



TAASA

THE ASIAN ARTS SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

REPORT OF MEMBERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE 2005

It is now nearly ten years since TAASA members' views were canvassed on all aspects of their involvement and expectations of the Society. At that time the prime comment was how valuable the TAASA Review was, and that was before there was a full colour spread in sight!

So it was with great interest that the Management Committee awaited the results of the questionnaire mailed to all members in November 2005. Forty percent percent of the questionnaires sent out were returned - which by any standard is impressive. All questionnaires

received by 31 December 2005 were analysed, and put into the draw for a free 2006 membership subscription. This went to Maree Hayes in Victoria.

The results have been analysed according to the three defined sections.

1. WHICH PARTICULAR ASPECTS OF ASIAN CULTURE INTEREST YOU?

Most respondents said that they were interested in all or most aspects of Asian arts. However, when they had to choose, the responses broke down as follows:

70% mentioned textiles; 68.6% responded that history/sociology interested them, closely followed by 66.0% who were interested in ceramics; 62.7 % voted for decorative arts; paintings and sculpture claimed 50.9% each, jewellery 40.5% and furniture 33.9 %; performing arts attracted 25.5% for film; 23.5% for music; 20.2% for dance and 12.4 % for theatre.

A number of respondents commented that architecture was not on the list. The recent edition of the *TAASA Review* (December 2004) devoted to architecture clearly reflected both members' interest and stimulated a new interest for others. Gardens and food were also mentioned as topics of interest which, taken together with architecture and the relatively high vote for decorative arts mentioned in the previous paragraph, reflects an interest in the domestic and daily life of people in the region. Calligraphy was also mentioned as a topic of interest not originally listed. These comments are invaluable to TAASA's Publications Committee, and to the TAASA Events Committee as well.

The Executive Committee, Publications Committee and Events Committees will all discuss further the preferences of TAASA members as reflected above, and will take them into account when future issues of *TAASA Review* and future TAASA events are being planned.

2. OPINIONS ON TAASA EVENTS

For 78% of respondents, lectures were the events they most preferred TAASA to organise, while 71.2% voted for symposiums, 33.9 % for workshops and 31.3% for social gatherings.

TAASA has not had a regular, formal program of one-off lectures in either Melbourne or Sydney for quite some time. The 'champagne series' held in Sydney in the mid-1990s ceased due to a declining number of attendees. But clearly when opportunities arise the Committee will continue to take full advantage of, for example, speakers from abroad visiting

Australia. Of course, lectures are the essential ingredient of symposiums, which, through the day or two they run, usually provide not only an accompanying related exhibition or event but also the occasion for members to meet, the 'social gathering' that a number of TAASA members also desire.

The issue of geographical accessibility to the centres where the majority of events take place - Sydney and Melbourne - is an issue that many respondents raised. TAASA has members in Queensland and South Australia, as well as in rural areas of NSW and Victoria. Queenslanders particularly mentioned that they would like to have local events, though some do make a point of visiting Sydney for events that draw their attention. Many members in rural areas say that they would like to do this, but accept the difficulties of doing so and enjoy TAASA activities vicariously through reports in the *Review*.

Other members commented that visits to private collections are something they would like TAASA to organise. While occasions such as these are often arranged by other societies, the issues of privacy and indeed the numbers that a private home can accommodate, make this a difficult request for TAASA to satisfy on a regular basis, though some such occasions have been organised in both Melbourne and Sydney in the past.

Clearly Asian ceramics have a devoted following, and TAASA hopes that this interest was partially met by the December 2005 issue of *TAASA Review*, which focussed on ceramics. While a Ceramics Focus Group ran successfully until quite recently in Melbourne as part of TAASA Victoria activities, it now has ceased operating. A Sydney-based Ceramics Focus Group did meet in the mid-1990s in Sydney, and three years ago a private viewing of two members' ceramics collections was arranged by TAASA Sydney to capitalise on renewed calls to assess whether there was enough interest to resurrect a formal ceramics focus group. Surprisingly, other than one from a Queensland member, no bookings were received. It is very difficult to make sense of this. But the Committee is always open to suggestions for convenors to volunteer to take up the challenge when they feel the time is ripe.

TAASA members' interest in textiles is demonstrated by the 70.5 % of members who mentioned this subject. The Textile Study Group in Sydney (which celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2004) is clearly a valued forum in NSW; and textiles continue to be a major focus for the regular meetings organised by TAASA in Melbourne.

One member commented that the opportunity for members to purchase recently published books at a reduced price and delivered to the door would be a real benefit. Such opportunities both focus on the achievements of TAASA member authors and provide a benefit to member's particularly those outside of main centres.

3. THE TAASA REVIEW

We were pleased to receive a number of pats on the back regarding the *Review* - e.g. 'Fantastic articles throughout the year', 'always excellent', 'I like the present mix'. Asked to assess the current content of the *Review*, members expressed a noticeable preference for scholarly essays (69.9 %) and reviews (69.2 %). Next 'most popular' content was Collector's Choice (61.5 %), followed by travel memoirs (50.3%), What's On (45%), personal profiles of Committee members (40.5 %) and artist's viewpoint (39.2%).

