

## SPOTLIGHT ON NEWNHAM US ALUMNAE

### PRODIGIOUS INDIA: Vidya Dehejia

After completing the tripos in Archaeology and Anthropology, Vidya Dehejia (N'61) received a University Research Grant to work on her Ph.D. thesis, "The Early Buddhist Caves of Western India." This, the first of her over twenty books, was published by Thames & Hudson in 1972. She is married to fellow Cantab graduate, Jay Dehejia (St. Johns), and has lived across the world, in London, Sydney, Hong Kong, New Delhi, Honolulu, New York and Washington, D.C. Extensive field travel in India, with visits to sites of importance in Southeast Asia, has given her close familiarity with the art of the region. She joined the faculty of Columbia University's Art History Department in 1982 to teach a range of courses on Indian art at both undergraduate and graduate levels. From 1994-2002, she held a variety of positions at the Smithsonian's Freer and Sackler Galleries, that jointly constitute the national museum for Asian Art, ending with that of Acting Director. Since 2002, Vidya has been the Barbara Stoler Miller professor of Indian Art at Columbia University, and also the director of Columbia's South Asia Institute.



Vidya's publications have ranged from Buddhist art of the centuries BC to the esoteric temples of North India, and from the sacred bronzes of the South to the art of British India, while her many exhibitions have covered a similar range of material. She curated the very first show on the art of British India at New York's Pierpont Morgan Library in 1986, before it became the "in" subject, titling it *From Merchants to Emperors: British Artist and India*. Soon thereafter, she curated an exhibition for Columbia University on Edward Lear's Indian watercolors (there are 3000 of them!), with the title *Impossible Picturesqueness*. In the year 2000, she led a Newnham tour of her exhibition *India through the Lens: Photography 1840-1911* that was shown at the Sackler Gallery in Washington, D.C.

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### FROM WARTORN BURMA TO RESURGENT CHINA: Yin Yin Nwe

After finishing my Ph.D. and leaving Newnham in August 1975, I went home to Burma and worked happily in Rangoon University, eventually becoming a Lecturer (Associate Professor in US terms). During this time, I had an interesting AND fulfilling life – teaching young students with hardly any resources, conducting university projects in remote rural areas, managing geological mapping and research projects on a shoestring budget, running field camps where we had to find our own water sources and dig our own latrines, trekking as much as 20 to 30 miles a day through jungles, across rivers and mountains. I remember walking through misty cinnamon forests on the mountain slopes near the border with Thailand, with tree leeches dropping on our necks; living in the poorest communities, and even stumbling into a tiger lair! But then came the bloodbaths of 1988. Some of my students and friends were arrested, others fled, universities started their decline.



I left the country with my young son (to give him the chance of a decent education). After one and half years of post-doctoral research and the usual obligatory publications as an Alexander von Humboldt Fellow in Munich Technical University, I turned away from academia, because I wanted to get to grips with development again. I joined UNICEF, the most operational of UN agencies and rose from my lowly first post (Environment Project Officer) to my current position now as the head of UNICEF in China – the first woman to hold this post. In between, I worked extensively in development planning and programming, especially in evaluation and monitoring systems, in the Central Asian Republics (during the Tajikistan civil war); the former Yugoslavian countries (during the Bosnian war); West and Central Africa (covering 23 countries in that region); North Africa and the Middle East (20 countries from Morocco in the west to Iran in the east, including stints in Iraq during Saddam Hussein's time); Indonesia (during its religious conflicts as well as during its Tsunami disaster); and South Asia. My last post before China involved tracking the use of UNICEF tsunami funds across the eight countries affected by the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami (India, Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Malaysia, Somalia, Sri Lanka and Thailand) and working with President Clinton's Office in his capacity as the UN Special Envoy for the Tsunami.

Now in China for nearly two years, I am working on several fronts: conversion of our office to a 'normal' UNICEF office from one where all national staff were seconded from the Government; private and corporate fundraising; corporate social responsibility and public/private partnerships for sustainable development; glaring disparities in social indicators between the east and west of the country; and not least, emergency and reconstruction programmes to respond to the terrible Sichuan earthquake.

