in his mid-40s, obviously a businessman, and a successful one at that. His suit is tailored to perfection and has that subtle, expensive sheen. He must have noticed my appraisal because he starts speaking as though we were old friends. “It was almost four years ago,” he says. “They came into our office and just made an announcement. We were all so ashamed that we couldn’t even raise our heads and look each other in the eye.” He pauses. “They said it wasn’t our fault… the recession… a bad year in exports…. But still…”

He’s somehow lit a cigarette. I’ve been staring at the castle rather than looking at his face. I don’t have to be a Catholic to recognize an open-air confessional.

“I lost my savings, then the house. After that I sent my wife home to her parents with the kids. We all said it was temporary. I went to see them a few times (continued on next page)
(continued from page 23)
but it was too painful and embarrassing all around. Now I just don’t bother anymore and everyone is relieved. It was the same thing with my friends. It made it worse that I still looked like them—I suppose it was a reminder that it could happen to them as well.

One day I walked out my door with nothing more than a briefcase and my best suit—as though I was just going off to work. I never went back.”

He’s rubbing a spot on the inside lining of his suit, and I can see that the material has started to fray. “I learned to sew,” he murmurs almost as an afterthought.

The lining had developed a tear. He flips it up just long enough for me to see the stitches, tiny and impossibly straight. “I take it off at night so that I don’t wrinkle it in my sleep.” He laughs low and without humor. “One night I almost froze to death. It was my first January, and it got so cold. Every third month I save up to have it dry-cleaned, and I have to hide for a night and a day. In between I hang it over a steaming subway grate.”

He used English when he first spoke to me, but since then he’s switched to Japanese. Sometimes I understand his words, sometimes not, but always from his expression, I know exactly what he means.

“Occasionally I buy a cheap ticket and ride back and forth on the train. I can do this because I look like a businessman. But it has to be during rush hour, when it’s the most crowded and uncomfortable. I always stand. Sometimes I catch a young lady’s eye.” He smiles. “Life isn’t so bad.”

When he walks among the people at the station, nobody notices him. That minor gesture—or lack thereof—makes him feel a part of things. And he reacts like any good citizen when he sees a dirty man in wrinkled clothes sleeping on the ground.

“I will never be like them”.

He’s smoked his cigarette to the nub. It’s an expensive habit—most homeless look for discarded, half-finished fags but he won’t pick them off the street—the telltale dents might give him away.

“T’ll drink too much,” he says sadly. A bad habit I brought with me... When I drink I remember the bars we used to go to after work—the camaraderie, the mama-sans, the swirling smoke, and lots of noise and warmth. It was always warm in there. I never noticed it at the time, but looking back…”

He can’t get another job, despite his expensive clothes. He’s not trained for anything else. Stores won’t take him because they want young women, and he’s overqualified. In some ways the suit is as much a deterrent as if he wore old rags.

And he has expenses. A haircut once a week. The barber doesn’t know his situation, even after all these years. He never asks for a discount, and always pays in cash.

The cigarettes are a prop, of course. I am a prop too—a one-time actor on his stage, there only for a single scene. The play: that he is a successful businessman taking a lunchtime stroll in the sun. Only he never gets up to go back to work.

But the suit—that’s more than just a prop. It’s his dignity—his face.

He’s rubbing the same spot over and over with his thumb. It’s fraying more each time.

“One day,” he says, still rubbing, “It will be destroyed. And then everything will be over.”

Koie Ryoji, the recipient of two Oribe awards, working in the Saint John’s University pottery studio.

Global Harmony Platter—In 1995, the St. Paul-Nagasaki Sister City Committee asked Bresnahan to create two platters to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, Japan. Each vessel bears an inscription on the bottom: waka-style poem by Father Neal Lawrence, who had been sent to Nagasaki and Hiroshima after the bombings to view the devastation first hand.

Richard Bresnahan stoking the final chamber of the first kiln he built at Saint John’s University.
Virtual Collaboration:
Speed Bumps on the Road to IDEAS
Karil Kucera
St. Olaf College

The Image Database to Enhance Asian Studies [IDEAS] has successfully unified digitizing efforts already in progress at four campuses into a shared searchable database. IDEAS is now available on the world-wide web [http://ideas.nitle.org/], making it the first multi-institutional, interdisciplinary, pan-Asian searchable database in the country. Focusing on the generally underrepresented area of Asia, IDEAS makes multi-media materials available for specialists and non-specialists alike.

