

# EAST ASIAN STUDIES

Alumni Newsletter



Fall 2023

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# A Letter from the Chair

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Dear Colleagues, Students, Alumni, and Friends of East Asian Studies:

Greetings from Gerard House! I am delighted to report that 2023 has been a wonderful year for the East Asian Studies Department at Brown. Classes are fully back in person, and EAS is enjoying strong enrollments across our programs. As of this fall, we have the highest number of concentrators the department has ever seen, which is a powerful testament to our dedicated and talented faculty.

The department has also enjoyed sponsoring a wide range of East Asia-related cultural activities. Just a few highlights: the Chinese program kicked off the Year of the Rabbit with a very successful dumpling party, attended by more than eighty students. The Japanese program held a number of events through the winter and spring, from a mini film-festival featuring documentaries about Ainu minorities and the Okinawan environmental movement, to a Bento-making workshop and a presentation on Tea Ceremony. The Korean Program enlivened the fall semester with a very popular Korean Game day on the quad, as well as with its Korean Performance Night extravaganza, featuring performances ranging from traditional Korea music to K-pop dancers. Last but not at all least, our Vietnamese Program brought in guest speakers, celebrated National Poetry Month with Vietnamese poetry, and held a Vietnamese Variety show. All of this was of course in addition to the regular Chinese Tea Time, Chinese Mahjong night, and Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese Language Table events, at which students get to interact informally and practice their language skills.

Other highlights of the year were our Senior Forum, at which all of 2023's graduating seniors presented research projects on topics as varied as the Digitalization of Night Markets in Taiwan and the world-wide popularity of Japanese tattoos. And finally, I was particularly thrilled to be able to introduce our talented concentrators at our EAS graduation ceremony. Under beautiful sunny skies, faculty, family, and friends joyously celebrated the accomplishments of our students.

The department has also been very active in presenting scholarly talks and research workshops this year. The Literary Chinese Reading Group, made up of faculty, graduate students, and increasing numbers of adventurous undergraduate students, regularly gets together to read texts in Literary Chinese, and also hosted a number of presentations by a series of specialists in Song dynasty (960-1279) history. With support from our department, the recently-formed Graduate Student Association for East Asian Studies (GSAEAS) hosted a talk by the eminent Buddhist scholar Gregory Levine of University of California, Berkeley, on Buddhism and the environment. At the invitation of Professor Lingzhen Wang, the Chinese scholar and activist Wei Wei gave a well-attended and lively presentation on Queer Politics in China. And in September, Professor Kaijun Chen from EAS collaborated with Professor Brian Lander in the History department to hold a two-day workshop on Chinese industry and environment, which was capped off by a lecture by the popular Chinese science-fiction writer Qiufan (Stanley) Chen.

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This year, EAS experienced no additions to or departures from our faculty, but two of our faculty members received important awards. Professor Kaijun Chen received a one-year fellowship from the prestigious Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, where he is now on leave researching his second book project. Prof. Chen's first book, *Porcelain for the Emperor*, was published this earlier this year. And on October 9th, in commemoration of Hangeul (Korean Alphabet) Day, Professor Hye-Sook Wang was awarded a Cultural Merit Medal from the government of South Korea. The medal is the second highest honor that can be conferred by the President of S.Korea to individuals who have "rendered distinguished services" to the country. Prof. Wang received this award for her contributions in teaching, researching, and promoting Korean language and culture.

As is too often the case in life, however, even as we celebrate our successes, our joy is tempered with sadness. Tragically, EAS lost two dedicated and cherished students this year. The department fondly remembers John Owen Habib, whose bright spirit and love of life enlivened many a Chinese class, and Jameson McMullen, who touched his classmates in Japanese with his kindness, wonderful smile, and love of manga. Our hearts go out to their families and friends at this holiday season.

As we head into the end of this semester, EAS looks forward to another exciting year of teaching, research, and sharing the cultures, arts, and foods of East Asia with our students. We hope that you as alumni will stay in touch with us and each other. In the meantime, we send you our warmest wishes for a joyous holiday season and a Happy New Year!

Sincerely,  
Beverly





# Faculty News

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## **Kumiko Akama**

With almost two decades of experience in teaching Japanese at Tulane University in New Orleans, LA, I embarked on a new and exciting chapter of my journey as I joined the Department of East Asian Studies at Brown University last year. The past year has been a whirlwind of challenges and growth. As I stand here now, I can say that I am settled and ready to embark on a new endeavor. My focus is clear: I am determined to enhance my instructional methods through innovative assessment and class design, aiming to provide our students with a more effective and engaging learning experience. I also would like to work on research/presentations on the topic of assessment and class design. Beyond the classroom, I enjoy strolls in my neighborhood and along the river. Sports, particularly American football and basketball, hold a special place in my heart and I find joy in cheering for my team. To maintain my inner balance, yoga has become an integral part of my daily routine, helping me regain focus and clarity. I look forward to collaborating with my colleagues on the continuing improvement and exploration of the world of Japanese language and East Asian Studies.



## **Wenhui Chen**

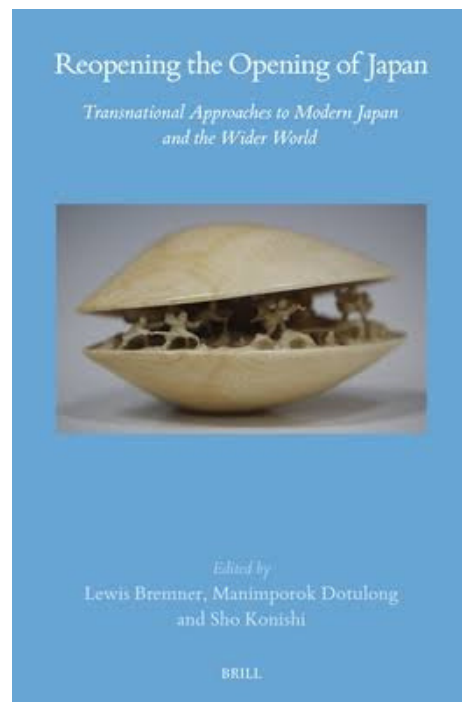
I visited the Inter-University Program for Chinese Language Studies (IUP) at Tsinghua University in Beijing in July. During my visit, I observed three different levels of Chinese classes, explored their textbooks and other teaching materials, and engaged in academic discussions with instructors and staff members. I believe that this visit has not only benefited me as a study abroad advisor but also as a language instructor.

# Faculty News

## Manimporok (Maro) Dotulong

Since last year's newsletter, I have had the privilege of teaching/learning/studying with incredible cohorts of students. I did so through two new courses, which essentially deal(t) with the intellectual history of various places across the Western Pacific, focusing on questions to do with indigeneity and transnational social experiments.

I have since also completed work on an edited volume titled *Reopening the Opening of Japan: Transnational Approaches to Modern Japan and the Wider World*. This volume explores the potential of transnational approaches to history writing through an expansion of what the idea of the 'Opening of Japan' entails. With chapters ranging from the global trade in mummified mermaids to the Japanese-Russian intellectual links underpinning the work of Akira Kurosawa, we show how "Japan's Opening" has, thus far, been a rather closed question. On the whole, the volume rethinks the possible meanings of 'historical connection' in a global context. The volume will be coming out at the end of November 2023 (with Brill) and I hope you will have a chance to check it out!



## Sachiko Hiramatsu



The academic year of 2022-2023 brought forth a lot of new experiences and responsibilities.

I directed JAPN 0700 for the first time in Fall 2022, and I explored how my Advanced Japanese II course could serve as a platform for nurturing 21st-century skills. Together with the students, we explored innovative ways to address pressing issues in Japan, including population, craftsmanship, economy and youth and politics.

In Spring 2023, I was granted scholarly leave, coinciding with the resumption of our study abroad programs in Japan after a hiatus of two and a half years! As the study abroad adviser for Japanese language, I had the opportunity to visit Brown's three study abroad programs in Japan: Kyoto Consortium for Japanese Studies (KCJS) in Kyoto, Keio University in Tokyo and Nanzan University in Nagoya.

Seeing Brown students' excitement and enthusiasm for finally being in Japan was inspiring. In addition, I had a chance to observe classes and meet with both instructors and administrative teams finally in person. Feeling the power of face-to-face interactions (not virtual) and the immersive surroundings, I left each school eager to help send more students to Japan to experience this wonderful immersive opportunity.

It was truly special to be able to enjoy not only the cherry blossoms but also wisteria in Kyushu in Japan.

