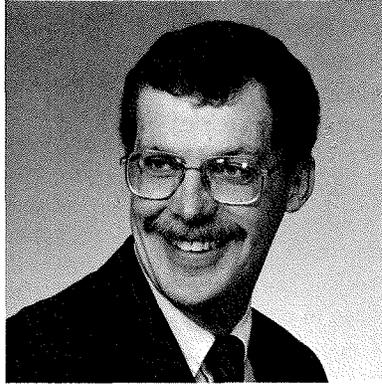


From the Executive Director



Late this spring, ASIANetwork completed a book, published by M.E. Sharpe, entitled *Asia in the Undergraduate Curriculum: A Case for Asian Studies in Liberal Arts Education*. The idea of publishing such a work was initially presented to ASIANetwork board members by Dr. Terrill Lautz, Vice-President of the Henry Luce Foundation. Terry felt there was a need to produce a book which would place the development of Asian studies programs in small colleges in a historical context and make a compelling case for the inclusion of Asian studies in the liberal arts curriculum. In this short space, I would like to report on how Terry's suggestion became a reality, for I believe this says a great deal about our young consortium.

The board's motives in accepting Terry's suggestion were two-fold. First, we also sensed the need for such a publication, but second, and perhaps equally important in our eyes, we hoped that through the publication of this book we could secure a second major grant from the Luce Foundation that would provide us with enough revenue to keep the consortium solvent.

At that time (spring 1996), the only grant that ASIANetwork had received, a Luce funded ASIANetwork Consultancy Program, was drawing to a close. This grant had provided ASIANetwork with \$225,000 to support consultancy visits by experienced Asian scholars to ASIANetwork colleges seeking advice on how to begin or to strengthen their Asian studies programs. However, built into the grant were monies to help fund ASIANetwork administrative costs, which though low were simply not being met by payments of institutional dues. During the fall 1996 board meetings, Marianna McJimsey, then Executive Director, announced that because of careful management of Luce monies, the consortium had been able to stretch three years of Luce support to sustain ASIANetwork for four years. But unless additional revenues were secured during the 1996-97 academic year, ASIANetwork would run out of money.

Consequently, the board asked me to accept the challenge of writing a new grant proposal to the Luce Foundation centered on the publication of this book. The proposal, *Promoting Dialogue Among Asianists: An ASIANetwork Initiative*, also committed us to develop a website, continue publication of our thrice-annual newsletter, and sustain our annual spring conference.

We were heartened by the Luce response in the fall of 1997, when we were informed that they had accepted the proposal and granted ASIANetwork \$150,000. Without this early seed money, there is no certainty that we would have survived.

Once funding for the book had been secured, Suzanne Wilson Barnett (University of Puget Sound) and I agreed to co-edit the book. With the Luce support, we were able to offer each of the six chapter authors a small stipend to free time for them to write their manuscripts. This was a wonderful group of authors including: Tom Coburn, St. Lawrence University; Ainslie T. Embree, faculty emeritus, Columbia University; Rita Smith Kipp, Kenyon College; Stan Mickel, Wittenberg University; Steve Nussbaum, Earlham College; and Sam Yamashita, Pomona College.

We were also able in early June 1998 to conduct a workshop in Colorado Springs, Colorado where the book's authors, co-editors, ASIANetwork Executive Director Marianna McJimsey, and Terrill Lautz met to reflect upon important issues that needed to be addressed in such a publication, what the role of each author would be in addressing these issues, and how individual chapters might be effectively integrated in the work. A tight time schedule was also agreed upon for submission of manuscripts, editing of manuscripts, and publication of the book by M.E. Sharpe, and this schedule was kept. Now, only two years after completion of the workshop, the published book is available for purchase.

All of us engaged in writing this book are very proud

of it. Producing it was an immensely satisfying endeavor that involved all participants in thoughtful reflection about the history and development of Asian studies at small colleges and what we need to do in the future to strengthen this field of study. We are pleased to announce that monies from the Luce Foundation grant, supplemented by monies provided by the consortium itself, will enable ASIANetwork to send during the month of September a copy of this book free of charge, to each 1999-2000 ASIANetwork member college president and academic dean, 328 individuals in all.

Should you wish to know more about *Asia in the Undergraduate Curriculum*, you will find a critical review of it written by Timothy Cheek of The Colorado College in this issue of the *ASIANetwork Exchange*. I hope you will read his review and then obtain and read this book. Once done, perhaps you and other faculty at your college can meet with your college president and academic dean to consider how you might strengthen the study of Asia on your campuses, using this book as a framework for such dialogue.

Van Symons

Order your copy of
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Jim Lochtefeld and Van Symons at the ASIANetwork Conference 2000