IDEAS presently houses over 1500 images with accompanying metadata, produced or compiled by faculty at four different institutions. The database includes a range of digital assets from a variety of disciplines, including still images, video clips, sound recordings, and scanned text documents. Although initially a collaboration between Colorado College, Earlham College, Lake Forest College, and St. Olaf College, the IDEAS project is committed to cooperative sharing of ideas, expertise, and resources among liberal arts institutions building online image collections.

IDEAS provides digital information that by virtue of its highly specialized nature is not readily available on the Internet or in print. For example, there is documentation of an Indian religious rite that is vital educational material, but too specialized to ever attract the interest of a publisher. A Japanese garden requires numerous images to convey the dynamic experience of changes over time, but texts usually present only one static image. Similar arguments can be made for most works of three dimensional art, architecture and ephemeral items of material culture. The collections hosted by the IDEAS project also offer users suggestions by knowledgeable faculty on selection and sequencing of these materials. The broad scope of IDEAS allows for the continued addition of new materials over time, and the plan is to expand the present four collections to include four new institutional collections by the end of 2007.

Limiting Issue—Obstacles to Success

Development of the IDEAS project over the past three years has highlighted several key advantages to virtual collaboration as well as potential disadvantages. Three that cross both categories—technology, time and money—will be considered here.

The database includes a range of digital assets from a variety of disciplines, including still images, video clips, sound recordings, and scanned text documents....

The collections hosted by the IDEAS project also offer users suggestions by knowledgeable faculty on selection and sequencing of these materials.

One “apparent” advantage to virtual collaboration is the relative ease with which materials and expertise can be shared, thanks to the marvels of modern technology. The term “apparent” is bracketed because the creation of the IDEAS database was not without unforeseen technological speed bumps along the way. One of the largest of these related to putting our previously created materials into a new system. In order to accomplish this transition there was the need to learn how to merge pre-existing materials into a different database structure, along with teaching faculty and staff new database tools. These types of technological issues, while not insurmountable, took time away from other activities that we had budgeted for, and in many ways cut into the quantity of materials we initially were able to post to the database. For those considering embarking on a project involving new technology, time must be allocated to coming up to speed on the technology, remembering that some members of the collaboration may be faster at this than others.

Although some may view technology as a bane as much as a blessing, the more critical issue facing all of those involved with the IDEAS project has been, and will continue to be, the constant crunch of time. With the organizing group comprised of twelve original members, the mere (continued on next page)
logistics of getting together to meet was one complicating factor.

Yet more than finding time to physically meet, finding the time to work on the project, such as to create the content, to edit and proofread, or to create a metadata document with fields suitable to our vision of the project, has been extremely difficult. None of the faculty received a course release for working on the database project, a reality that meant that work on the project was happening on evenings or weekends, on top of regular academic loads.

The IDEAS project has been very fortunate in having a sizeable start-up grant that has been judiciously utilized over the past few years. Money for start-up in the form of manpower hours was vital since it allowed us to hire staff to work with the collation of the pre-existing collections as well as creation of the web interface.

One complicating factor for IDEAS over the past year—and one reason for our slow pace vis-à-vis new acquisitions and new contributors—has been the assimilation of our grant-provider, the Midwest Instructional Technology Center, into the larger entity of the National Institute for Technology and Liberal Education (NITLE). Both are funded by grants from the Mellon Foundation, which allowed for the continued monetary support. The IDEAS project presently is supported through NITLE in the form of a server to house our project and the monies to invest in the database software and support. However, as with all grant funding, this is not a permanent situation, and we envision that IDEAS will over time become more self-supporting. To this end, we continue to look for cost-effective ways to collaborate and to entice new contributors to join our cause.

**Ways to Achieve Success in Virtual Collaboration**

The IDEAS project has developed some techniques for streamlining our process and for working towards our ultimate goal, a relatively self-sustaining, easy to use, easy to contribute to database. The following items are just a few that have helped make for a successful virtual collaboration.

