

# ON THE ASIAN STUDIES DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

## EDITOR'S NOTE:

*The Asian Studies Development Program is a quite successful project that focuses upon improving undergraduate-level teaching about Asia.*

*ASDP is particularly useful for college faculty who aren't Asia specialists and would like to develop Asia-related expertise.*

*In what follows I interview ASDP's outstanding codirectors,*

*Roger Ames  
and Betty Buck.*



**ELIZABETH BUCK** is Director of Education at the East-West Center. She is also Co-Director of the Asian Studies Development Program, a joint East-West Center and University of Hawaii program to improve teaching about Asia in American colleges and universities. Her interests include internationalizing American higher education, Asian film, and Hawaiian history and politics. Her publications include *Paradise Remade: The Politics of History and Culture in Hawaii*, 1993; and "A History of Hawaiian Music Production" in *Whose Master's Voice?*, 1997.

**Lucien:** *How did both of you become interested in Asia? What Asia-related academic work did you do, and what positions did you hold before becoming associated with the East-West Center, the Asian Studies Development Program, and the University of Hawaii?*

**ROGER AMES:** I grew up in Canada and as an undergraduate, spent time in Hong Kong. I then went on to my graduate degrees in Chinese philosophy, going to school in both Taiwan and Japan, and graduating from the University of London. Since then, I have been in the U-H Philosophy Department, one of the few universities in the world with a strong comparative philosophy program. What was exotic and "other" in those years has moved to center stage today. In fact, some of my translations of Chinese philosophic texts are actually required readings in many U.S. schools of business.

**BETTY BUCK:** I started years ago at the East-West Center doing research in development communication and cultural studies. I'm not an Asianist, but just being at the Center is a learning experience about Asia. I did my



**ROGER T. AMES** is a Professor of Philosophy and Director of the Center for Chinese Studies at the University of Hawaii and Co-Director of the Asian Studies Development Program. He teaches Chinese philosophy and culture. His primary publications are new philosophical translations of Chinese classics, and speculative studies in classical Chinese philosophy. Some recent publications include *Sun-Tsu: The Art of Warfare* (1992); *The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation* (1998); *Thinking from the Han: Self, Truth and Transcendence in Chinese and Western Culture* (1997).

Ph.D. in political science at U-H, on the politics of culture in Hawaii. In 1990, when I was asked to help establish and then later to co-direct the Asian Studies Development Program, I became even more deeply involved in the field of Asian studies.

**Lucien:** *How did each of you come to be associated with ASDP, with the EWC, and U-H?*

**ROGER AND BETTY:** We joined the program from its beginning as co-directors and representatives from the two partner institutions—the East-West Center and the University of Hawaii—and we have continued to be part of what has been an exciting emergent program for some ten years. But ASDP wouldn't be what it is without the willingness of great Asian studies scholars at the University of Hawaii, the East-West Center and many universities on the mainland. We are also part of a great team that includes Peter Hershock, Wendy Nohara, Sandy Osaki and Grant Otschi who are largely responsible for ASDP's success.

**Lucien:** *How does ASDP relate to the overall mission of the EWC and U-H?*

**ROGER AND BETTY:** The East-West Center was established by Congress to promote cultural and technical understanding between the U.S. and countries of Asia and the Pacific. An important element in this understanding and developing a sense of community in the region is the knowledge that Americans and Asians have about each other's cultures, and their citizens' ability to function effectively in this important part of the world.

The University of Hawaii has probably the largest concentration of Asian expertise outside of Asia. It is thus appropriate that both of these institutions step up to contribute their resources to address what many see as a crisis in American education—American students finishing their education ill prepared to function in an interdependent world.

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**Lucien:** *Over the years the East-West Center and the University of Hawaii, through the Asian Studies Development Program, have done a great deal to promote understanding of Asia at the college and university level. Please give our readers who aren't familiar with ASDP some background information on how ASDP got started.*

**ROGER AND BETTY:** In 1990, the then-president of the East-West Center, Victor Hao Li, made a presentation at the national meetings of two-year and four-year colleges and expressed his concern that American education was not moving fast enough to accommodate the growing importance of Asia in young America's future. He challenged these educators to join him

and the EWC in developing a strategy to accelerate the pace by which America could become literate in Asian cultures and issues, concentrating on colleges and universities that had not featured Asia in their curriculum but who recognized the need to do so.