# Faculty News

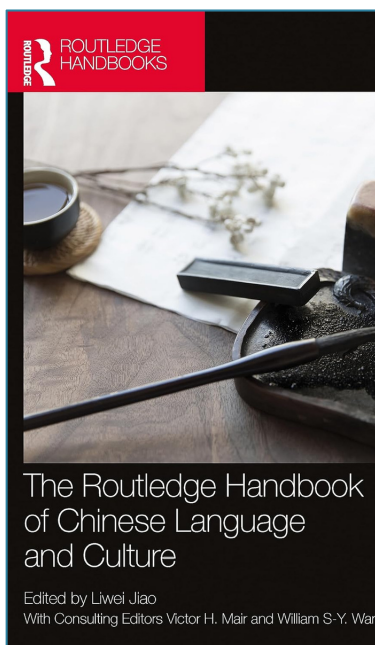
## Heeyeoung Jung

Entering my first academic year at Brown in 2022-23, I experienced a blend of excitement and a touch of nervousness as I navigated an unfamiliar environment. Despite my years of teaching Korean across multiple institutions and being at a mid-career stage, this new chapter evoked both anticipation and a sense of the unknown. My focus centered on ensuring a smooth transition to Brown and delivering effective teaching. I am pleased to share that this transition was seamless, thanks to the strong support of the Korean faculty members and colleagues from other sections within the department.

Meanwhile, in an effort to feel a sense of belonging in the community, I participated in the 5K Monster Dash held in Providence on October 29th this year. I was a bit nervous as it was my first official race. However, running with Mr. Dinosaur, three pig siblings, and the Superman family made the drizzle and cold weather a non-issue. I am grateful to Naemi and Aya for joining me. I look forward to creating an EAS group and participating together next year!"



## Liwei Jiao



"A long way!" is definitely the phrase to summarize my past year. First, I went to China to attend a conference, and the return journey took me 40 hours! Despite the toilsome travel, I did find great pleasure in between. I visited my alma mater, Nankai University of China, where I studied for six years. I had a layover in Taipei for ten hours, so I snuck out of the airport and visited the city for the first time. The food there is marvelous. I especially liked 卤肉饭/卤肉飯 (lu3rou4fan4, Braised Rice with Pork and Soy Sauce) so much! Second, I finished editing a book named the Routledge Handbook of Chinese Language and Culture. It took me several years, including the entire global pandemic period, to finish this project. After submitting the manuscript, I feel the Long March is over now!



# Faculty News

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## Zhuqing Li

I continue to juggle the fallouts from my ambitious endeavors, which can be broken down into three main areas:

### Book Endeavors:

- My book, “Daughters of the Flower Fragrant Garden: Two Sisters Separated by China’s Civil War” won the Brown Book Award.
- I continue to focus on the human perspective of China-Taiwan relationship as I engage the public at speaking events. Notable appearances include, The Mount’s summer lecture series and the History Book Festival in Lewes, DE.
- “Education About Asia” has featured my book as a key resource for learning about China.
- The paperback edition of the book was released in June, and the Chinese translation rights were secured with Taiwan’s Commercial Press.
- BookBrowse readers honored the book by selecting it as a recommended nonfiction read for book clubs in 2024.

### Linguistic Work:

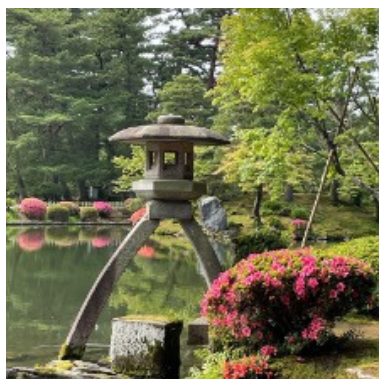
- I was the invited speaker at Xiamen University, where I discussed translation.
- I completed an in-depth article on Chinese place names for inclusion in Dr. Jiao Liwei’s forthcoming book.

### Academic Leadership:

- As head of the East Asian research team, I established the Gardner Fellowship at the University Library to enable Brown students to delve into the special collections.
- Two students, Zoe Yu and Jared Wong, have been named the first recipients of this fellowship.
- I also mentored four Undergraduate Teaching and Research Award (UTRA) students. Qijia Huangchen, Zihan Zhang, and Angela Sha explored the library’s collections for their individual research projects, while Michael Tu focused on the structure of Chinese characters, with all four set to present their work at the semester’s conclusion.

## Naemi Mcpherson

I finally started to take an online Korean class this fall, and I can totally understand how my first-year Japanese students are feeling! Just like shamisen lessons, it is very difficult to find time to practice and I get stressed out before the lesson, but I find it very rewarding when I have a good lesson! In the summer, I traveled to Japan and Hawaii to visit our families. In Osaka I met Takahiro Kawamoto, the director of “Kaba”, one of the films we watched in JAPN0812 Japanese Language and Society through Contemporary Film in the Spring 2023 semester. It was interesting to hear about the real stories behind the movie. I was happy to visit Kanazawa, one of the cities I had always wanted to see, with my high school friends. After returning to RI, I harvested LOTS of shishito peppers and Japanese eggplants in our backyard garden for the rest of the summer through the early autumn!





# Faculty News

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## Rebecca Nedostup

The past year has been about learning to be in the wider world again. The awkwardness and joy of the first post-Covid in-person academic conferences in 2022 yielded to resumed international travel and reunions with much-missed friends in 2023. I have entered my third year as faculty director for the Choices program, which produces history and social studies curriculum units for secondary schools. While continuing to offer my mainstay courses on modern Chinese history, I developed two new courses in 2022-23 -- one on research methods in the history of modern China and its diasporas, and one on the complex history of Taiwan as seen from its different geographic contexts. In spring 2023, I taught the Taiwan course both online at Brown and in person in the Netherlands, as part of my role as Visiting Chair of Taiwan Studies at the Leiden University Institute for Area Studies (LIAS) and International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS). While in Leiden I learned about Dutch conservation and preservation practices and gained a tremendous amount from the capacious and generous institutional vision of the IIAS. There I developed a new project connecting Taiwan's efforts to reckon with the legacy of authoritarian violence to global conversations about reparations, property restoration, and the production of historical knowledge. My workshop "Material Matters in Historical Spaces: Taiwan and Beyond" brought together scholars from Europe and Taiwan to discuss the work of material history and public engagement.

This followed a joyful visit to Taiwan in January 2023 -- not only the first Asian research trip I had taken since 2019, but a chance to reconnect with friends, family, students, and colleagues. My PhD advisee Shih-Yu Juan was able to join me briefly in the Netherlands to pursue her research project on scientific instrumentation and knowledge transfer in late 19th century China. Another grad student, Yu-cheng Shih, is completing a dissertation on the littoral communities around Lake Tai in the century following the Taiping Rebellion. Meanwhile, co-advisee Betsy Archelus is launching a thesis analyzing post-war South Korean society through the lens of international Black feminist theory. Brown PhD alums Yu-chi Chang and Shiuon Chu continue to research and teach at Oberlin College and Academia Sinica respectively. With Shih-Yu Juan's help, this fall I relaunched a study group bringing together grad students and postdocs from several departments who work on topics in modern Asian history. Finally, I have been extremely fortunate to work with talented undergrads during the past year; student researchers Dun Jian Chin, Brianna Nee, Audrey Taylor, and Adam You have helped me collect material on social networks of care in Chinese communities, and Naphat Permpredanun has been collaborating to build a data literacy exercise for classroom use. Both these projects come out of my experience writing my current book on wartime displacement in mid-twentieth century China and Taiwan, as well as from the personal and social experiences of the pandemic.



Leiden University

# Faculty News

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## Samuel Perry

I was on sabbatical last year, spending most of my time in Seoul, Nagasaki and Ho Chi Minh City. In Seoul I finalized the manuscripts for my MLA Text and Translation project, which will come into fruition this fall with the publication of *A Century of Queer Korean Fiction* and the Korean-language companion volume *한국의 퀴어 문학: 한세기*. With access to Korean libraries, I also developed a new translation project called “Pyongyang Modern,” which will include fiction and essays about the city of Pyongyang, written in both Korean and Japanese before national division. In Nagasaki I rediscovered my love of the archives, and had the luxury of several weeks in libraries where I was able to slowly comb through newspapers and journals published during and immediately after the US Occupation of Japan, which will become part of my upcoming monograph on the Korean War in Japan. Over the winter break, I gave an invited lecture at Stanford University on the Japanese nostalgia for wartime homoeroticism in gay commercial magazines. While in Japan I also traveled with a group of spirited Brown Alumni through the alleys of Tokyo, the Japanese alps, and some of the most beautiful temples and gardens in Japan during cherry blossom season. Please join the faculty on an Alumni trip sometime!

During the Spring semester, I spent three months attending intensive Vietnamese language school in Ho Chi Minh City, and tracing the steps of several Japanese writers who lived and travelled in Vietnam. I am now preparing a new course in Comparative Literature called “Worlding Vietnamese Literature,” which will bring together works originally published in Vietnamese, French, Japanese, Korean and English in an examination of both colonial and Vietnamese diasporic writing. My long term goal of learning Vietnamese is the magnification of long overlooked interconnections between Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese cultures, which were largely consequences of successive waves of Japanese and US colonialism in Southeast Asia.