One way to better address technology issues in the very beginning of a virtual collaboration is to ascertain who will be the point person for this aspect of the project. Having all of the technology issues going through a central person leaves other time available to those who should be more focused on content. IDEAS has also asked to have access to technology that will make the process smoother and less complicated for contributors. Making the IT people aware of our project needs helped them familiarize project members with tools that complemented our new database technology.

Vis-à-vis time, those involved with the project recognized early on that one way to save time was to avoid barrages of emails, choosing instead to set up monthly conference calls. The first year we spent an inordinate amount of time communicating via email, working out to about five emails a day, often with repeated concerns or information. This clearly wasn’t the most efficient use of time, and a decision was made to hold a monthly conference call with a set agenda, which helped to prioritize issues.

All IDEAS project correspondence as well as reports now goes through Moodle, an Open Source course management system. This approach allows for project members to go in and check on past conversations, emails or earlier documentation. Rough drafts of proposals or projects can also be posted along with a calendar for setting suitable times to call or meet. Moodle is internet-based, allowing access from anywhere, and stores everything that has been proposed or is under discussion in a threaded fashion. Moodle also allowed for the creation of subgroup conversations, where project members with certain types of expertise received notification of activity on specific topics. For example, new collection development goes largely to the editorial board, not to everyone. Metadata issues go to the librarians; technology issues to the technologists.

All of the IDEAS project members would stress to anyone considering a virtual collaboration the need to periodically meet face to face. Although much can be accomplished via Moodle or conference calls, the greatest progress on IDEAS has been made when the project members meet around a table. Originally this was done at one of the four participating schools, but given the difficulties and time it takes to get to each institution, the most recent project meeting was held in a downtown Chicago hotel. This cost significantly less than flying the participants to one of the colleges. Future meetings will be held in conjunction with large conferences, utilizing the venue as an opportunity to continue our outreach efforts.

NITLE has allowed us to continue to work utilizing our present funding until it runs out, going no later than summer 2008. Money will always be an issue, especially should NITLE no longer support us with the server and database support staff. Members of the IDEAS project plan to look into optional funding opportunities over the next year, preparing grant applications where appropriate and as needed. Like the subgroups created for technology or metadata, a subgroup of grant writers devoted to finding support for maintaining any virtual collaboration is vital.

**Concluding thoughts**

The IDEAS project presents a unique model for faculty interested in collaboration. Successfully bringing four very different groups together to work towards a common goal, the IDEAS project continues to grow and serve the greater academic community. The members of the project ask for patience as we continue to expand our collections, and feedback as you start to use the images and metadata in the database. It is our belief that the dialogue and collegiality that a virtual collaboration project like IDEAS promotes is vital to sustaining Asian Studies in the 21st century.
Many of us who teach and work as administrators in East Asian Studies share a particular kind of study abroad experience—we went to Japan or Taiwan (China less commonly until the 1990’s, and Korea is a growing but still small segment) and studied Japanese or Chinese language. Period. And there were few choices of programs available to us, yet that was fine—serious language acquisition was the goal.

No longer do students share such a limited set of goals and options when it comes to study abroad in East Asia. ASIANetwork faculty members likely find that more of your students are going to East Asia and for quite a diverse set of learning opportunities:

- Faculty-led research projects
- Intensive language training
- Language study combined with area studies courses taught in English
- Thematic study programs on particular topics
- Travel-study courses exposing students to several countries

Ensuring the quality of our programs, and in turn we report to an Academic Council comprised of faculty and study abroad administrators from top U.S. colleges and universities who belong to our consortium. We continually evaluate and respond to the changes in study abroad for students interested in East Asia and as a result we are implementing changes to our program models to address the wider range of learning objectives students are bringing with them. The dominant IES model for a resident program of one or two semesters’ length in China or Japan has been one in which the students split their time between language learning and taking college-level area studies courses in English. This original program model appeals to many students, as it offers enough language to ensure a serious student body, and also enhances students’ intercultural development by offering area studies courses with field trips and other exercises meant to bring the culture to life for the student living there. From a practical perspective, students and their home college advisors appreciate the ability to transfer back non-language courses so that they can keep pace towards meeting their graduation requirements.

