

From the Executive Director

ASIANetwork Surveys: Some Discoveries

Teddy O. Amoloza
Illinois Wesleyan University

Spring semester is a busy time for ASIANetwork. In January, our selection committees read application materials for the different programs we run. We meet in February to select the grant recipients. Then we turn our attention to the AAS conference in March, where much of our ASIANetwork business is conducted. And finally we prepare for our own conference in April. This spring, another activity was added to our plate: the strategic planning retreat that was held in Minneapolis at the end of January. In preparation for this retreat, we conducted two web-based surveys, one for individual members and another for school representatives. Results from the surveys provided the starting points for our discussions that led to the formulation of our draft strategic plan that will be shared with the membership at the Sunday plenary session at the April conference. (See Phyllis Larson's piece on page 3 for details about the strategic planning process.)

As a person who works with survey research, let me first offer the following caveats before sharing some findings from the surveys. Those who responded to both surveys are self-selected; therefore we cannot claim that the responses are representative of the sentiments of the entire membership. Nevertheless, it is fair to assume that those who responded are the ones who are actively engaged with ASIANetwork and the ones who look to the consortium to provide opportunities for individual professional development and institutional program development. Because no generalizations can be applied to the entire membership, figures reported below are the actual number of responses and not percentages.

Survey of individual members

Questions directed at individual members were designed to give us feedback on the different services we provide to members: the conference, the newsletter, the website, research and faculty development programs, and institutional programs. We also asked for specialty areas and expertise of members, their teaching status and length of teaching at their schools. Of the 181 respondents 125 are tenured and 31 are in tenure-track positions. More than 100 of our colleagues have been at their school for at least 11 years, indicating stability of Asian Studies at their institutions.

In response to questions about our conference format, 153 of the respondents indicated that they are likely or most likely to attend conference panels on scholarly/research topics. It thus becomes incumbent upon future program committees to ensure

... program committees [will] ensure that there will be adequate scholarly/research panels at future conferences starting with the conference next year in San Antonio.

that there will be adequate panels of this nature at future conferences, starting with the conference next year in San Antonio.

Information we received about members' areas of expertise will guide us in the faculty development projects that we will develop. After China and Japan, the third most frequently reported country of specialization is India; this information once again reminds us of the urgency to develop and offer programs focused on the South Asian region.

The qualitative comments will be further studied and summarized so that we will be able to respond more effectively to the concerns raised by our members.

Survey of school representatives

This survey was designed to collect information on several issues: the teaching of Asian languages at member campuses,

Very few...reported a lack of administrative interest or lack of general faculty support as challenges they face in their schools.

Asian Studies majors or minors, study abroad in Asia, availability of Asian courses on campus, and the challenges faced by Asian Studies at member schools. Of the 65 representatives who responded, 55 indicated that their schools offer Asian language courses; 49 teach Chinese, 41 teach Japanese and 4 teach Hindi. Of the 65 schools represented in the survey, 37 offer an Asian Studies major and 45 offer an Asian Studies minor or concentration. Very few, only about a dozen, reported a lack of administrative interest or lack of general faculty support as challenges they face in their schools. With financial constraint being the most commonly cited challenge for the school, as indicated by 41 of the respondents, it becomes more imperative that ASIANetwork continue to be strong and be able to provide development programs for our Asian Studies colleagues whose institutions have very limited opportunities for faculty development.

As with the individual survey, narrative responses will be summarized and
(continued on page 16)

jobs. They included Chinese government representatives, professionals, and graduate students.¹² Transborder families formed by Hong Kong residents married to mainland spouses are on the increase, and a growing number of elderly Hong Kong residents are also moving to the Mainland to enjoy a lower cost of living or a quieter living environment, or to return to their native place. The psychological barriers between Hong Kongers and Mainlanders are steadily eroded by the formation of such relationships.¹³

As the cultural and economic distance between these two groups continues to shrink, Hong Kong Chinese will likely identify themselves increasingly as “Chinese” or as “both Hong Konger and Chinese.” The percentage of Hong Kong residents who identified themselves primarily as “Hong Konger” has dropped from 58.3% in 1990 to 49.3% in 2001, while the percentage of those who self-identified as “Chinese” has risen from 26.2% to 30.6%, and the percentage of those who self-identified as both have risen from 14.3% to 19.2%.¹⁴ Negative stereotypes of mainlanders in Hong Kong media will likely disappear,

particularly as Hong Kong cinema increasingly looks to China as a primary market and as a production partner.