The following summer, a group of national educators, administrators, and representatives of the University of Hawaii's School of Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific Studies (SHAPS) met at the East-West Center and shaped the mission and program of ASDP. The focus on faculty and institutional development would be addressed over a period of at least ten years and would consist of three components: residential institutes in Hawaii, field studies to Asia, and the development of mentoring institutions among the colleges and universities involved in ASDP. Our emphasis has been on developing long-term relationships with colleges and universities committed to institutionalizing Asian studies. When a new school is interested in ASDP, we suggest they start with a two- to three-person team and send additional faculty to subsequent programs. In this way, a college is able to build a "critical mass" of faculty and administrators who work together to develop an Asian studies presence.

**Lucien:** *What are the objectives of ASDP, and what types of colleges and universities are involved in it? What kinds of faculty is ASDP trying to serve?*

**ROGER AND BETTY:** Given our commitment to the undergraduate core curriculum, our target educators are those in charge of teaching these introductory courses. Hence, our participants are largely from community colleges and four-year land grant institutions. Most of the schools involved in ASDP do not have the resources to hire full-time Asianists, and instead turn to the most innovative of their existing faculty and ask them to develop their knowledge and capacity to teach about Asia. We cooperate with AsiaNetwork, the con-

sortium of liberal arts colleges, who have a similar mission.

From the beginning, ASDP has been committed to working with minority-serving institutions to insure that national minorities have access to the full complement of opportunities which Asia offers on America's horizon. To this end, we have developed close ties with a number of historically black colleges and universities, such as Morgan State University and Clark Atlanta University, and have had workshops on "the Asia-Africa connection."

Our project is neither to provide experts with additional education, nor to produce overnight Asianists. Rather, we are committed to the notion that the very best faculty are experts in their own disciplines, are excited at the possibilities of extending their own knowledge of Asia and sharing this in their classrooms. Working with one teacher at a time, the cumulative effect is a core enriched with Asian content. We provide opportunities for those who teach many of the "introduction" courses in Sociology, Religion, Anthropology, Philosophy, Literature, and so on, to introduce an Asian dimension into classes that they already teach very well. In fact, our programs do attract educators who take personal responsibility for expanding their own areas of expertise to meet changing needs of their students and institutions.

**Lucien:** *What are some of the funding sources for ASDP activities?*

**ROGER AND BETTY:** ASDP has been fortunate. The first five years of the program were funded primarily by the East-West Center with the University of Hawaii providing most of the Institutes' faculty. Early on, the National Endowment for the Humanities began to fund a series of five-week Institutes on Asian cultures, and Fulbright provided funds for our first two field studies. In the wake of steep

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cut-backs in federal funding for international education and exchange, including the East-West Center, ASDP sought private assistance. We have been most fortunate in receiving support from the Henry Luce Foundation, the Freeman Foundation and the Korea Foundation. In most of our programs, the participating institutions also take some responsibility for supporting the participation of their faculty in our activities.

**Lucien:** *Please describe and elaborate upon the major programmatic components of ASDP.*

**ROGER AND BETTY:** ASDP began with a three-week residential institute in the summer of 1991 with a parade of Asianists making presentations to some 40 faculty from two-year and

four-year colleges across the country, most of whom come as part of a two- to three-person team consisting of faculty and academic administrators. While this three-week institute continues to be the conduit for new-to-ASDP institutions, we have been able to add a series of some six NEH funded five-week institutes on Asian cultures and civilization.

We have sent twelve field seminars to China, India, Japan, Southeast Asia, and Korea, and since 1995, we have been coordinating a series of two- to four-day workshops—usually about two or three per semester—at different schools across the country on a variety of themes. For these workshops we enlist the support of Asianist faculty from major Asian studies programs on the mainland to augment our own personnel resources, and this has helped to develop cooperation between these centers of expertise and local colleges involved in the ASDP network.