However, in the past few years as study abroad numbers to East Asia have increased, we’ve noticed an interesting split among the students our programs in China and Japan attract...—those whose primary goal is the language study and those whose primary goal is the cultural and area studies learning. And we’ve learned that serving these two kinds of students with a one-size-fits all program is not the best option.

BEIJING PROGRAM

In Beijing we now have two programs—one a language-intensive program and the other a modular program focusing on the politics, economics, literature and major policy issues facing contemporary China.

The language intensive program takes seriously the goals some students have to improve their Chinese language skills:
For Our Students

IES in Tokyo

- requires previous study of the language
- places students either in a home stay with a Chinese family or in dormitory with a Chinese roommate
- offers a for-credit part-time internship option for students to be placed in jobs with Chinese organizations
- and even offers this fall a pilot area studies course offering taught in Chinese for advanced-level students.

The Contemporary Issues in China program addresses the students whose expressed goal is to learn as much about China as possible, even if this is a student’s first exposure to the country or the language.

- Offers beginning-level Chinese as well as second and third-year language
- begins with an introduction to China course to equalize students' understanding of essential issues in the history and culture
- teaches one term-length course at a time over several weeks each so that students can explore a topic intensively and have maximum class time available for field trips and research projects
- includes travel directly in the curriculum much as a faculty-led program would.

Tokyo Program

Our Tokyo program has also moved to address these two kinds of students. Students looking for more of a balance between area studies and language learning, as well as those with little or no study of Japanese, opt for our Society and Culture program, where they take 6 credits of Japanese language along with 3 or 4 area studies courses. And those students with at least one and a half years of Japanese study who are looking to focus on their Japanese language skills can opt for a program with 12 credits of Japanese and one area studies course. All students are particularly encouraged to participate in our experiential learning seminar where they spend one day a week as a participant-observer in a Japanese organization—businesses, temples, schools, community service organizations—and process their learning about Japanese culture with a sociology teacher.

Help for Returning Students

Of course, other than helping a student think through his or her options for study abroad, ASIANetwork faculty members and advisors no doubt concern themselves a great deal with what happens *after* the student returns. Integrating the student’s study and experiences abroad into his home campus learning, helping the student maintain or further his or her language abilities, and drawing out the student’s first hand knowledge and experience for the benefit of classmates are all challenges facing the faculty. IES often runs faculty workshops and seminars for members of our consortium precisely to bring together faculty and discuss ideas related to study abroad and its integration with the college curriculum.

One of the most important issues in curriculum integration for ASIANetwork members I’ve met at recent conferences has been related to helping a student maintain or build on his or her language skills after study abroad. This can be especially difficult on a small campus where Chinese and Japanese classes may not go beyond the intermediate level. Quite a few colleges and universities have found that bringing a native speaker as a student language assistant for a year can be a great way to approach this challenge. IES offers a student assistant program to facilitate the process of inviting a Chinese or Japanese student to spend a year on a U.S. college campus to be an assistant to the language teachers in exchange for room and board and the opportunity to take classes. Typical assignments for student assistants include hosting language tables in the dining room, helping with language drill sessions, living in a foreign-language themed residence hall, and serving as conversation partners and tutors for more advanced students.

As you consider the role of international study in the curriculum on your campus, as well as your own role as an advisor to students learning about Asia, I invite you to familiarize yourself with the range of options now available to students. Your students will be coming in your office door with different interests and goals, but the good news is that there’s quite likely to be a program that will meet the needs of each student! If you’d like to learn more about IES and how we may be able to assist you in serving the needs of your students learning about Asia, please contact us.

Robin Wagner, Deputy Director of Academic Programs, Dean for China Michael Green, Director of Recruiting Nancy Kenyon, Director of Customized (faculty-led) Programs

www.IESabroad.org
312-944-1750
rwagner@iesabroad.org

For Your Students

ASIANetwork Exchange

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A Call for Submissions

The Wittenberg University
East Asian Studies Journal
Encouraging Academic Publication by Undergraduate Students

Started in the spring of 1976, the Wittenberg University East Asian Studies Journal will have been published for thirty-one consecutive years with this year’s annual volume having come out early this past summer. Our journal is a student managed publication with only initial organizational help each year from a Wittenberg faculty advisor. The journal is funded by the Wittenberg Student Government Association, and the student editorial staff is selected from Wittenberg East Asian Studies majors and minors. Submissions of articles by undergraduate students at all academic institutions of higher learning are welcome as long as the articles were written while the author was an undergraduate student.

