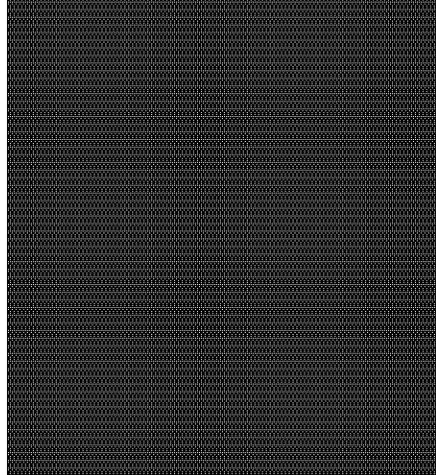


From the Executive Director



Each academic year, generally in the fall, Stan Mickel (Wittenburg University) and Cathy Benton (Lake Forest College), the two officers of ASIANetwork's Development Committee, and I make a short trip to New York City to visit foundations and meet with close friends of the consortium. Most often, we have a new grant initiative to showcase as we seek foundation support for a new summer program or to sustain some other need of the consortium. However, this fall was special because we were able to work our development trip around the "Symposium on Asia in the Curriculum," which was held at Columbia University September 20th to honor the Freeman family and their Foundation. As such, Houghton, his wife Doreen, and their son, Graeme, were the special guests, as were Elizabeth Wong, program officer for the foundation, and Hildy Simmons, who works for the Freemans out of the offices of J.P. Morgan in New York. It is about this symposium and the Freemans that I wish to write.

The symposium was organized and hosted by two long-time friends of ASIANetwork, Carol Gluck, George Sansom Professor of Japanese History at Columbia (who is also a member of our Council of Advisors and will be one of our keynote speakers at this spring's conference in South Carolina), and Roberta Martin of the East Asian Institute at Columbia, who is one of five regional directors of the National Consortium for Teaching about Asia and an incoming member of our Council of Advisors.

The invited guests, and there were a lot of us, were the beneficiaries of Freeman Foundation support during the past year, especially that directed to colleges and universities

through the Undergraduate Asian Studies Funding Initiative. This program has provided on, an institution to institution basis, grant support ranging from just under \$200,000 to \$2,000,000 over a four-year period to thirty large universities and fifty-four smaller colleges. ASIANetwork is grateful that thirty-five of the small colleges receiving support are currently ASIANetwork members and that Elizabeth Wong graciously requested the institutional mailing list of the consortium at the beginning of the initiative so that ASIANetwork member institutions would be fully aware of this grant opportunity. One might also note that eight of the remaining nineteen colleges that were funded have at one time or another been part of ASIANetwork. It is hard to imagine the impact this support is having on faculty, student, and program development on these campuses and across the country as grant proposals now become reality and innovative programs to strengthen the study of Asia commence.

At the beginning of the symposium, Houghton Freeman reviewed for the group the activities of the Foundation. He talked about the family's deep ties to Asia, of his father's involvement in the founding in China with C.V. Starr of the AIG Insurance Company, and of his son and daughter's childhood in Japan where he worked after the Second World War. It is this connection to East Asia that has led to the deep commitment of the Foundation to foster stronger bonds of friendship between this country and the countries of East and Southeast Asia.

In addition to building stronger ties with Asia, Mr. Freeman noted that the Foundation has also become involved in a wide range of activities to support the environment and

education in Vermont, their home state. It has contributed financial support to land mine removal in South Vietnam; and perhaps most interesting, it has made a commitment to fund the preservation of the northeast corner of the Forbidden City in Beijing, a section of the imperial complex developed by the Qianlong Emperor in the late 18th century. The foundation is also working from the bottom up to infuse Asia into K-12 education through the efforts of the National Consortium for Teaching about Asia (NCTA), and from the top down through the Asia Society and state governors and state boards of education to internationalize middle and high school curriculums. In addition, the Freeman Foundation is beginning to support the development and strengthening of Asian collections at museums across the country.

Three generations of Freemans have been schooled at Wesleyan University in Connecticut, so they know firsthand the value of a liberal arts education and the ready resources that are available through small colleges to help the Freemans achieve many of their objectives. As you all know, the Freeman Foundation has twice granted ASIAnetwork support, totaling over \$2,000,000, to fund our very successful Student-Faculty Fellows and our College-in-Asia Institute programs.

The symposium was a highly successful one. It is rare that individuals committed to K-12, liberal arts, and university level education are able to freely interact with representatives from non-profit organizations such as the Asia Society, Japan Society, Korea Society, the National Committee on United States-China Relations, the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia, and the ASDP

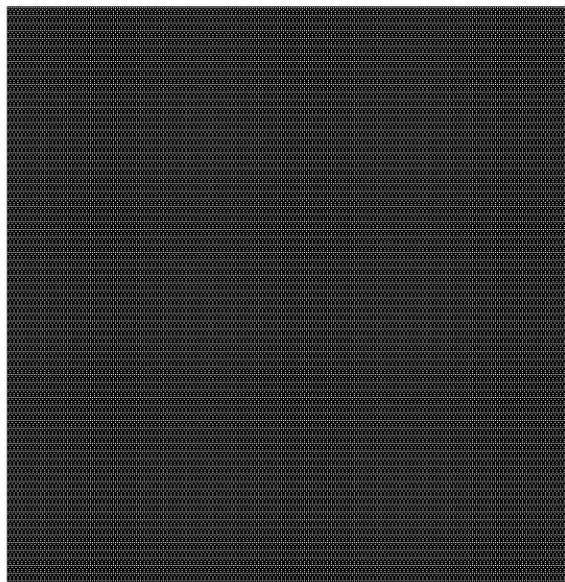
programs located at the East-West Center. Add to this mix representatives from a number of important museums, foundations such as the Henry Luce Foundation, and publishers such as Doug Merwin at East Bridge Press and you can imagine the energy among the group. One also quickly gains a sense of the impressive outreach of the Freemans.

The morning was spent in workshops. Individuals were free to choose which they wished to join. Sessions focussed upon “Integrating Asia into General Education Courses,” chaired by Carol Gluck; “Exchanges and Study Tours,” chaired by Susan Greenwell; “Faculty Development,” chaired by Van J. Symons; “Asian Studies Programs,” chaired by Richard Smith; and “Museum, Electronic, Print and Other” chaired by Roberta Martin. Discussion was lively and valuable.

Lunch followed and participants were encouraged to sit by state and region to facilitate networking. A plenary session followed after which everyone was invited to a cocktail reception in the C.V. Starr East Asian Library. Dinner followed where the Freemans were honored with kind remarks made by Carol Gluck and a surprise vocal performance by Jacques Fuqua, director of the national coordinating site of NCTA at Indiana University.

It was a splendid day, highlighted by good food, developing friendships, and the presence of the Freemans. This symposium provided the opportunity for all in attendance to express their thanks to Houghton, Doreen, and Graeme for their beneficence and their commitment to so many commendable goals.

Van Symons



The Shanghai headquarters office of AIG Insurance as it appears today.

Photo by Cathy Benton, Lake Forest College