In my spare time, I continue to work on my farm in NH, and have almost completed a mile-long system of trails through my fields and forests, which takes visitors through stands of ancient hardwood, mountain streams, and rolling hills. Visitors welcome!





# Faculty News

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## Naofumi Tatsumi

Together with my colleagues at Columbia and Princeton, I published a book entitled "A Practical Guide for Scholarly Reading in Japanese" this year. This is a reference guide as well as a textbook for scholars specializing in Asian studies, with a special focus on Chinese studies.



## Trang Trang

I wanted to share some highlights and updates from the Vietnamese Program at Brown University during the previous semester. Your continued support and enthusiasm for our program are greatly appreciated, and I'd like to keep you informed about our recent activities and achievements.



# Faculty News

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## Trang Tran (Continued)

Events we celebrated:

Vietnamese National Poetry Month: Tháng Thơ Ca (4/24 - 4/28): We celebrated National Poetry Month by sharing our favorite poems and translations, promoting language skills, and understanding different cultures through poetry.

Vietnamese Vocabulary Video Contest 2023 (4/20-5/6): Students had the opportunity to create a 30-second video explaining the meaning of a Vietnamese word. This creative contest aimed to improve vocabulary while encouraging fun and educational content.

The Showcase of Final Projects (4/28): Students presented their final projects, demonstrating language proficiency, creativity, and cultural knowledge.

Vietnamese Variety Show and Year-End Party (5/6): We wrapped up the semester with a variety show and a year-end party, celebrating our language learners' achievements and hard work. It was a time to enjoy Vietnamese food, cultural performances, and community.

I am proud of our students' dedication and the positive impact of these activities on our program. I will continue organizing engaging events and creating opportunities for our students to learn, express themselves, and share their passion for the Vietnamese language and culture.

Thank you for your ongoing support and for participating in our program's journey. Please reach out if you have any questions or want to stay involved. We look forward to sharing more exciting updates with you in the future.





# Faculty News

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## Hye-Sook Wang

This year has been another hectic year for me and the Korean Program!

For research, I focused on my current book editing project on Sociolinguistics and Korean Language Education. It is now at the stage of professional editing and expected to be published sometime in 2024 by Institute of East Asia at University of California-Berkeley. I wrote a chapter on 'politeness inflation' as well as my introduction to the book. The 2nd edition of *Integrated Korean: High Advanced* that I co-authored with my colleagues at other institutions has been in the works all year long and we have completed the manuscripts for both Book 1 and Book 2. They will soon to be sent to the publisher (University of Hawaii Press) once the formatting is done. Although it is called 2nd edition, the book is completely face lifted with respect to the approach and content. For three consecutive semesters, I received UTRA awards that greatly helped my research.

On the teaching side, I taught Advanced Korean and a First-Year Seminar course Language, Culture, and Society: Korea in Spring of 2023 and I am currently teaching Advanced Korean and Business Korean in Fall of 2023. As usual, I also allocated some of my time for advising Sophomore students. As for professional services, I assisted Modern Language Association's foreign language enrollment survey project that MLA conducts every five or six years as the consultant for the Korean language. MLA has just published the results on November 15 and Korean is one of the three languages that showed enrollment increases of 38.3%. The growth of 38.3% was a large margin over the other two languages. I continued to serve on the executive board of the American Association of Teachers of Korean (aka AATK) and National Advisory Board of the International Student Conferences based in D.C. I also performed manuscript reviews for various journals in my field as a referee. I successfully concluded my term as the inaugural president of the New England Association for College Korean Educators (aka NEACKE) at the end of 2022 after serving three years. For the University, I continued to serve as Study Abroad advisor for Korea for the Office of International Programs and affiliated member of the Center for Language Studies.

At the program level, I'm happy to report that our two new colleagues Dr. Heeyeong Jung and Dr. Kyuwon Moon have brought a much needed staffing stability in the program. I tried to help them have a smooth transition and adaptation to a new environment to the best I can and I think they are doing really well. We were also delighted to welcome Dr. Katherine Kang to Brown last year, who was hired for Center for Language Studies. Given her background, Dr. Kang taught one section of Beginning Korean.

We successfully held annual Korean Language Week events in October, celebrating the Hangeul Day. It was especially exciting to reinstate the "Performance Night" event that had been on hold for the past a few years due to the Covid 19. Our talented students as well as local Gayageum musicians shared their talents. We also hosted our annual Brown Korean Speech Contest in person on March 17 and three students advanced to and competed in the 4th New England contest on April 8, 2023 at Boston College in which 8 schools participated. All three students from Brown, Lana Hadziosmanovic, Jeremy Ha, and Jared Ong received prizes. They made us very proud. Congratulations again to the awardees. Your enthusiasm and love for Korea and Korean language stood out. Speaking of Hangeul Day, I personally had a great honor of receiving a Cultural Merit Medal from the S. Korean government (President Seok-Yul Yoon) at Hangeul Day ceremony held in Korea on October 9. It was the second highest honor that is conferred to those who made significant contributions to the promotion of the Korean Alphabet Hangeul, Korean language and Korean culture. I was truly humbled by and grateful for this recognition. So many people offered their congratulations and I would like to thank them once again.

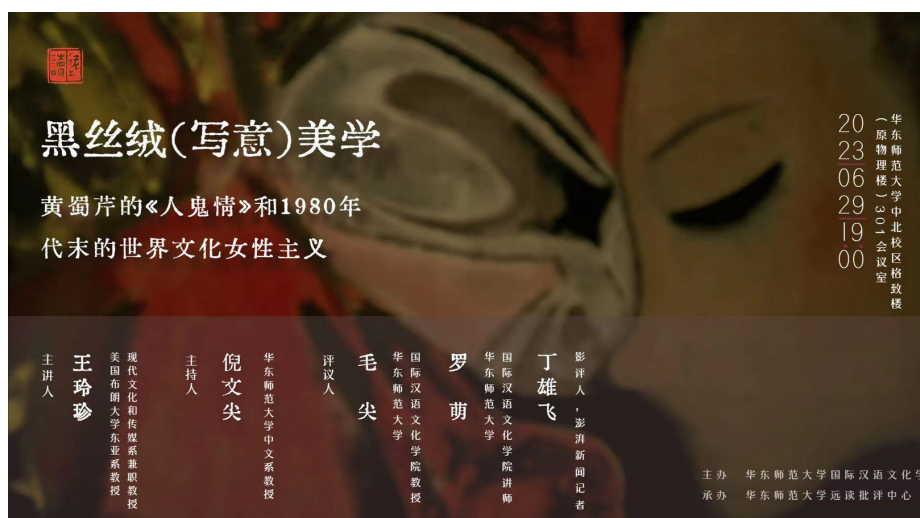
# Faculty News

## Lingzhen Wang

This marks my third year as the Director of Undergraduate Studies, and it has been an immense pleasure to work with our students. I deeply appreciate and admire their dedication and courage in pursuing East Asian Studies during a time of global uncertainty and regional conflicts.

Their enthusiasm and commitment to the languages, cultures, and histories of East Asia clearly signal their transnational vision for the future. Over the past few years, the EAS concentration has seen steady growth, with the number of concentrators recently reaching a historic high of 40. I would like to extend my gratitude to my EAS colleagues and staff members, especially the language faculty across all three programs, who have wholeheartedly dedicated themselves to fostering an inclusive and engaging learning environment. Their efforts have significantly contributed to the increasing interest of Brown students in East Asian Studies.

Throughout this calendar year, I had the privilege of being invited by several universities in the UK, the US, and China to discuss my most recently published book, "Revisiting Women's Cinema." Additionally, I had the opportunity to deliver a few public talks and published a comparative study on French New Wave cinema and Chinese women's experimental cinema during the early post-Mao era in the *Journal of Chinese Women's Studies*.



# Faculty News

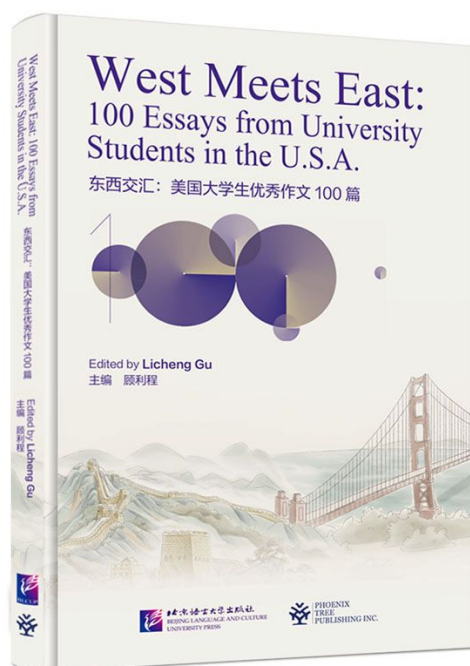
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## Yang Wang

This past year, I taught first-year Chinese, fourth-year Chinese, and Business Chinese. I am always amazed by the progress my students have made throughout their Chinese studies at Brown, particularly now, as their classroom experience and study abroad plans have been affected by Covid. In the spring of 2024, I invited two EAS/Chinese language program alumni, Samantha Kiernan and Karina Bao, to give a talk on how to highlight their learning experience of Chinese on resumes when applying for internships or law schools.