The geographic focus of an article may be on specific East Asian states or on East Asia as a whole. Manuscripts may be based on any academic discipline and focus on any topic concerning East Asia or individual countries. Manuscripts should be double spaced and not exceed thirty pages in total length. The annual deadline for submissions is the eleventh of January. Earlier submissions are also accepted and considered.

A hard copy of a manuscript accompanied by a digital version should be sent to Editor-in-Chief/ East Asian Studies Journal/ Wittenberg University/ 200 West Ward Street/ Springfield, OH 45501. Each annual volume is published in middle or late May, and two copies of the journal will be sent to those authors whose articles are selected for publication. One copy will be sent upon request to faculty members at undergraduate institutions interested in East Asian Studies.

NEW AND NOTEWORTHY

The United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia recently appointed Patricia Stranahan as President. Jun Xing was appointed Vice President for Programs.

Brian Hatcher, Professor of Religion and Humanities, Illinois Wesleyan University has been awarded a Fulbright-Hays Faculty Research Abroad Fellowship for 2006-07 to conduct research in India and the United Kingdom in connection with a project entitled, “Pandits in the Public Sphere: Sanskrit Scholars in Colonial Bengal.”

The Oglethorpe University Museum of Art debuted “Portals to Shangri-La: Masterpieces from Buddhist Mongolia,” celebrating the 800th anniversary of the founding of the Mongol Empire by Genghis Khan. The exhibition, donated by various American collectors, ran from February 12 through August 6, 2006. This exhibition was to have come from the Zanabazar Mongolia National Fine Arts Museum. However, on January 13, 2006, Mongolia’s government collapsed, and this prevented the artwork from leaving the country. Art historian and author Glenn Mullin, who organized both of these exhibitions, worked quickly to obtain works from various collectors in the United States, including works from his own personal collection. The exhibition included works from the personal collection of Donald and Shelley Rubin, founders of the Rubin Museum of Art in New York City. Rubin, who is an alumnus of Oglethorpe University, class of 1956, immediately stepped in to help Oglethorpe present an exhibition of Mongolian art. The exhibition focused on Mongolia’s image as a portal to the mystical land of Shambala, the source of James Hilton’s concept of Shangri-La. These works by Mongolian masters are considered to be tunnels or portals to a higher reality.

The opening ceremony for the exhibition was held Sunday, February 12, 2006. The program included the official installation ceremony of the Honorary Consul of Mongolia and music by Mongolian musicians and multi-phonic throat singers and was attended by Mongolian Ambassador Ravdan Bold, Zanabazar Mongolia National Fine Arts Museum Director Batdorj Damdensuren and Oglethorpe President Larry Schall.
2006
CONFERENCE MOMENTS

Richard Bresnahan during his keynote address on Friday (Photo by Diane Clayton)

Teddy Amoloza, Executive Director, at the Saturday keynote address (Photo by Diane Clayton)

Fred de Sam Lazaro during his keynote address on Saturday (Photo by Diane Clayton)

Audience at the Plenary Session: Web Tools for Teaching Asian Studies (Photo by Diane Clayton)

St. Olaf Taiko Club (Photo by Diane Clayton)

Past Board Chairs Jim Lochtefeld, Van Symons, and Paul Watt (Photo by Diane Clayton)

