

powerful stereotypical views.

4. Similarly, how do I meet the inquiries of my Asian American students and recent immigrants from Asia who wish to know about the history of their ethnic and national groups?

5. Travel to Asia is very important for K-12 teachers who may not have studied about Asia. *Education About Asia* articles reflect on opportunities for K-12 teachers to travel and study in Asia including Fulbright Fellowships, National Council for the Social Studies grants such as the Keizai Koho Center which has taken over 500 teachers to Japan, the Korea Society programs, and study tours organized by the Outreach Programs such as those found at the University of Illinois, Indiana University, the University of Washington, the Five College Center in Massachusetts, the Social Science Education Consortium in Boulder, and Columbia University.

Some common general interests of both undergraduate faculty and K-12 teachers as reflected in the ten issues of *Education About Asia* include:

1. How do we utilize museums and material culture to teach about Asia?

2. How do we incorporate contemporary issues when students do not have good historical backgrounds? Should we do more with examination of the origins of conflict, with the influence of media, and with economic interdependence, not only between Asia and the U.S., but especially among the countries of Asia?

3. How do I find the time to winnow and select materials significant for my courses from the immense volume now available on the web? With volume #3, the second issue of *Education About Asia*, Web Gleanings became a regular feature. (I was amused to follow the career of its talented author, Judith Ames, who four years ago was working in educational outreach but now is the Coordinator of Customer Services of Motley Fool, an on-line investment company.)

4. A noticeable development over the four years of the journal has been an increase in notices and advertisements for study abroad opportunities. There has been an attendant interest in how to prepare students for study in Asia, and how to support the students when they return to their schools and campuses.

5. There have been a couple of feature articles on teaching resources that entirely bridge the middle school, high school, and college spectrum: One example is the novel, *Lost Names*, a fictional account of the Korean colonial experience. A reviewer noted, "Never in my time in Asian Studies has one work been so applicable to such a wide range of students as is the case with *Lost Names*."

A second example of a resource that is broadly applicable in teaching is Richard Minear's *Doctor Seuss Goes to War*. The book has been used in college classes. This spring in Boulder, Richard Minear worked with high school teachers for two days at a workshop using *Doctor Seuss Goes to War* as the central text.

6. Close to 150 books and films have been reviewed in the ten issues of *Education About Asia*, and over two-

thirds of the reviewers have been drawn from college and university faculty and a little under one-third from school teachers. These are books and films that enhance and inform teaching whether one is teaching seventh grade geography or a course on Indonesia's domestic policies. The breadth of the field from which reviewers have been drawn illustrates the commonality of teaching concerns of both pre-collegiate and undergraduate teachers.

In summary, the future issues in teaching about Asia, as revealed when we open the window of *Education About Asia*, include incorporating Asia into a core curriculum, not just nodding to but emphasizing Asia in World History courses, bringing multiple perspectives to the study of Asia; teaching the religions of Asia, adding the study of the geography of Asia to the undergraduate curriculum, using technology well in the classroom, enhancing further the study of South and Southeast Asia, and including a wider variety of the languages of Asia. ASIANetwork institutions are struggling with these issues; our colleges are in the enviable position of being able to experiment and revise as we work on these challenges. In *Education About Asia*, we have a forum in which we can converse.

I look forward to the continued role of *Education About Asia* as such a forum for teaching concerns and as a rich resource for teaching enhancement.

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### *Where is Southeast Asia?*

Toby Volkman

The Ford Foundation

In posing the question "where is Southeast Asia" in the liberal arts college curriculum, I hope to do two things.<sup>1</sup> First, to call attention to a major area of the world that continues to be strangely neglected both in our educational institutions and in the public arena. And second, to generate some further reflections on the practice of area studies in the twenty-first century. The latter set of reflections builds in part on the experience I've had over the last six years as the program officer at the Ford Foundation responsible for rethinking the Foundation's work in area studies.<sup>2</sup>

The question comes from several sources. First, I confess to a personal motivation, having been trained as a scholar of Southeast Asia. More importantly, in spite of increasing prominence of some parts of the region in the news—for reasons other than earthquakes, volcanoes, or war—the fact remains that scholarship and teaching on Southeast Asia still tend to be concentrated in a very few, Title-VI funded National Resource Centers. Thus it comes as no surprise that in the very welcome Luce Foundation initiative in support of new faculty positions in Asian studies, Southeast Asia has been barely visible. In the first year of that program, of fifty-three proposals received, approximately one-and-a-half could be described as having a serious Southeast Asia focus. Of these, one was funded: a

Balinese theater position at College of the Holy Cross. I hasten to add that this situation is not unique to liberal arts colleges; several years ago, Southeast Asia was also largely absent from over 200 responses to a Request for Proposals issued by the Ford Foundation's initiative, *Crossing Borders: Revitalizing Area Studies* (this included undergraduate and graduate institutions, but mostly the latter, throughout the United States).