Earlier this year, essays by Maya Azrieli, Kevin Kang, and Amanda Zhang, three former CHIN0800 students, were selected for publication in the book "West Meets East: 100 Essays from University Students in the U.S.A". Their essays, "《三姐妹》 (Three Sisters)," "《算了吧先生》 (Mr. Forget it)," and "《在车里》 (In the Car)," received high praise from the book's editors.

In addition, my pedagogical design of the final case study project for Business Chinese won first prize at the 2nd International Symposium on Chinese for Specific Purposes Lesson Plan Contest organized by the University of Pennsylvania and Duke University. At the symposium, I had the pleasure of demonstrating Brown students' consulting reports for Innomed 茵络医疗, a Suzhou-based company that designs and produces patented guidewires for cardiac surgeries. This presentation addressed two critical challenges the company was facing: a supply chain problem and a communication problem between the design team and the production team. I might speak better Chinese than my students, but they are so much better at doing business!







# Class of 2023

*The East Asian Studies Department's 2023 graduates are listed below.*

Khadijah Ebrahim

Jing Chong Gan

Emma Giventer-Braff

Christine Han

Georgia Liu

Andrew Needham

Brianna Richards

Aiganym Sadykova

Kelly Wang

Jemma Xu



# Post-Fellowship Reflection

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## Charles Alaimo

I would like to sincerely thank you for the opportunity to spend the past summer at CET Beijing engaging in an intensive Mandarin program. I not only learned to speak another language proficiently, challenging my mind to work in new ways, but also broadened my perspective of the world and made many good friends along the way.

Before going to Beijing, I had taken one year of Mandarin at Brown. I knew enough to say some basic phrases, but not much more— I couldn't hold a conversation, or even really understand most native speakers unless they spoke slowly and without a regional accent. Part of what attracted me to the program I attended, CET Beijing, was its intense nature; I swore a language pledge for two months to only speak Mandarin except when calling my family. This was a really difficult transition; the first few weeks of classes went at a fast pace, and started before I had even gotten over my jet lag. But through this environment of total immersion, my language skills progressed dramatically. My speaking is a bit better than reading and writing characters, but I now feel totally comfortable having long conversations entirely in Chinese. I really can't understate how incredible this feels; I chose the program I did because I wanted to do something completely outside my comfort zone, that I couldn't imagine myself at the end of, and I made it out on the other end.

I formed a deep bond with not only the other American students in my program, but also the Chinese university students partnered with us to help adjust to life in a new country. I feel grateful to take away so many lifelong friendships from this experience. I have so many people to text with on Wechat to keep up with and practice my Chinese. The kindness and patience that we were shown by everyone in China from bus drivers to security guards was overwhelming.

There are too many stories to tell in such a short letter about my time abroad this summer, but here's one that I think is illustrative of the larger whole. Towards the end of the program, I was traveling for the weekend in Xi'an with a few other friends. After waking up early to see the Terracotta warriors, we had decided to split up for the afternoon and wander around the city before meeting for dinner in the Muslim Quarter to try one of Xi'an's specialties, a thick noodle called biangbiang mian. It's famous as a kind of touristy gimmick: the character for biang is ridiculously complicated, with the most strokes of any in the Chinese language. The late afternoon sun was baking us alive, at probably temperatures of over 100 degrees Fahrenheit, and we decided to look for a cool place to sit inside. At first we looked for some sort of cool bookstore or restaurant, but eventually in desperation turned to the nearest Starbucks. However, when we went inside and sat down after ordering a coffee cake, we realized that this coffee shop was a little different than normal: it was called “安静星巴克”, or “Quiet Starbucks.” The store was part of a program to give jobs to deaf people, and all of the baristas at the cafe were trained in Chinese Sign Language (not even the ASL that most people in the USA have heard of). While we were sitting, I thought it would be fun, so I learned how to order a latte from a video on the wall, and then went up to try it for real. I didn't know any words in sign language besides the one I had just learned, and trying to communicate what I wanted took several minutes of pointing, waving, and inarticulate gesturing. It was probably very embarrassing.

# Post-Fellowship Reflection

## Charles Alaimo

But in the middle of this experience, I had a realization: I felt completely at home in this awkward situation. After spending months in another language struggling to get my meaning across, it felt like absolutely nothing new. Even though I had never learned any sign language in my life of any kind, I dived right in without any of the hesitation or fear I had when first learning Chinese or my few years of Spanish in high school. This is what I really think I got out of the summer— a newfound confidence and ability to engage with people that I never had before. After I got my coffee, I went back up again with a notepad to have a written conversation with the barista, and learned how to say a few more words, even the biang in biangbiang mian. Even if I never have a chance to go back to China, I think I'll have come away from my trip a new and better person. It was an amazing time.



# Post-Fellowship Reflection

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## Jared Ong

Spending 7 weeks in Korea over the Summer has been an eye-opening experience for me personally, and I felt that I have grown a lot, both in terms of intercultural understanding and my language skills.

I applied to Yonsei's Summer program with a clear goal to improve my Korean language skills. While Brown's comprehensive language program was extremely effective in teaching me the foundations of the language skills and instilling good practices to retain what we have learned, there is no better way to improve yourself in a language other than to immerse yourself in an environment that actively forces you to actively apply what is learned in the classroom to real life. In Seoul, I felt that I have met this goal of mine and even exceeded it greatly. I remember shuddering and feeling so overwhelmed by the fast pace at which everyone around me spoke at, and the different words from the nicely-rehearsed conversations we practiced in classrooms that they used. The first few days in Korea was rough, where I would sometimes not even dare to try out some restaurants for the fear of us not being able to understanding each other, or embarrassing myself by using "broken Korean."

However, as the days passed and I had gotten used to the phrases commonly used by people in casual conversations, particularly in survival situations, I slowly started to try experimenting around with these phrases, combining them with words I have learned in class to find my own way of communicating with the locals. What I found in trying was that even though I was not perfectly speaking Korean, that moment of interaction in the same language and effort you show as a foreigner in trying to do so, is something so magical that immediately bridges two strangers together. I realised that speaking with native Koreans was not something as scary as I perceived at the start, and that almost everyone I had met tried not only to accommodate my mediocre skills, but help me better express myself. I learned to appreciate being able to speak in Korean in every opportunity possible. More importantly, I began to "un-learn" the deeply-perfectionist tendency in me to want to get everything "right" whenever I try to speak in a foreign language.

Now, I try my best to express myself in Korean whenever I can in class or in any setting where I can use the language (unless, of course, I am inconveniencing someone). All in all, I felt that the combination of structured Korean lessons I received there, and the need to constantly understand and communicate with the locals helped me shed out of my shy skin and become more bold in utilizing the language skills I am trying to acquire, and learn from "making mistakes."

In fact, I think that it is this mindset, beyond the cultural experiences and museum visits I went on in Seoul, that developed me the most in terms of the student I would like to become. Going into my junior year where I am beginning to shape the form of my thesis, I realize that I have been spending too much time worrying small tiny problems and considerations without really "doing" anything substantial to advance its progress yet. After this experience in Korea, I am more confident to consider taking my thesis in directions that I have never considered before because I did not want to take too many risks. For one, I am intending to scope my topic beyond simply East Asia, but also to extend my study into Southeast Asia – another interest of mine – and examining the changes in food cultures in East Asian migrant communities in Southeast Asia. While I am sure I will stumble many times in this journey, I am confident that every misstep or slip-up in this process will only serve to improve the quality of my thesis and develop my mental resilience.



# Post-Fellowship Reflection

## Simone Paul

To best reflect the impacts of my program and my personal growth, both in language and character, I will share a formal presentation I gave in Mandarin to my peers and professors near the end of my summer term. My professors and the administration of the IUP Tsinghua University program felt impressed enough with my presentation to ask if it could be published as a part of their newsletter. I have included the original script, an approximate translation into English, and some relevant photos to the presentation.

我今天要讲一个非常重要的题目：“联系的重要性。”

我先会解释这个联系重要的原因。然后会我自己在北京的体验做例子来证明联系的重要性。最后会提出怎么联系的最好建议。

相信我们都知道联系很重要。重要到什么程度呢？

在人类社会中，我们都非交朋友和维持关系不可，要不然会一天比一天寂寞。

大致地说，在生活中我们跟别人的关系占有很重要的地位。

进一步来说，我们都知道现在的政治和经济形势太紧张了。

这个问题复杂得不是我五分钟能详细解释，但我觉得为了达到世界和平和统一的目的，我们得重视联系，特别在个人的小规模的联系上。因为世界不只是包括国家和公司，其实不然。实际上最现实的世界也包括人们。像我和你们一样的人们。有目标，有理想，有恐惧感的人们。

讲那么笼统的题目不太妙，为了举具体例子说明，我会讨论一下我在北京自己的经验。

这是我第一次来中国。我来中国的目的除了提高我的中文水平以外，就是建立联系。

Today I will discuss a very important topic: The Importance of Connection.

