

*THE FUTURE OF STUDENT EXCHANGE*  
*RICHARD WOOD, EARLHAM COLLEGE*  
*1996 ASIANetwork CONFERENCE ADDRESS*

"We need more study abroad, not less. The Pacific Century is here. We must not be blinded as though we were deer with headlights in our eyes," Richard Wood challenged the ASIANetwork Conference attendees at the April 27, 1996 lunch. Wood, President, Earlham College; Chair, U.S.-Japan Friendship Committee and U.S.-Japan Conference on Cultural and Educational Interchange (CULCON), has accepted a position as Dean of the Divinity School, Yale University, effective July 1, 1996.

Wood cited Richard Jackson of the Foreign Service Institute who observed the qualities of successful foreign service officers. Wood suggested that Jackson's conclusions are also characteristic of students whose study-abroad experiences are the most enriching.

**Excellent study-abroad experiences**

Such students 1) know enough or take the time to learn enough language to engage in cross-cultural communications; 2) know something of

the history, culture, and politics of the host country; 3) are interested in what is going on in the world outside of the university; 4) frequently travel away from the university site and city to the country and small towns; 5) develop personal contacts outside their official links; 6) are skilled in active listening, using both their eyes and their ears.

**Erasmus model**

"American study abroad programs must be rethought," Wood urged. We should move away from the junior year abroad concept, and consider the European Erasmus model whereby students receive their degrees from more than one institution.

Wood underscored the centrality of language study in the study-abroad experience. Language is fundamental to competence in communication and is the basis of establishing genuine exchange.

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*GENDER AND CHANGE IN ASIAN SOCIETIES*  
*1996 ASIANetwork CONFERENCE PANEL SYNOPSIS*

Rita Kipp, Panel Chair  
Anthropology, Kenyon College

Following the charge to examine what has changed and what has not changed in women's lives or gender relations over recent decades, four panelists reported on the countries or regions of Asia they knew best.

Panelists included *Sandhya Kiran*, Biology, Lady Doak College (Madurai, India), 1995-1996 United Board visiting scholar at Presbyterian College, on India; *Nirmala Salgado*, Sociology, Augustana College (639 38th St., Rock Island, IL 61201), on Sri Lanka; *Rita Kipp*, Anthropology, Kenyon College (kipp@kenyon.edu), on Southeast Asia;

and *Suzanne Barnett*, History, University of Puget Sound (sbarnett@ups.edu), on China and Japan.

Kiran addressed the impact of Hinduism on images of women and noted where the Indian government is attempting to ameliorate gender inequality. Salgado and Kipp both focused on changing work roles for women, especially in industry and as international migrant laborers. Barnett looked at women both in relation to the socialist revolution that remade China and to the Japanese reformation since the Meiji era. Her remarks suggested the difficulty of translating "feminism" across different times and cultures.

The panelists compiled an annotated list of books they recommend for teaching courses about women in Asia, or for incorporating information about gender and change in other courses.

### South Asia

Bartholomeusz, T., *Women Under the Bo Tree*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, 296 pp., \$59.95

A comprehensive study that examines the history, role, and activities of female Buddhist renunciants or "nuns" from the late nineteenth century to the present. Discusses these women within the context of the Buddhist revival in Sri Lanka.

Tharu, S., Lalita, K. (eds), *Women Writing in India, Vol. II: The Twentieth Century*. New York: Feminist Press at CUNY, 1993, 576 pp., \$29.95, pb

An anthology of women's writing in India, including translations from a variety of languages and representatives of diverse literary genres. Especially useful in providing an overview of nationalism in relation to women and the women's movement in India. Short introductions to individual writers and their works.

Kiribamune, S., Samarasinge, V., *Women at the Crossroads: A Sri Lankan Perspective*, New Delhi: Vikas, 1990, South Asia Books. 248 pp., \$35, pb

A collection of essays relating to the status and role of Sri Lankan women in a variety of contexts and concerning issues common to developing countries. Women in politics, education, law, the family, and foreign domestic work in mid- and late twentieth century contexts.

Ali, Aruna Asif, *The Resurgence of Indian Women*, New Delhi: Radiant Publishers, 1991, South Asia Books, \$30

The roles of Indian women from Vedic times through pre- and post-independence. Good documentation.

Jiggins, Janice, *Changing the Boundaries: Women Centered Perspectives on Population and Environment*, Covelo, CA and Washington, DC: Island Press, 1994. 350 pp., \$22, pb

Insights on the relationship between women, food, and population, and on the position of women in programs of sustainable development.

Ghadially, Rehana (ed), *Women in Indian Society: A Reader*, Newberry Park, CA: Sage, 1988, 310 pp., \$14.95, pb

Articles that examine and challenge the roles of women in a rapidly changing society.