There are undoubtedly many reasons for this absence, including the relative newness of the field in contrast to other long established "studies," especially of East and South Asia; the relative fragmentation of the academic field, a reflection of the region's own diversity (or, some would say, diffuseness). Nonetheless, it really is a remarkable absence, given the size and importance of the region, its religious, ethnic, and linguistic diversity; its environmental riches and problems; not to mention the extraordinarily dramatic economic crises (and to some extent, recoveries), and the political upheavals of the last few years, most notably Indonesia's current experiment in democratic transition. Ironically, the very diversity that some of us find compelling may have produced its marginality—unlike China, Japan, and India, which dominate the liberal arts college Asian Studies curriculum, Southeast Asia cannot lay claim to "civilizations" in the great and capital C (and presumably "coherent") sense that these other regions do.<sup>3</sup> There are no thick anthologies that boast titles like "Sources of Southeast Asian Tradition" or "The Wonder that was Southeast Asia." And then, of course, there are so many practical reasons. Southeast Asian languages are many; most are hard to learn, rarely taught, and often one is not enough. Nancy Florida, who teaches Javanese literature at the University of Michigan, has noted that to be a scholar in her field one needs not only to know Javanese, but to study Arabic and Indonesian (and, if she is to deal with colonial literature, Dutch). Learning Chinese begins to seem rather straightforward in comparison.

These sorts of problems—and the more general problem of how to imagine an area studies that could deal at once with local specificity and increasingly trans-local or globalizing processes and interconnections—inspired the initiative at the Ford Foundation known as *Crossing Borders: Revitalizing Area Studies*. This initiative was launched in 1997 in order to "revitalize" this field in essentially two, conjoined ways: first, by continuing to support in-depth study of language, culture, history, and place; and second, by stretching the older area studies to examine connections, linkages, interrelationships—transnational, global, oceanic, diasporic, and so on—among these languages, cultures, histories and places. We argued that both the world and scholarship are in motion, and that what we need is a series of experiments, explorations of new ways of conceptualizing areas and their relationships. Such explorations, we suggested, would necessarily entail new participants, most notably scholars or intellectuals from regions formerly simply the objects of study. It followed from this that the U.S. or North America would also be an "area" in a new, more vital, area studies.

Experiments, of course, may be hard to justify to deans; they may not appear to be "strategic," or to build on existing strengths. Yet the best experiments can do so. Take for example the Holy Cross example mentioned above. Building on Southeast Asia expertise in several disciplines, especially the performing arts, and on several years of productive experience with a campus gamelan and visiting Indonesian artists, Holy Cross developed a proposal to create not simply a faculty position in Balinese music, dance, and theater, but a rotating one, designed to bring a different faculty person every three to four years from Indonesia. This actually was an ingenious solution to the Indonesian partner institution's concern with losing talent to the U.S., and gaining nothing in return. The result promises to bring added value to both sides: the presence of *Southeast Asian faculty* will bring new perspectives to Holy Cross, and upon their return to Indonesia these scholar-artists will surely bring new ideas home. If successful, the networks and ongoing exchanges thus created should contribute to the intellectual/artistic life of institutions both here and there.

The sorts of experiments that are appropriate for one institution may be wildly inappropriate in another; there are no cookie-cutter solutions. In many *Crossing Borders* projects, collaborations of various kinds have proven productive. Such collaborations may be across institutions: the Five Colleges project, for example, involved interdisciplinary team teaching across the various institutions in that consortium. Other collaborations are within institutions; again, team teaching may bring new disciplinary as well as regional expertise and perspectives to students (and faculty). Columbia University's new Center for the Study of Comparative Literature and Society, for example, links comparative literature faculty with colleagues in area studies, law, and architecture. At the University of Chicago, a project known as "Regional Worlds" brings faculty from Midwestern colleges together with a core of University of Chicago faculty to take part in regular seminars and workshops on rethinking "geographies." A project organized by the University of Hawaii involves collaboration at multiple levels: across Asian and Pacific studies within the university, across disciplines, and with colleagues and a diverse array of institutions in Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, and on the tiny Pacific island of Palau.

Transnational collaboration is beyond the scope of most liberal arts colleges, but the Hawaii effort—one of many projects that questions received notions of "area"—suggests an *approach* that may be worth considering on a less ambitious scale. The project, "Moving Cultures: Remaking Asia-Pacific Studies," explores the growing presence of Asia in the Pacific, and how that presence is transforming local cultural, political, and economic dynamics. Among its several components is a redesigned undergraduate core curriculum that looks at flows of capital, people, and ideas linking disparate parts of the region and the "moving cultures" they create. Although this project originally took a distant island (Palau) as its focus, its use of interdisciplinary teams could analyze the complex layering of local and transnational forces

suggests an approach that could be viable for sites much closer to home sites. In fact the second stage of "Moving Cultures" includes Hawaii as a "site." One could imagine similar approaches to globalizing cities or sites elsewhere.