I will first explain why connection is important. Then I will use my own experiences in Beijing to prove its importance. Finally I will propose some suggestions for how best to create meaningful connections.

I trust that we all know that connection is important, but really how important is it?

Making friends and maintaining relationships is essential in our current day to avoid loneliness.

In other words, generally our relationships with others play an important role in our lives.

Separately, we all know how tense our current political and economic climate is.

While I do not have the time to fully examine and explain the reasons for this tension, however, I believe in order to ultimately achieve worldwide peace and unity, we must focus on connection. Because the world does not only contain big countries and companies, but also normal people, with aspirations, goals, fears, and feelings; just like you and I. As a result, we must focus on small-scale, person-to-person connection.

Talking in the abstract is insufficient, so I will next demonstrate this importance with examples from my life.

This is my first time in China. In China I not only planned to improve my Chinese, but also create connections.

# Post-Fellowship Reflection

举例来说，我跟年纪大一点的人相处的经验。我曾经下课以后觉得有点儿寂寞，所以我去清华校内的球场去看老年男人踢足球。

我站在球场旁边踢足球的时候，一位老人来了，欢迎我跟他们一起玩。

他先说英语，但一听我能说汉语就用汉语和我聊一聊  
我们一边聊天儿一边踢足球。

再比如说，我也找到了机会跟小朋友联系。在北京我平常到热闹的地方会被小孩儿围观。他们问我很多问题，请我跟他们拍照片。结果我现在每天都随身带着一些小礼物，所以在那样的情况下我已经有所准备。

这些小礼物就是小贴纸。贴纸上说 “you are beautiful!”  
当我被他们围观的时候，把这些贴纸拿出来，然后问他们“这个有什么意思？”

年纪大一点的小朋友常常回答“你很漂亮！”或者“你很美丽。”  
最后我向他们说明一下 “beautiful” 的意思，把它分成两个部分：“相貌的美丽”和“心灵的美丽。”

那这两个经验有什么意义呢？

站在美国人的立场，恐怕除了政府，政策，国家面积，人口数量，经济这些方面以外，我们不太了解中国。

简单地说，一般的美国人不知不觉地忘了中国人也是人。忘了他们也有自己的特点。所以失去了一些对中国人的爱心和尊重。

我不敢充满信心地说，但我相信中国人对美国人的观点也差不了多少。

所以我认为前面提到的经验的确特别影响我。

For example, one day after class I was feeling a bit lonely, so I made my way to one of the Tsinghua University Soccer Fields.

While I was watching from the sideline, an older man came over and invited me to join.

He first spoke in English, but after hearing that I knew Mandarin, he quickly switched back to his native tongue and while playing soccer we also spoke together in Mandarin.

Similarly, I have also been able to make great connections with little kids in Beijing. When in public, I am often swarmed by little kids. They berate me with questions and ask to take pictures with me. As a result, I've learned to carry little gifts with me, so I can be prepared during these moments.

I carry stickers that say “you are beautiful” on them so that when I am surrounded I can take them out and ask the little kids, “do you know what this means?”

Older kids often respond with a handful of Mandarin equivalents of “you are beautiful.” With these kids, I talk a little bit about what beautiful means; your outward appearance, but also the much more important inward beauty.

Now, what is the significance of these kinds of interactions?

From an average American's point of view, aside from facts about government, policy, area, population, or economics, China and the Chinese people are a mystery.

Simply put, the average American tends to forget that Chinese people are *people* too, with their own unique qualities. With this mentality, naturally you begin to lose respect and compassion for these people.

While I wouldn't dare assume, I *believe* that this is not a uniquely American phenomenon.

So, I believe my previously mentioned

# Post-Fellowship Reflection

我现在看清楚在中国，人们也有很多不一样的观点，理想，和独特的特点。

总的来说，为了恢复国际关系，得从个人关系开始。

那我们怎么建立联系？

我们都已经开始了，来到了一个不太熟悉的地方，学习一个不太熟悉的语言，每天跟不熟悉的人聊天儿。

所以我只会建议不要限制这种好奇心，而是培养这种好奇心。

experiences are important, because now I can push past the prejudices I had of Chinese people. I can see and understand the diversity of opinion, the unique dreams, and the often overlooked independent characteristics.

In sum, in order to begin to repair global tension, I believe we must start from international personal connection.

But, how do we do it?

Well, we have all already begun; traveling to a *strange* place, learning a *strange* language, and talking everyday with *strange* people. With enough of this interaction, we will realize that these places, languages, and people are not strange, only new and unfamiliar.

So, in order to form these connections I only recommend that you hold on to this curious attitude and work to develop it further.





# Post-Fellowship Reflection

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## **Laura Romig**

For two months this summer, I had the incredible opportunity to study abroad in Beijing, China. With help from the EAS Department at Brown, I found and funded an intensive language program for Mandarin Chinese hosted at Capital Normal University. In Beijing, I dedicated over 20 hours each week to formally studying Chinese with CET Academic Programs, and spent countless more exploring Beijing and China, participating in cultural activities, forming friendships with local students, and more, all while speaking Mandarin.

When I completed my application for the EAS Summer Language Study Fellowship, one of the concrete goals I articulated was to be able to read literature in Chinese. Entering the program with 4 semester of language study at Brown, I could only read my way through the constructed dialogues of the textbooks, but by the sixth week I was reading short stories and poems in Chinese, and by the final week I had purchased six novels in Chinese, excited about the prospect of digging into them. Seeing this material progress from textbook dialogue to literature was amazing, and I am so grateful that my study at the summer program has given me access to the literature of another language; I also have my eye on the modern Chinese literature course offered at Brown in my remaining semesters.

But literature is just one example; I also had the broader goal of wanting to explore academic interests in another language. While I haven't done any advanced math in Chinese yet, my summer course and experiences gave me the foundations to discuss topics like American politics, international relations and finance, traditional Chinese culture, and even some science in Mandarin. Outside of the classroom, I befriended a local student at the university who does research on the language technology industry, and he has been sending me papers and articles—in Chinese—about this topic, a hot one right now with the development of more advanced AI technologies and fraught US-China relations around scientific exchange. Furthermore, I had the opportunity to present my own opinions about intelligent agriculture and a sustainable future (in Mandarin) at an economic forum with Renmin University students; there, I talked to Chinese students in finance and math, and learned about their economic research. These unique connections and opportunities were possible only because I learned Chinese and went to China, and just in two months; I'm so excited by the prospect of continuing to use the language to connect and grow my world.

While writing my initial application I also had the goal to escape from the linguistic insularity of the United States. Studying Chinese abroad allowed me to experience language learning in environments far beyond the classroom, from martial arts extracurricular class, to a finance conference with another university, to the corner convenience stores in Beijing.

# Post-Fellowship Reflection

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## **Laura Romig**

Additionally, living in a country where I was not fluent in the language gave me the repeated, humbling experience of having to ask for clarification in a conversation, or simply to admit I couldn't understand what someone was saying. In the linguistically insular communities I grew up in, there is far less empathy for this type of interaction, for accented English, or for speakers of English as a second language; after studying abroad, I have a much greater sense of appreciation and empathy for the impressive feat of speaking English as a second language every single day, as many Americans do.

Last, but certainly not least, I hoped by going abroad to gain a deeper understanding of Chinese culture and life in China. In our current geopolitical climate, I believe that personal connections are our most important tool for building empathy and understanding. While in China, I learned about and experienced the rich culture and history of Beijing; I also had the chance to travel to the cities of Chengdu and Xi'an to experience life in other Chinese cities. Thousands of years of history and culture, a population with a billion more people than the US, a deep shared understanding of linguistic and artistic culture, the reverence and value for family — I saw firsthand the impact of these features and more on the Chinese culture and the friends I made. It also allowed me to reflect on the features growing up in America that had shaped my own mindset, and the misconceptions and simplifications around other cultures within the US. While reading newspapers and studying cultures from books and primary sources is important, it cannot compare with truly experiencing the culture and life of a place.

As I was flying back to America in August, listening to Chinese music I had discovered while abroad and gazing out the window and writing my final blog post for CET reflecting on the summer, three points kept raising to the top of my mind. The first was the realization that our world is so, so much bigger than just Brown, my hometown, my experiences, my own intellectual and cultural framework. The second was a deep sense a longing for the friends, both American and Chinese, I was leaving in Beijing. But the third was an intense motivation—to see the world, to continue learning and speaking Chinese, to stay in touch with those friends, to strive to understand experiences and cultures different from my own, and more. I'm so grateful that my summer experience gave me the spark that lit these feelings, and that EAS provided financial support that allowed me to have that experience. I hope to visit China again in the future, and to continue growing my linguistic skills, my cultural understanding and empathy, and my horizons.