### Southeast Asia

Ong, Aihwa and Peletz, Michael G. (eds), *Bewitching Women, Pious Men: Gender and Body Politics in Southeast Asia*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995, 307, pp. \$16, pb

Challenges the supposition that gender relations in this region are equal or complementary, and disputes that we can ever study gender "in and of itself." Essays about Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines view women's lives in transnational, national, and local contexts.

Wolf, Daine Lauren, *Factory Daughters: Gender, Household Dynamic, and Rural Industrialization in Java*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992, 323 pp. \$15, pb

Examines how young women's industrial labor changes the dynamics within their families. Describes the new constraints that have emerged along with new freedoms, and finds the total impact on women "paradoxical and contradictory."

### China and Japan

Fogel, Joshua (ed), *Chinese Women in a Century of Revolution, 1850-1950*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989, 288 pp. \$12.95, pb

Argues that women's equality was central to the revolutionary movement led by Communists and essential to the viability of the PRC. Revolution would occur only if women were freed of traditional constraints, and women would be free only if China experienced a Marxist revolution.

Bernstein, Gail Lee (ed), *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600-1945*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991, 52 pp. \$16, pb

Supports the view that Japan's modern transformation significantly involved women of varying social classes but reinforced the subordinate role of women. Describes the state's incorporation of women into national policy with the Meiji emphasis on "Good Wife, Wise Mother." Explores post-Meiji social history showing that while women enjoyed increased recognition, socio-economic structures relegated them to home and motherhood. Liberal activists of the Taisho era appear either as the "Modern Girl" or "New Woman," upsetting established norms, or as feminists who advocated motherhood as woman's noblest work.

Feng, Jicai, *The Three-Inch Golden Lotus*, David Wakefield (trans.), Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994 (Tianjin, 1986), 208 pp., \$12.95, pb

A compelling, recent novel about foot-binding in the last years of imperial China and the early Republic. With double meanings everywhere, over-

stated, often ironically witty. Views bound feet as art and fetish. Shows the complicity of women in the perpetuation of their subordinate status, symbolized by their deformed feet, ironically perceived as reformed feet and as the basis of female agency and empowerment.

Ariyoshi, Sawako, *The Doctor's Wife*, Wakako Hiro-naka and Ann Siller Kostant (trans), Tokyo and New York: Kodansha International, 1978, 184 pp, \$9, pb

Novel about a doctor in late Tokugawa era who experiments on his wife. Modeled on an actual historical figure.

## *USING RELIGION TO TEACH ABOUT ASIA*

### *1996 ASIANetwork CONFERENCE PANEL SYNOPSIS*

Miyako Matsuki, Panel Chair  
Religion, Gettysburg College

How does one teach about the religions of Asia to undergraduates? Professors who are specialists in Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, or Shinto have faced this question many times. At the ASIANetwork Conference, the issue was phrased in a different way in a panel presentation entitled, "Using Religion to Teach about Asia."

**Carol S. Anderson, Kalamazoo College**  
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A student once described my course on Chinese religious traditions: "Think of it this way. If Chinese religions are like a flower, we've studied the stamen, the petals, the stem and the roots, but not the essence of the flower itself."

I have found this analogy useful in thinking about how we teach the religions of China, Japan, and South Asia. With this analogy, this student revealed her expectation that in the course she would learn something of "Chinese spirituality." Spirituality, students explain, is the essence of religion, and I have found that students dismiss the institutional forms of a religious tradition in favor of what they understand the spiritual forms to be.

The assumption that "spirituality" may be separated from the structure of a religious tradition is a common one among students at Kalamazoo College. They are not necessarily engaged in a personal religious search, but they seek to grasp, comprehend, and digest the inner religious experience of others.

Teaching a course on Chinese or Japanese religions or on Buddhism in South Asia is thus as much an exercise in hermeneutics as in teaching the substantive issues. As we read the early myths of the *Nihongi*, for example, we discuss the unar-

ticulated assumptions about religion and spirituality that students bring to the class. We attempt to see the complex and intricate dance between myths, histories, symbols, rituals, and sacred texts that lies at the heart of any religion. Ideally, students learn through a course on Asian religious traditions that their initial expectations require reshaping. As one student put it on the last day of class, "Maybe our search for Chinese spirituality is mostly a product of our own culture."

**Cathy Benton, Lake Forest College**  
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I am interested in the pedagogical issues that emerge when using story literature as a window into the Indian religious tradition. Stories teach the world view and ethos of the tradition in small "nutshells." My job as the teacher is to help students understand the broader context which the stories highlight.

One of the challenges of this approach is finding good translations which are faithful to the original languages, but are also accessible to students. Once the texts have been chosen, my role as guide is twofold: first, to provide the right balance of contextual background in the Indian tradition without destroying the opportunity to discover the tale's teachings in the words of the narrative itself, and second, to guide students in examining the implicit assumptions and value judgments inherent in the form and content of the stories.

Using traditional stories as a way to draw students in works well because students begin to learn the religious tradition from the inside out, rather than from the "outside" in as they do when simply reading secondary sources.