Endnotes

¹Amartya Sen, *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006).

²Li Ruojian, “Zhongguo dalu qianru Xianggang de renkou yanjiu [A Study of Migration from Mainland China into Hong Kong]” (2004?), Table 3. <http://www.usc.cuhk.edu.hk/wk_wzdetails.asp?id=2909>

³Wong Cheuk Yin, “The 1967 Leftist Riots and Regime Legitimacy in Hong Kong,” *E-Journal on Hong Kong Cultural and Social Studies*, 3 (June 2004). <http://www.hku.hk/hkcspp/ccex/ehkcss01/issue3_ar_lawrence_wong.htm>

⁴Yingchi Chu, *Hong Kong Cinema: Coloniser, Motherland and Self* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002), 44-45, 94.

⁵Agnes S. Ku, “Immigration Policies, Discourses, and the Politics of Local Belonging in Hong Kong (1950-80),” *Modern China* 30 (July 2004), 349; Li Ruojian.

⁶Li Ruojian.

⁷Chen Wen, “A Study on Technological Progress and Economic Growth in Hong

Kong,” *E-Journal on Hong Kong Cultural and Social Studies*, 1 (Feb. 2002), Table 1. <http://www.hku.hk/hkcspp/ccex/ehkcss01/a_pdf2.htm>

⁸Li Ruojian.

⁹Ku, 342-7.

¹⁰Hui Yew-Foong, “In Search of Heunggongyan: The Construction of a Metropolitan Identity,” *E-Journal on Hong Kong Cultural and Social Studies*, 1 (Feb. 2002).

<http://www.hku.hk/hkcspp/ccex/ehkcss01/a_pdf8.htm>

¹¹Lau Siu-kai, “<Xianggangren> huo <Zhongguoren>: Xianggang huaren de shenfen rentong 1985-1995 [Hong Konger or Chinese: Self-Identification of Hong Kong Chinese],” *Ershiyi shiji* 41 (June 1997). <http://www.usc.cuhk.edu.hk/wk_wzdetails.asp?id=1847>

¹²Hui Yew-Foong.

¹³Werner Breitung, “Transformation of a Boundary Regime: the Hong Kong and Mainland China Case,” *Environment and Planning A*, 34 (2002), 1755-6.

¹⁴Victor Zheng and Wong Siu-lun, “Xianggang huaren de shenfen rentong: jiuqi qianhou de juanbian [Self-Identification of the Hong Kong Chinese: Changes Before and After 1997],” *Ershiyi shiji* online edition, 7 (Oct. 2002). <http://www.usc.cuhk.edu.hk/wk_wzdetails.asp?id=1865>

Surveys (continued from page 4)

analyzed to give us a picture of the Asian Studies landscape at some of our member campuses.

Regardless of the small number of responses and the self-selection of those who participated, the results from these surveys provide us with some hard facts as opposed to impressionistic assumptions about the state of Asian Studies at our member campuses. We have learned some important lessons from our experiences with this survey. One key lesson is that we need a more systematic way to collect information about the areas of expertise of our members if we are to build a reliable data base that will be a useful resource for the broader academic community. In the very near future, we will contact you for that information, and when that time comes, I hope that a significantly larger portion of our more than 900 individual members will respond.

Consultancy Awards for the Asian Art in the Undergraduate Curriculum Project

At the selection meeting last February, the Steering Committee of the Asian Art in the Undergraduate Curriculum project composed of Stan Mickel, Karil Kucera, Mary-Ann Milford, Paul Nietupski and Joan O'Mara selected the following schools to receive consultancy visits to evaluate their Asian arts collections: **Berea College, DePauw University, Lake Forest College, Mills College, Swarthmore College, Valparaiso University and Willamette University**. In addition, subgrants of \$1,500 each were awarded to the following schools to help them digitize and document some of their Asian arts collections: **Bowdoin College, Carleton College, St Olaf College and Wittenberg University**.

This is the last round of such consultancy and subgrant awards. The project will then move to its next phase, the writing of a book with accompanying DVD that discusses how selected pieces of Asian arts and material culture collections that were discovered during the consultancy phase can be used in the teaching about Asia. The target date for publication of the book is Spring 2009.