# Post-Fellowship Reflection

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## Oliver Sand

Looking back on my time this summer studying at the ICLP language program at National Taiwan University, there are a few areas in which I think I've significantly changed and grown, as a language learner and person more broadly. After attending a few days of class at ICLP, I quickly realized that the program's teaching methods and the required study methods were entirely different from those I relied on in Chinese class at Brown. The volume of homework was much greater than anything I'd had before for a language class, class size was much smaller at 3-4 students, and a higher percentage of the classes consisted of "unscripted" speaking: the teacher would raise a question or issue, and students would discuss with textbooks closed. This was initially quite intimidating, and gave me some appreciation for just how vast an endeavor learning a language is: fluency and understanding change with accent, context, emotions, application, place, etc. As uncomfortable as it was at first, though, I believe that this is maybe the best method for raising students' ability to communicate in their target language in real-time. Teachers at ICLP were able to spend time working individually to meet each student's needs, which I believe also contributes to increased language ability and confidence. Course materials were more interesting and relevant to current events than what I'd studied previously: Taiwan and China history, international news stories, and assigned speeches on topics of personal interest: I chose Taipei's MRT train system and juggling sites map notation. Traveling to the museums and tourist sites of Taipei, such as the National Palace Museum, Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial Hall, Da-An Forest Park, Taipei 101, and many others, and speaking Chinese outside of class with friends and housemates, these new topics and vocabulary became immediately relevant and incredibly rewarding to use. Making friends and building relationships with teachers and classmates, and learning about history and the media and cultures of Taiwan, also greatly strengthened my interest in these topics as well as providing an opportunity for personal introspection and thinking outside of previous identities.

After 9 weeks of a schedule of several hours of class and homework per day, speaking Chinese with roommates, and exploring Taipei City in the evenings, my Mandarin Chinese understanding and speaking abilities have progressed more than I had expected. At this point, I am beginning to get some enjoyment out of native-level Chinese content: videos, podcasts, and news articles. This has opened up a whole world of language learning to continue to explore after coming back to Providence and provides much motivation and excitement.

I would like to thank Brown University's East Asian Studies department and donors for this opportunity, and for the excellent TAs and teachers I've had the privilege to study with and get to know over the past few years at Brown and NTU. I'm grateful to have been able to travel this summer and meet language-learning goals, and I look forward to continuing the learning process in the future.



# Post-Fellowship Reflection

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## Griffin Seidel

For me it's incredibly difficult to fully describe the effect studying abroad in Beijing with CET has had on me. I've been studying Chinese formally for almost eight years and have had informal exposure for even longer. While I have always felt my reading and writing skills develop year after year, when it came to speaking and listening I found myself constantly doubting myself and avoiding opportunities to speak. Partly out of this low confidence and partly from the lack of opportunities to organically practice my Chinese, my speaking never took off in the way I would have liked. To me it often felt disingenuous to say I 'spoke' Chinese and I never liked to tell anyone I was learning it for the fear they would ask me to talk in it. The reason I started learning Chinese in the first place is because my grandma is Chinese and immigrated to America in 1948 as an 18 year old. I've always had a close relationship with my grandma and have always been interested in what she would tell me about Chinese history and culture so I wanted to start learning to be able to speak with her in her native language. But even after so many years of learning I just still couldn't do it, at first it was simply an ability issue but later it was my embarrassment that after investing so much time and resources I still could only hold an incredibly basic conversation.

I chose to study abroad to rectify this because I felt the only way to shock me out of this cycle would be through exposure to a fully immersive environment that would force me to improve. Against every prior feeling of fear surrounding speaking I chose to enroll in CET precisely because it had a full time language pledge. In the weeks leading up to my departure I was terrified. Whenever I met with my teachers at Brown I would always prep lines for what I wanted to ask them but now every second of every day I was going to have to use this language to order food, ride taxis, buy essentials and when I got there it certainly was difficult. Eating meals with our assigned language partners was a struggle to disguise the fact that I only really was understanding every fifth word. The classes were intense and fast paced and even challenged my usual strengths in reading and writing.

However as I began to settle in I found all the hundred upon hundreds of words I had learned in all my past years studying Chinese that had aimlessly been floating in my head come to the forefront of my mind. I found myself able to converse with my teachers on a level that would have been previously unthinkable for me. As I got more comfortable, conversations with the language partners became the highlight of my experience. Going from asking simple questions about hobbies and school we started being able to talk about all sorts of subjects. I found myself able to explain complicated elements of the American political system like the electoral college entirely in Chinese and was able to talk to my language partner about the linguistics research he was doing and about the Chinese government's influence over academia and how he felt about it. I found myself at a Chinese rock concert with classmates actually being able to understand lyrics and sing along.

# Post-Fellowship Reflection

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## Griffin Seidel

Near the end of the term, we had to prepare 10 minute presentations on Chinese-American economic relations that we would be presenting to an audience of Renmin University professors and graduate students, and what I felt was truly a testament to how far my ability had come is that I was able to successfully present on the concept of a central bank digital currency (CBDC) which I had only ever learned about in an advanced political science course I had taken at Brown just the semester prior.

What truly made this experience feel so valuable was visiting my Chinese relatives in Shanghai. I had only met them once seven years prior, and could only speak to them through my grandma as a translator, but now I found myself spending the entirety of four whole days touring Shanghai with them only speaking Chinese. We were not only able to talk about Shanghai's unique architecture and cuisine, but also about my family's difficult history in the 20th century and what it was like living through that time period, and with one of my uncles what living life as a converted Christian was like in China. Every day in Shanghai was truly amazing and during it all it was incredible to be able to call my grandmother and talk to her in her native language about meeting the family she was separated from so long ago and about exploring the city she grew up in.

# Post-Fellowship Reflection

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## **Stella Tsogtjargal**

This past summer, I was lucky enough to participate in the Kyoto Consortium of Japanese Studies's summer program in Modern Japanese. There, I spent two months studying the Japanese language and exploring beautiful and culturally rich Kyoto, Japan. This experience was the first time I've visited a country outside of the United States, so I feel that I've grown significantly in character and confidence. Due to never having been abroad, I didn't know what to expect before starting my program. On my first day in Kyoto, after two grueling flights, I was mystified by everything I saw; from foliage to architecture to the fashion of its inhabitants, Kyoto was like nothing I'd ever seen or experienced.

For two months, I dedicated nearly all my time to practicing my Japanese. From speaking to students attending the university hosting my program to communicating with clerks, my Japanese improved significantly every passing day. I also learned about Japanese culture through friendships I made with Doshisha University students. Just as they were curious about what it is like to live in the United States, I was equally, if not more, curious about life in Japan. Luckily, my friends humored my many questions about Japanese dialects, college living, travel, opinions on America, and more. Learning how to communicate with people in a language I am not yet fluent in, although frequently embarrassing, significantly improved my confidence in speaking. By considering my limited arsenal of words and grammar in Japanese and cultural differences in conversation, I learned new ways to convey my ideas. In the classroom, I engaged with my teacher and classmates only in Japanese, improving my listening and speaking skills.

I also discovered new interests and niches in my Japanese language journey— I found myself especially interested in gender-related issues in Japanese society and gendered language. Because my classmates and I were all dedicated to improving our Japanese together, we were able to practice skills that aren't regularly practiced in a classroom setting, namely casual speech.

Through more mundane activities, like planning an international trip, learning Kyoto's public transit system, and discovering how to enjoy myself while alone in a foreign country, I've noticed that I have grown in maturity. I have learned how to rely on myself, practiced my problem solving skills everyday, and constantly sought ways to make the most of my time in Japan. To enrich myself in its culture, I spent my time outside of class visiting museums, gardens, cafes, and shopping districts. When I visited cities like Osaka and Tokyo, I could even notice cultural differences between their inhabitants and that of Kyoto.



# Post-Fellowship Reflection

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## **Stella Tsogtjargal**

One especially important memory I made was visiting Taiwan for a long weekend. Since I could rely on scholarships to cover my study abroad related costs, I could afford to visit my brother and his family in Tainan. This was the first time I've seen him in twelve years, so having the ability to reconnect and spend time with him was extremely valuable to me; it will remain a memory I'll never forget.

Through simply experiencing life in another country, I feel that a door has opened with regard to what I'm capable of. I haven't considered living in another country or finding jobs internationally, but I know now that these options, however daunting, are available to me. Not only have I given a lot more thought to my future in an international sense, I've also come to think of myself as a more bold, self-assured person— one who can take on significant challenges like that of moving to a new country. In this sense, my study abroad experience has made me feel like a freer and more capable person.