My son finished high school in Africa and is now working in New York. Although we had initially discussed applying to Cambridge, England, he eventually went to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology from where he graduated with three degrees.

## BRITISH ENGLISH POETRY & ARGUMENTS: Kim Wheatley

I was born and grew up in Bath, England, and read English at Newnham from 1979 to 1982. When I arrived in Baltimore in 1984 to do my Ph.D. at Johns Hopkins, I didn't realize I was emigrating, but I've now spent half my life in the States. For the past sixteen years I've been teaching English at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia. I teach 18th- and 19th-century British literature, including Romantic poetry, Jane Austen, and the Gothic novel. My first book was on the early reception of Shelley's poetry, and I'm now (very slowly) writing a book on feuds involving early 19th-century British periodicals. I happily spend my spare time driving my two children to swim practice, baseball, soccer, play rehearsals, etc. Here's a picture of me with my husband Loren Council, our children Emily (13) and Stephen (8), and our dog Chagwa.



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## ON THE WINGS OF WAR: Avis Waring



I was born in 1920 in Oregon and lived on a number of farms during the 1920's and the 1930's Depression. My parents depended on us seven children to provide help for the gardening, dairying, and house work. In high school I tried saving money for college by working for neighbors. After enrolling at Willamette University in Salem, Oregon, I worked as a waitress to pay all expenses for a B.A. Degree. For my last college year, I transferred to the University of Washington in Seattle just before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December, 1941. That event changed the goal of my life, which had been to become a librarian. Instead I heard that our Military Forces needed Japanese linguists, so I transferred from French to Japanese language classes. Soon the US Navy offered to give a year of intensive Japanese language training to a few women to be translators. I was fortunate to be one of about 60 WAVE officers selected to go to the Navy Department in Washington, D.C. for translation of captured Japanese documents. Discharged from the WAVES in 1946, I immediately applied to the U.S. Army to go as a civilian in the Occupation of Japan and spent three years as an assistant to an American economist assigned to determine how much food we needed to import to Japan to avoid starvation. That work inspired me to get a Master's degree in economics. I also wanted to see Europe before I settled down in the United States and in 1949 was admitted to Newnham College. There I used my GI Bill funding to study for two years and used savings from working in Japan to travel during college breaks in various European countries.

I had known Ronald Waring for seven years before we decided to get married upon my return from England to Oregon. While I was abroad, he used the GI Bill to graduate from college in Journalism. Very soon we were invited by friends to join them for a business in Guatemala. Their business failed but we wanted to stay there, so I took a position writing economic reports for the Bank of Guatemala and Ron established an English-language news broadcast. Our first daughter was born on Ronald's birthday, in February 1954, prompting us to name her Rhonda. A few months later, Guatemala revolted against a newly-formed Communist government. Anxious to leave we managed to get air reservations to return to Oregon. The following year we were employed by the U.S. Government in Washington, D.C. Ron took a job as an editor/writer for the National Science Foundation and I became an economics analyst for the C.I.A. Fortunately my division was completely separate from the Intelligence Division (the 'Division of Dirty Tricks') about which we have heard so much in recent years. My job was to study the economic situation in various countries, usually concentrating on the agricultural condition of countries like India, which needed food imports at that time, or the Brazilian soy bean expansion where production could be expected to have an impact on the U.S. market. My job was enjoyable – I had been well trained for it at Newnham, in Japan, and in Guatemala. In addition, the C.I.A. often gave me travel expenses to visit the countries about which I wrote. When our second daughter, Elizabeth, was born in 1958, I found a wonderful maid to supervise the children and do the housework on weekdays. Ron called himself the "Saturday maid" whenever I had to work overtime. In 1980, after retiring, we developed a 33-lot subdivision in Florida, and moved from Virginia into a house there on Merritt Island (near the Space Center). Ron bought a little Kubota tractor and a mower to maintain the subdivision. He called them 'His Toys'. I took classes to get a real estate license to sell the lots and join a real estate sales company where I worked until 2002. Our two daughters and their families, one living in Oregon and the other in Virginia, have come often to visit. We lived 22 years there before Ron died in 2002 and I moved closer to my youngest brother on the Indian River.