Higher education in the 1990s is increasingly conscious of other peoples, other cultures and other traditions. While historically Bridgewater has placed emphasis on western civilization, the college is now moving to enhance its offerings in eastern civilization. Dr. De-min Tao of the History Department is a faculty member who brings a strong interest in East Asia to the campus.

A specialist in Japanese intellectual and cultural history, Dr. Tao recently published a book based on his dissertation from Osaka University Press that looks into the scholarly tradition of the Kaitokudo, a Neo-Confucian Academy in early modern Japan (1724-1869). He points out in his book that the Kaitokudo Academy has not been sufficiently explored, particularly with respect to its contributions to solving a range of social and economic problems of the late Tokugawa period. Through Dr. Tao's work the impact of Neo-Confucianism in Tokugawa Japan will be more clearly understood.

With his book on the Kaitokudo Academy published, Dr. Tao has been engaged in a new research project on Chinese studies in Meiji Japan (1868-1912). He presented a paper at the International Conference on Meiji Studies held at Harvard University in May and went to Japan for the summer to further his study on the subject through a research fellowship from prestigious Rikkyo University (Saint Paul's University) in Tokyo. In the future Dr. Tao plans to write an intellectual biography of the Japanese philosopher Tominaga Nakamoto (1715-1746) who was one of the major scholars in the historical study of Confucianism, Buddhism and Shintoism.

With Dr. De-Min Tao on the Bridgewater faculty, students now have someone who can open their minds to eastern civilization and new thought systems from an Asian perspective. As contact among nations increases and interest in Japan and China grows, Dr. Tao is certainly at the center of the college's commitment to a truly global education.