# Post-Fellowship Reflection

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## Nathaniel White

This summer, with the support of the East Asian Studies Summer Fellowship, I participated in the Chinese Immersion Program hosted by Middlebury Language Schools, one of the most renowned language programs in the world, and it is with great pleasure and gratitude that I share my reflections.

Middlebury Language Schools' reputation for academic excellence and rigor is not without justification. Every weekday, I attended a morning lecture (大班课) held at the bright hour of 8:20, which was immediately followed by a meticulous "drill class" (小班课), which saw us divide into intimate groups of 5 or 6 students under the guidance of one of my teachers and review the day's vocabulary and grammar structures. After a short break, I would then reconvene with my small group for a class discussion (讨论课), in which we practiced incorporating these words and grammar structures into our lexicon through wide-ranging conversations on Chinese history, culture, and contemporary issues, before heading to lunch with my teachers and classmates. In the afternoons, I was able to participate in several extracurricular activities, including a weekly Chinese cooking class, tai chi, and hiking in the foothills of the Green Mountains - all facilitated exclusively in Chinese.

My days usually ended with several hours of homework focused on sharpening the four language skills - speaking, listening, reading, and writing - and arming me with a new set of vocabulary words for the next day of classes. One of my teachers once remarked that one day at Middlebury is equivalent to a week's worth of Chinese classes in a traditional university setting, and from my experience, that was far from an exaggeration. Over the course of the summer, I conquered hundreds of vocabulary words, delivered ten original oral presentations, penned dozens of short essays, and compiled an extensive final research report on the geopolitical goals and historical context of the Belt and Road Initiative. This intensive learning endeavor, while initially appearing daunting, proved to be an undeniably rewarding and fruitful journey that sharpened my language skills considerably and helped me to achieve the rapid improvement that I had hoped for upon entering the program.

At the core of Middlebury Language Schools' pedagogical approach is its renowned Language Pledge, which all students sign on the first day of classes and which reads, quite ominously, "In signing this Language Pledge®, I agree to use Chinese as my only language of communication while attending the Middlebury Language Schools. I understand that failure to comply with this Pledge may result in my expulsion." The Language Pledge required an incomparable level of mental discipline as it necessitated that every student immerse themselves fully into an unfamiliar linguistic environment, where even the simplest of interactions became an exercise in adaptability and understanding. The allowance of only Chinese, both inside and outside the classroom, certainly brought about, at times, challenging and sometimes awkward situations, especially during the early weeks of the program. However, the intense immersion soon transformed these steep challenges into familiar patterns of everyday existence, forcing me to engage with Chinese in ways that a typical language class might not afford. The reward of such effort was tangible as I saw my proficiency deepen and my ability to express complex thoughts develop in ways that I had not anticipated.

# Post-Fellowship Reflection

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## **Nathaniel White**

My experience was also greatly enriched by the diversity of my fellow students. Contrary to my initial expectation of being surrounded solely by undergraduate “language nerds” like myself, I was pleasantly surprised by the diverse assortment of individuals in the program. My peers spanned from a wide array of backgrounds, each with their own unique reason for studying Chinese and a distinct perspective on the many issues we discussed in class. Among this vibrant cohort, I found myself part of a community of undergraduates from various colleges and universities, master’s and doctoral students in a wide variety of disciplines, government employees, educators from international schools across China and Taiwan, members of the Marine Corps who had been stationed in East Asia, a flight attendant from Taiwan’s flag-carrying airline, and a quite mysterious group of Australian military and foreign service officials who, due to the ostensibly sensitive nature of their work, could share very little about their backgrounds.

Collectively, interacting with such a diverse group on a daily basis fostered an enriching learning environment that transcended the conventional classroom boundaries. These interpersonal exchanges - be it an intense (and sometimes graded) class debate on the demolition and development of Beijing’s historic Hutongs, a lunchtime conversation on the popularity of imported goods in China, or just small talk during the breaks between classes - made every conversation an immense learning opportunity, and while the depth of many of these conversations were undoubtedly limited by the language ability of myself and my peers, they nonetheless pushed us to evolve beyond our comfort zones, urging us to find alternative ways to communicate complex thoughts and ideas more effectively, thereby sharpening our proficiency and adapting us to the cultural nuances of the Chinese language. My teachers played an indispensable role in facilitating these exchanges.

Simultaneously acting as human dictionaries, discussion leaders, professors, and advisors, they performed the neverending task of correcting our grammar and pronunciation in real time while continuously challenging us to explore new thematic terrains. They modeled a balanced blend of rigor and patience, helping us to decode the intricate labyrinth of the Chinese language while encouraging us to articulate our thoughts and push past the limits of our speaking abilities. I am particularly grateful for the extraordinary lengths they went to to keep classes engaging and tailored to the individual needs of myself and my peers. Many of the most memorable moments of my experience came during my twice-weekly one-on-one sessions (单班课) with my teachers, in which they presented frequent errors they had observed in my speaking and writing during class and on our many homework assignments, explained why I might be making those mistakes, and helped me to overcome them. I was also pleased to discover that many of them had previously worked in the East Asian Studies department at Brown and worked alongside some of my Chinese professors!

I am immensely grateful for having had the opportunity to participate in this program and for the support of the Brown East Asian Studies department, and I am excited to share my experience and newfound knowledge as I continue my studies in Chinese at Brown!

# Post-Fellowship Reflection

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## Wenjing Yap

The past summer I spent studying abroad in Japan has been an enlightening experience for me, for more reasons than I had first anticipated. Over the summer, I was immersed in the Japanese language and culture as I lived in Kyoto, where I could study the language far more efficiently than I would be able to elsewhere.

It was not just the location that helped my studies: my classmates at the Kyoto Consortium for Japanese Studies brought with them a wealth of knowledge that they were eager to share, and I learned much from them. Their different styles of learning and their goals when it came to the language were eye opening. My instructor, Professor Nakamura, was an excellent teacher who sought to broaden our perspectives not only on the Japanese language, but also Japan's culture and current affairs. All her feedback, along with feedback and comments from my classmates, was incredibly insightful and honest, and I am very grateful to both her and my classmates for making my time abroad so meaningful.

There was much that exceeded my expectations, such as how different Japanese could be based on region and demographic, or how vast the language was outside the confines of a textbook. I tried to find opportunities to speak with people outside of the educational environment, and doing so has made me realize just how many different styles of speech can exist in a single city, let alone an entire country or the world! As a student studying translation, I naively thought that some first hand exposure around Japanese dialects would somehow make me more capable of translating works in which I would have to work with dialects or unconventional language, but it will obviously require more effort than that. As much as I have learned from this experience abroad, I still have so much more to learn.

I am thoroughly humbled by my experience abroad. I knew I had much to learn, but my time abroad has made me realize just how little I really know. This experience has also given me a few hints on where I should start looking to fill in those gaps in knowledge that I have. I bring back to Brown with me this new sense of direction, and a broader understanding of the Japanese language. (And probably more Japanese novels than I can realistically read this semester.)

To end off, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the donors who fund Brown's study abroad programs. Thank you for making this enlightening, unforgettable experience possible for so many of us students.



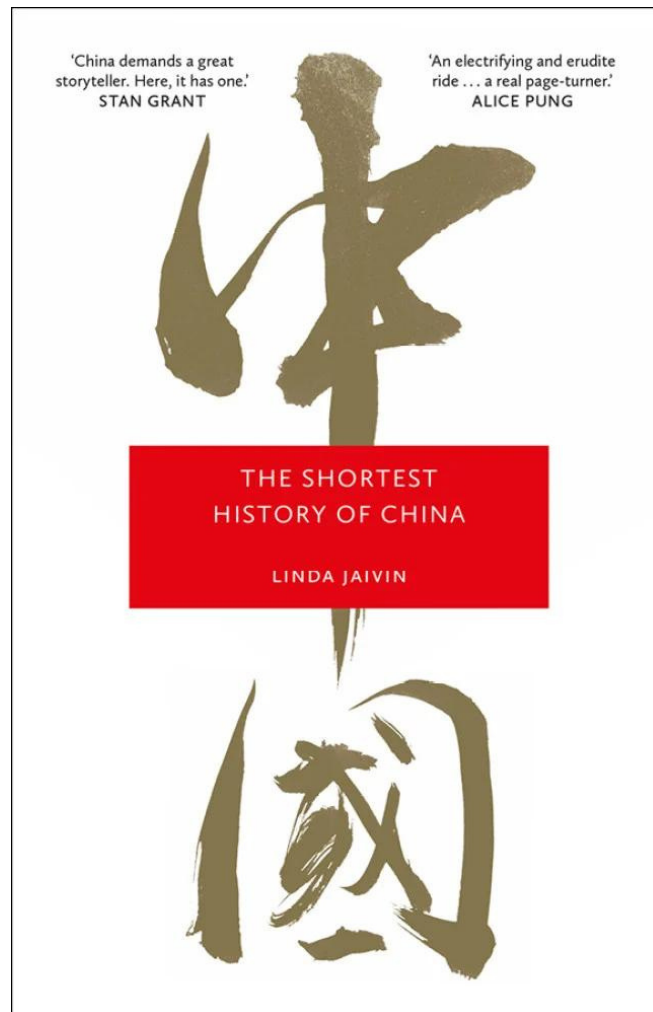
# Alumni News

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1977

## Linda Jaivin

My publisher informs me that my book *The Shortest History of China* will soon have a Korean edition. That is exciting news, and the Korean edition will join other non-English editions, some out, some still being translated: Japanese, Italian, Portuguese, Turkish, Thai, Greek, Czech, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Arabic, Hebrew, Slovak, Russian, Ukrainian and Chinese (Taiwan)... I hope I haven't missed any. It's also published in English in the US, UK, Australia (first edition) and India. It has been widely and positively reviewed, even if BAM somehow took note of it (crying emoji followed by laughing emoji. Amitabha.)