Dorothy Guyot introduces students from Myanmar who have been studying in the United States (Photo by Tom Lutze)
### Full Members:
- Agnes Scott College
- Albertson College of Idaho
- Albion College
- Allegheny College
- Alverno College
- Antioch College
- Augustana College
- Austin College
- Baldwin-Wallace College
- Bard College
- Bates College
- Belmont University
- Beloit College
- Berea College
- Bowdoin College
- Bucknell University
- Butler University
- Calvin College
- Carleton College
- Carthage College
- Central College
- Clark University
- Coe College
- Colby College
- Colgate University
- College of Saint Benedict/Saint John’s University
- College of William & Mary
- College of Wooster
- Colorado College
- Connecticut College
- Cornell College
- Daemen College
- Davidson College
- Denison University
- DePauw University
- Dickinson College
- Drake University
- Drew University
- Drury University
- Earlham College
- Eckerd College
- Edgewood College
- Elms College
- Elon University
- Fairfield University
- Furman University
- Gettysburg College
- Goucher College
- Green Mountain College
- Guilford College
- Gustavus Adolphus College
- Hamilton College
- Hamline University
- Hanover College
- Hastings College
- Haverford College
- Hiram College
- Hobart & William Smith Colleges
- Hope College
- Illinois Wesleyan University
- John Carroll University
- Kalamazoo College
- Kenyon College
- Knox College
- Lafayette College
- Lake Forest College
- Lawrence University
- Lehigh University
- Lewis and Clark College
- Loras College
- Luther College
- Macalester College
- Manhattanville College
- Marietta College
- Marlboro College
- Marymount College of Fordham University
- Maryville College
- Millikin University
- Mills College
- Moravian College
- Mount Holyoke College
- North Central College
- Occidental College
- Oglethorpe University
- Ohio Wesleyan University
- Our Lady of the Lake University
- Pomona College
- Presbyterian College
- Principia College
- Purchase College
- Randolph-Macon College
- Randolph-Macon Woman’s College
- Rhodes College
- Ripon College
- Roanoke College
- Saint Anselm College
- Saint Vincent College
- Sarah Lawrence College
- Sewanee, The University of the South
- Shorter College
- Simmons College
- Simon’s Rock College of Bard
- Skidmore College
- Southwestern University
- Spelman College
- St. Andrews Presbyterian College
- St. John’s College
- St. Lawrence University
- St. Mary’s College of Maryland
- St. Olaf College
- Swarthmore College
- Transylvania University
- Trinity University
- Union College
- University of Evansville
- University of North Carolina, Asheville
- University of Notre Dame
- University of Puget Sound
- University of Redlands
- University of San Diego
- Valparaiso University
- Vassar College
- Viterbo University
- Washburn College
- Warren Wilson College
- Wartburg College
- Washington & Lee University
- Wellesley College
- Wells College
- Wesleyan University
- Westminster College
- Westmont College
- Wheaton College
- Whitman College
- Whittier College
- Willamette University
- Williams College
- Wittenberg University

### Associate Members:
- Bridgewater State College
- Case Western Reserve University
- Central Washington University
- College of Charleston
- Converse College
- East Tennessee State University Honors College
- Highline Community College
- Hofstra University
- Huron University College
- Lingnan University
- Loyola Marymount University
- Muhlenberg College
- Naropa University
- Northeastern State University
- Northern Kentucky University
- Pacific Lutheran University
- Rice University
- Saint Joseph’s University
- Simpson College
- South Puget Sound Community College
- Temple University
- University of Findlay
- University of Florida School of Architecture
- University of Illinois at Urbana, AEMS
- University of Washington, Tacoma
- Webster University
- Western Michigan University

### Affiliate Organizations:
- American Council of Learned Societies CEEVN
- Associated Colleges of the Midwest
- Association of Teachers of Japanese
- Eastbridge, A Non-Profit organization
- Henry Luce Foundation
- Institute for the International Education of Students
- Japan ICU Foundation, Inc.
- Myanmar Foundation for Analytic Education
- Payap University
- School for International Training
- United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia (UBCHEA)

### Affiliate Individuals:
- Adams, David, CIES
- Bao Bean, Cathy
- Cheek, Timothy, University of British Columbia
- Kiblinger, Kristin Beise, Winthrop University
- Martin, Roberta, Columbia University
- Prescott, Anne, Indiana University
- Wang, Dong, Gordon College
15th Annual ASIANetwork Conference
“ASIANetwork at Fifteen: Taking Stock, Meeting New Challenges”
April 20-22, 2007
Mariott Hotel Conference Center
Lisle, Illinois

* * * *

Last minute panel proposal?
Proposals considered through September 30, 2006.
See www.asianetwork.org for details.