Viewing cultures as always in motion demands a far more fluid sort of geography. Duke University's *Crossing Borders* project, "Oceans Connect," is a practical exploration of the implications of the arguments propounded by Martin Lewis and Karen Wigen in *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography*. The Duke project calls for a change of focus, from landmasses to ocean basins and the historical as well as contemporary transactions that are shaped across the waters. Might this new geography allow us to teach about Southeast Asia in the liberal arts college in a more relational way? To bring in Southeast Asia in the context of a dynamic, always changing set of connections?

The risk in suggesting this is the implication that one does not need to know much about the area in order to teach it, or that thematic expertise alone suffices—so that one can teach environmental or women's movements if one knows about environmental or women's movements, and one does not need to know Southeast Asia. That is definitely not what I wish to suggest. I suspect, however, that many liberal arts college faculty have grappled with the question of *how* one can teach Southeast Asia (or its equivalent) in an institution that lacks specialists on all 10 countries in a range of disciplines. Are there creative ways of pooling expertise, sharing across departments and institutions, perhaps even internationally? Are there opportunities to join forces with ethnic or diaspora studies programs, if such exist? Are there students of Southeast Asian descent who can, or wish to, be brought into such an effort? Or are these too small a presence, especially when compared with Chinese- or Korean-American students? Might these efforts be more promising, and less fraught, than they sometimes are at research universities with entrenched departments and turf wars? Is student interest in the Vietnam War still strong, and how might such interest be tapped to catalyze interest not just in America, but in Vietnam itself and the wider region?<sup>4</sup>

In the fortunate colleges that do have Southeast Asianists, faculty are exploring teaching strategies that stretch, expand, and enrich the idea of both Asia and Southeast Asia. In some instances this involves incorporating large amounts of Asia content, including Southeast Asia, into non-area courses. In her essay in *Asia in the Undergraduate Curriculum*, Rita Kipp suggests that "complicating" students' ideas of "China" or "India" are among the most basic tasks of teachers of Asian studies. I would add that teaching Southeast Asia provides numerous ways to complicate—to question and enrich—what may be students' notions of monolithic civilizations, or even of "Asia." Kipp also makes a case for teaching what she calls "Asian Studies Plus": engaging regional expertise with comparative and theoretical projects, noting that such a strategy is most possible in liberal arts colleges where faculty *must* be generalists. Barbara Andaya describes, in a recent Association of Asian Studies newsletter, undergraduate courses that she teaches at the

University of Hawaii organized around crosscutting themes rather than conventional cartography. Thus a gendered map of Asia may include Southeast Asia, Sri Lanka, southern China, and parts of India. Another map may start with trade-based ties that link Laos, Thailand, Burma, and China. The "region" may not be the appropriate frame: at the University of Victoria, Helen Chauncey was pleasantly surprised to find that student interest in the international dimensions of genocide enabled her to engage students in the study of complex Cambodian history.

One of the interesting discoveries that has emerged from *Crossing Borders* is a sense that there is interest and excitement at the undergraduate level in what seems to be captured under the International Studies framework—some kind of a middle ground between a "traditional" area studies in which one learned a body of knowledge—everything you could possibly know about a particular part of the world—and an international relations "view from nowhere." The emerging International Studies seems to be on the one hand rooted in some area-based knowledge (along with some language, and perhaps a field experience abroad) and on the other linked to asking questions of topical, even theoretical interest. This suggests an inversion of an older model, whereby area studies knowledge trickled down, at best, to college students. Might we be seeing the inklings of a new kind of knowledge production—concerned with the shifting relationship between place and culture? Might the liberal arts colleges provide the flexibility and wonderfully fertile seedbeds for interdisciplinary exploration that could nurture such new knowledge? And might those explorations, in turn, actually transform the way graduate area studies are taught and practiced?

<sup>1</sup> I thank Terry Lutz and Helena Kolenda of the Henry Luce Foundation for helpful comments on this essay.

<sup>2</sup> See Volkman, Toby. "Crossing Borders: The Case for Area Studies," *Ford Foundation Report*, Winter 1998.

<sup>3</sup> For a critique of "civilizational thinking," see the *Crossing Borders* project at the University of California, Santa Cruz. This and other *Crossing Borders* projects are described on a website to be launched in late winter, 2001: [www.crossing-borders.net](http://www.crossing-borders.net).

<sup>4</sup> ASIANetwork summer programs in Southeast Asia (and other parts of Asia) have provided some faculty with introductions to the region. And, since 1991, the Asian Studies Development Program, a joint project of the East-West Center and the University of Hawaii, has been organizing faculty development programs designed to infuse Asian content into undergraduate courses in the social sciences and the humanities. Such programs serve two-year and four-year colleges and universities, including minority-serving universities. In the summer of 2000, ASDP held its first Infusing Institute focused on Southeast Asia.