THE ASIANetwork BOOK
ASIA IN THE UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM AND THE CASE FOR THE LIBERAL ARTS

Suzanne Wilson Barnett
History, University of Puget Sound

College teachers have the good fortune of being paid to do something that is well worth doing, the conveyance, extension, and generation of ideas in the service of intellectual community and human understanding at many levels. The basis of the ASIANetwork book, supported by a grant from the Henry Luce Foundation, is that the study of Asia in the context of the liberal arts promotes intellectual exchange at a high order of thought and enhances the promise of college graduates as citizens of a world that is increasingly both more complex and more interdependent. The book is an opportunity to celebrate this reality with reference to the objectives, achievements, and dynamic quality of ASIANetwork member institutions in the development and promise of Asian area studies.

June 1998 editorial meeting

At a meeting in Colorado Springs in mid-June 1998 the authors and editors of the book engaged in extended conversation that illuminated themes and concerns. Thomas Coburn's image of liberal arts education as an ellipse involving tension between two foci, rather than as a "center," inspired the sense that Asian subject matter well serves the pursuit of the fluidity and range of knowledge and affirms Asia's role as a "sphere of humane literacy," in words invoked by Rita Kipp. Stephen Nussbaum's observation that the liberal arts college is "a privileged place" where "creative dialogue occurs" followed the trend of the meeting to see Asia as important to the preservation of the liberal arts ideal. Ainslie Embree summarized the challenge as the need to make Asian studies integral to undergraduate education and a democratic society in the world context. Discussion suggested that this process involves the avoidance of stereotyping and essentializing Asian peoples, the promotion of language study, and continued excitement about ideas and pedagogy and the integration of teaching and research.

In addition to Professors Coburn (St. Lawrence University), Kipp (Kenyon College), Nussbaum (Earlham College), and Embree (Columbia University, emeritus), other authors at the meeting were Samuel Hideo Yamashita (Pomona College) and Stanley Mickel (Wittenberg University); also in attendance were co-editors Van Symons (Augustana College) and Suzanne Wilson Barnett (University of Puget Sound), along with ASIANetwork Executive Director Marianna McJimsey (The Colorado College) and Terrill Lautz (The Henry Luce Foundation).

TWO OPPORTUNITIES TO STUDY AND TRAVEL IN ASIA
THE 1999 ASIANetwork FREEMAN PROGRAMS
APPLICATIONS DUE NOVEMBER 30, 1998

The ASIANetwork invites applications for two programs funded by the Freeman Foundation. The Student-Faculty Fellows Program supports collaborative research of ten student-faculty pairs in which the student works with a faculty member and both go to Asia for three weeks or longer. The College in Asia Summer Institutes Program provides training for colleges to develop and manage term-in-Asia programs. In each of three summers, five different colleges, each represented by an administrator and a faculty member, will be selected to participate in a three-week institute conducted on-site in Asia.

The one million dollar, four-year (1998-2001) Freeman Foundation grant generously supports travel, research materials and stipend for students, faculty and staff of ASIANetwork member institutions.

1998 Student-Faculty Fellows Program faculty mentors

The 1998 Student-Faculty Fellows Program faculty mentors are listed here for prospective applicants who wish to discuss with them the first year of the four-year program.

Marsha Smith, Sociology, Augustana College, China