One of the things we try to do is keep participants interested and involved in ASDP. We do this through our field study opportunities which give priority to alumni of ASDP institutes, through workshops on the mainland, a newsletter, a moderated and active ASDP listserv, and the ASDP syllabi Web site. We also do what we can to help participating schools with grant proposals, and we help them with speakers for special events such as campus workshops.

**Lucien:** *How many faculty and colleges/universities have been involved in ASDP programs to date?*

**ROGER AND BETTY:** We are proud of our long list of alumni—over 650—who have participated in the residential institutes and the field seminars. Many more educators have participated in the mainland workshops. To date, we can count about 250 institutions in 48 states in the ASDP network.

**Lucien:** *What kind of Asia-related activities do ASDP alumni engage in after working with you?*

**ROGER AND BETTY:** We now have 13 designated regional centers. These centers are taking the responsibility of carrying on ASDP activities at the local level, serving as mentoring institutions for their own regions by hosting workshops and sharing resources. We have cooperated with many of these colleges and universities in applying for funding for their own Asia-related programs. For example, DuPage Community College has had two highly successful NEH institutes at the University of Chicago, the first on *Dream of the Red Chamber*, and the second on *Journey to the West*. Morgan State University, the City College of Philadelphia, Paradise Valley Community College, and the City College of San Francisco, to name a few, are ASDP regional centers that have been successful in attracting their own funding for programs. Such initiatives are undertaken with the support and encouragement of ASDP.

**Lucien:** *What is the long-range impact of ASDP and its major accomplishments?*

**ROGER AND BETTY:** This is the \$64,000 question for any program like ASDP. We feel that we are part of a concentrated effort to help American educators accomplish their mission to educate our children for the next millennium, a century in which Asia will become increasingly important in every way: economics, security, environment, health, and so on. AsiaNetwork, Columbia University, and other outreach initiatives have been our partners along the way. But our real accomplishments have been the success of our alums. Whenever we are unsure about the impact we have had, we hear about a campus where committed educators are following through on our programs, or we receive a letter from a participant that says ASDP changed their lives—they feel renewed as scholars and teachers.

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We are in the process of surveying all of our ASDP alumni, asking what impact the program has had on them and their institutions, and asking for suggestions for the future direction of ASDP.

**Lucien:** *What ASDP programs do you have planned for 2000 and 2001? Who in particular is eligible? How might one apply?*

**ROGER AND BETTY:** For summer 2000, ASDP is offering two residential institutes in Hawaii, one on India and one on Southeast Asia. NEH is funding the “Institute on Religions, Philosophies and Culture in India: Conflicts and Negotiations” which will be held from June 12 to July 14. Twenty-five college and university humanities and social science faculty

will be selected from a national competition. Participants receive a stipend of \$3,250 for housing, transportation, meals and other expenses involved in attending the Institute. The directors are two dynamic, new members of the U-H Philosophy Department, Arindam Chakrabarti and Vrinda Dalmiya. They directed a very lively institute on India last summer, and we are looking forward to another outstanding program.

The Luce Foundation is funding the tenth annual three-week “Institute on Infusing Asian Studies into the Undergraduate Curriculum,” which will be held from July 18 to August 4. This is the first time the Institute has focused on Southeast Asia rather than East Asia. For this Institute, because of its focus on institution building, we give priority in the selection process to two- and three-person teams from a college or university. Participants receive housing and a very modest stipend. The director is Michael Aung-twin, Professor of Southeast Asian Studies at the University of Hawaii.

For application information contact Sandy Osaki, the ASDP secretary (phone: 808-944-7337, or osakis@ewc.hawaii.edu). For more general information about ASDP, call Betty Buck at 808-944-7315 or e-mail her at bucke@ewc.hawaii.edu.

We would also like to put a plug in for the East-West Center’s program for elementary and secondary teachers, the Consortium for Teaching Asia and the Pacific in the Schools, or CTAPS. This summer they are offering a field study to Southeast Asia as well as a two-week residential institute at the Center. CTAPS programs are limited to full-time K-12 teachers.

For information on CTAPS, contact Merle Doi, CTAPS Coordinator, at doim@ewc.hawaii.edu or Cheryl Hidano at 808-944-7765 or hidanoc@ewc.hawaii.edu. ■