# Alumni News

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2000

## Micheal Justin Lee

I have released a series of rock music albums in the past year. They are all Concept EPs of songs that I have composed and produced for Rock Opera interpretations of classics. My first was “Romeo and Juliet” and has been followed by “Mulan,” “Peter Pan,” “Cleopatra,” “Lady Macbeth,” “Snow White” and “Joan of Arc.” All are streaming on Spotify, iTunes/Apple Music, Pandora, Amazon Music, YouTube Music, and on over 150 other platforms worldwide.

My most recent release is by far the most important artistic endeavor that I have ever undertaken. It is entitled, “Anna May Wong: A Screen Icon’s Story.” She was the first Asian-American movie star. Starting in the silent film era, she set the stage for Asian-American artists to come, including Bruce Lee, Michelle Yeoh, and so many others. Unfortunately, most people do not know her.

Therefore, especially with the success of Asian-Americans at this year’s Academy Awards, I think this is a particularly fine time to release my tribute to Anna May Wong. Here it is on Spotify:

[https://open.spotify.com/album/0IwIVHV9k7w2wDOQ1zd5dN?referral=labelaffiliate&utm\\_source=1011lxSgPjL4&utm\\_medium=Indie\\_CDBaby&utm\\_campaign=labelaffiliate](https://open.spotify.com/album/0IwIVHV9k7w2wDOQ1zd5dN?referral=labelaffiliate&utm_source=1011lxSgPjL4&utm_medium=Indie_CDBaby&utm_campaign=labelaffiliate)



I’m now casting for my first workshopping of the score for a hopeful stage musical. It covers her start in Hollywood, her years in Europe, and her life after returning to the United States. It’s told through a fictionalized portrayal of her friendship with Marlene Dietrich, contrasting the divergent trajectories of the two friends’ careers over the years.

I’m daunted by the enormity of this endeavor but feel it must at least be attempted.

Requesting wishes for luck please!

# Alumni News

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2000

## **Stacy Smith**

This year I celebrated the milestone of working 15 years as a freelance Japanese interpreter. I'm thankful for all the interesting jobs I've had during this time, and it's nice to look back on all I've accomplished. There have been many opportunities to learn and change as I've evolved in my business practices, and I hope the next 15 years bring more chances for growth and fulfillment.

One of this year's highlights was interpreting at the New York Film Festival at Lincoln Center for the film PERFECT DAYS, starring Japanese acting legend Koji Yakusho. It was a wonderful experience getting to know him and the rest of the film's team (pictured here at a post-screening Q&A). PERFECT DAYS was picked as Japan's entry for the best international feature category of the Academy Awards, so here's hoping it receives the nomination!

In personal news, this spring I traveled to Japan for the first time in six years after several false starts during the pandemic. I went with my partner who was visiting the country for the first time, and our two week stay involved stops in Tokyo, Kyoto, Kumamoto and Hiroshima and lots of time on the shinkansen. Although the cherry blossoms peaked earlier than expected this year, we lucked out as they were in full bloom in half of the cities we visited. It was amazing to catch up with old friends, eat tons of delicious food and sakura-flavored sweets, and see Japan through new eyes thanks to my partner. I definitely won't let so much time go by before my next trip!



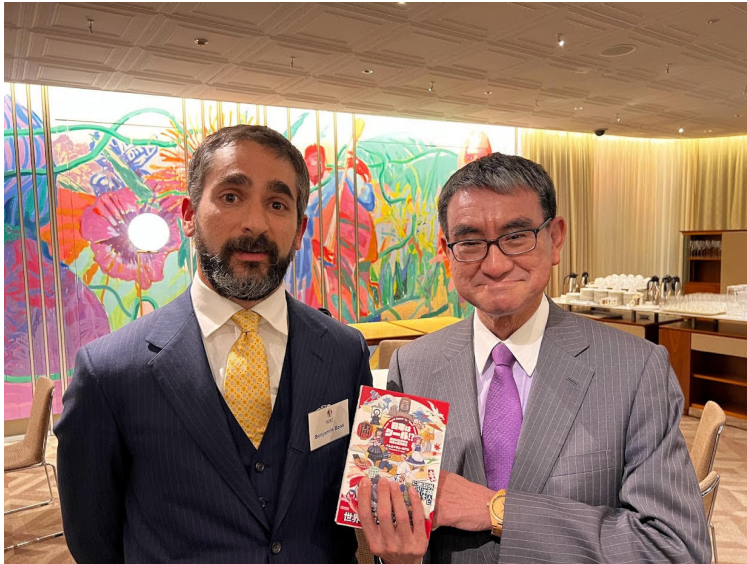
Photo Credit: Julie Cunnah



# Alumni News

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2006



**Benjamin Boas**

I am delighted to inform you that I am still currently residing in Japan. I had the honor of publishing my new book, "From Cool Japan to Your Japan," in Japanese late last year. I am humbled by its warm reception, as it swiftly became a bestseller. This year has been largely dedicated to fostering and enhancing the understanding between Japan and the global community. I had the esteemed privilege of meeting with Minister Kono Taro, among other noteworthy experiences, including appearances on live national television.

2009

**Kimberly Kwok**

As the founder of Acorn Playhouse, a family club in Hong Kong, I am dedicated to providing a safe and welcoming space for modern families. Our club offers a coworking area, a spacious playground, and a cafe where parents can work, hang out, and play with their children. I am also the founder of Mighty Oaks International Nursery and Kindergarten, as well as Acorn Playgroup, both focused on character education and social-emotional learning for children aged 0 to 6 and their families. We strive to create a nurturing environment where children can explore, learn, and grow together. In recognition of our efforts, Mighty Oaks received the Most Prominent Nursery & Kindergarten Of The Year award in 2022. Personally, it has been an eventful year as I welcomed my second child, Hannah Lam, into our family. I am grateful for the recognition I received, including the Hong Kong Professional Elite Ladies award and the Golden Bauhinia Women Entrepreneur Awards.





# Faculty Directory 2023-2024

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Kumiko Akama.....	Visiting Lecturer of Japanese
Beverly Bossler .....	Chair of EAS and Professor of EAS and History
Cynthia Brokaw .....	Professor of EAS and History
Kaijun Chen .....	Assistant Professor of EAS
Pin-Chi Chen.....	Visiting Lecturer of Chinese
Wenhui Chen .....	Senior Lecturer of Chinese
Ellie Choi .....	Visiting Assistant Professor of EAS
Maro Dotulong.....	Cogut Postdoctoral Fellow in International Humanities
Sachiko Hiramatsu .....	Lecturer of Japanese
Jia-Lin Huang Hsieh .....	Visiting Lecturer of Chinese
Lung-Hua Hu .....	Senior Lecturer of Chinese
Liwei Jiao .....	Senior Lecturer of Chinese
Heeyeong Jung.....	Lecturer of Korean
Zhuqing Li .....	Visiting Associate Professor of EAS
Naemi McPherson .....	Lecturer of Japanese
Kyuwon Moon.....	Lecturer of Korean
Rebecca Nedostup .....	Associate Professor of EAS and History
Jeffrey Niedermaier.....	Assistant Professor of EAS and Comparative Literature
Samuel Perry .....	Associate Professor of EAS and Comparative Literature
Janine Sawada .....	Professor of EAS and Religious Studies
Kerry Smith .....	Associate Professor of EAS and History
Atsuko Suga Borgmann .....	Senior Lecturer of Japanese
Naofumi Tatsumi .....	Visiting Lecturer of Japanese
Trang Tran.....	Visiting Lecturer of Vietnamese
Lulei Su .....	Lecturer of Chinese
Hye-Sook Wang .....	Associate Professor of EAS
Lingzhen Wang .....	Professor of EAS
Yang Wang .....	Senior Lecturer of Chinese
Aya Yamakawa .....	Visiting Lecturer of Japanese
Kiko Yamashita .....	Associate Professor of EAS



Brown University Department of East Asian Studies  
Providence, Rhode Island