Since the *TAASA Review* became a full colour journal in December 2002, the beautiful images supplied by authors, advertisers and other contributors have enhanced the already high quality of the peer-reviewed articles. The scholarly essays and reviews clearly fulfil a need and interest for members as articles from sources other than academic and esoteric journals, supplementing lectures and private reading and research.

The Committee thanks all those who responded to the questionnaire and hopes that the analysis figures and the accompanying comments clarify and satisfy the number of issues raised by members.

Gillian Green, Vice-President, TAASA

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THE ASIAN ARTS SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

SURVEY OF ASIAN STUDIES 2006

Compiled by Gabrielle Ewington

TAASA thought it may be of interest to members to have a very general overview of the wealth of courses related to Asia available through universities and other adult education institutions nationwide. Whether you're undertaking formal academic studies or taking a more casual general interest course, the rewards can be fantastic.

Many universities now offer undergraduate, postgraduate and graduate diploma courses in Asian Studies covering the languages, contemporary societies, histories and cultures of most Asian countries. Each university will have different entry requirements, but entry to a course as a miscellaneous subject without undertaking a degree or diploma should be possible.

NOTE: We can't stress enough that the list below is just a beginning – email editorial@taasa.org.au if you have any interesting additions! Good studying.

1. PRINCIPAL TERTIARY WEB SITES OF INTEREST

Australian National University, Faculty of Asian Studies,
<http://www.asianstudies.anu.edu.au>

La Trobe University, Asian Studies Program
<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/asianstudies/pending.htm>

Monash University, School of Languages, Cultures and Linguistics:
Chinese Studies, Indonesian Studies, Japanese Studies, Asian Studies.
<http://www.arts.monash.edu/current/study-areas/undergraduate/asian-studies/>
Monash Asia Institute, <http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/mai/>

University of Melbourne, Melbourne Institute of Asian Languages
and Societies
<http://www.mials.unimelb.edu.au/programs/>

University of Queensland, Asian Studies
<http://www.arts.uq.edu.au/slccs/index.html?page=21419>

University of Sydney, School of Languages and Cultures:
Asian Studies Program,
Chinese Studies, Southeast Asian Studies, Indian Subcontinental Studies,
Indonesian Studies, Japanese and Korean Studies.
<http://www.arts.usyd.edu.au/school/slc/>

University of Tasmania, School of Asian Languages and Studies
<http://fcms.its.utas.edu.au/arts/asianstudies/>

University of WA, Asian Studies:
<http://www.asianstudies.arts.uwa.edu.au/>

Murdoch University, Asian Studies
<http://www.ssh.murdoch.edu.au/asianstudies/>

2. SOME INDIVIDUAL TERTIARY COURSES

Australian National University
INDN3007 Introduction to Asian Performing Arts.
ASIA2160 Chinese Renaissance: The Song Period.
ASIA3011 Samurai Society and Social Control in Japan.
<http://info.anu.edu.au/StudyAt/AcadOrgCourseList.asp?strCareer=UGRD&strAcadOrg=05>

Charles Darwin University
AHT215 Foundations of South East Asian Arts.
<http://eagle.ntu.edu.au/ntu/apps/unitre.nsf/wUnitSearch/AHT215>
University of South Australia
PERF2011 Asian Performance.
<http://www.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/courses/index.asp>

Monash University
HSY2110/3110 Centres of Power: Great Cities of Asia.
ANY3510 A Comparative Examination of Cultures in South
and Southeast Asia.
MUS3830/3860 Music of Southeast Asia.
<http://www.arts.monash.edu/current/study-areas/undergraduate/asian-studies/>

University of NSW
ASIA1002 Introducing Southeast Asia.
<http://www.handbook.unsw.edu.au/undergraduate/courses/2006/ASI A1002.html>

University of Sydney
ARPH2611 From Java to Beijing: Asian Archaeology.
ARHT2643 Art and Architecture of Modern Japan.
ARHT2671 Orientalism and Visual Culture.
SANS1001 Sanskrit Introductory.
http://www.arts.usyd.edu.au/future_students/undergrad/outlines.shtml

University of Queensland
ASIA2160 From Buddha to Bruce Lee: Asian Visual Cultures.
http://www.uq.edu.au/study/course.html?course_code=MSTU2001&fees_wiz_search=

Queensland University of Technology
HHB238 Asian Cultures and Societies.
<http://www.handbook.qut.edu.au/synopses/HH.jsp>

University of Tasmania
FST213 Contemporary Art of the Asia-Pacific Region
<http://fcms.its.utas.edu.au/arts/artschool/units.asp?lStartPage=4>

University of WA
ARCY2201 Early Southeast Asia: Before Farming (Archaeology).
<http://handbooks.uwa.edu.au/units/arcy/arcy2201>

3. OTHER COURSES

Many universities also offer Continuing Education courses. This year, for example, Sydney University Continuing Education is offering study tour programs including 'Bhutan: Land of the Thunder Dragons'; 'Two Eastern Classics: Luang Prabang and Angkor'; and a writing retreat in Darjeeling. Email: www.cce.usyd.edu.au

Check out major Art Galleries for special interest courses and lecture series, particularly those galleries with major Asian collections. Community Colleges, TAFES and the WEA in Victoria also offer short courses at a variety of levels which often include Asian arts, societies, languages and cuisines.