Toward Immersive Asian Studies:  
A Collaborative Undergraduate Exchange Program for the Todai-Princeton Partnership

David Leheny  
Princeton University  
Department of East Asian Studies

Jin Sato  
Department of Pioneering Asian Studies  
Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia  
The University of Tokyo

Asian Studies: An Overview

Asia’s role in global politics, mass culture, economics, fine art, has increased dramatically in recent years, and seems likely only to grow further. These developments are mirrored in the intense demand among students for courses and research topics on Asia, a demand that transcends disciplinary boundaries and that expects deep knowledge and innovative curricula on the region. The Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia (Tobunken) at Todai and the Department of East Asian Studies (EAS) at Princeton spearhead their respective universities’ broad engagement with the region, jointly propose a collaborative program designed to build and facilitate undergraduate exchange and education on Asia.

The institutions differ in important ways. The EAS Department is an academic department that focuses heavily on undergraduate education as well as on its PhD programs. Tobunken is a research institute whose faculty is primarily engaged in research projects and graduate training, with some opting to teach undergraduate courses in other departments and programs at Todai. This, along with the different academic calendars, helps to explain the structure of this proposal. More Todai faculty propose to teach semester-length courses at Princeton University, with the Princeton side focusing on undergraduates enrolled in a specific course traveling to Todai to study there. Because of the research interests of the faculty, these institutions are natural counterparts, but their different responsibilities and activities requires a creative and somewhat asymmetric proposal to be both logistically realistic and professionally viable to both universities. Equally important, their complementarities map well onto their respective universities’ goals for internationalization. By gaining experience in Princeton classrooms, Tobunken faculty can contribute to Todai’s efforts to internationalize its own classrooms and attract a more global student body, while also developing course topics on Japan and Asia that are likely to engage
international attention. By drawing on the broader expertise of Todai faculty and the eagerness to draw Princeton students into exchange there, EAS can serve unmet student demand for important topical courses on East and Southeast Asia while also offering a springboard for Princeton students to consider longer overseas stays at an institution developing course curricula that would meet Princeton’s standards.

This is a three-year project that we view as a springboard rather than a pilot program. Our goal is to generate deep interest in and wide support for regular and sustained exchanges that would have Todai faculty regularly offering courses in Princeton classrooms and Princeton faculty regularly offering courses in Todai classrooms, as well as a steady flow of 4-5 students per year from each university studying at the other for at least a semester. Last summer’s Princeton Global Seminar held at Tobunken already inspired one student to study at Todai this academic year, and another is considering going next year. We think that a more sustained and programmatic effort designed to draw students from each university together, while systematizing a faculty exchange program that ensures faculty from each university are offering courses at the other, will provide immediate and measurable benefits to each school in terms of their course offerings and study opportunities while also creating momentum for more sustained stays that guarantee immersion by students of each school in their counterparts’ classrooms. That is, this undergraduate exchange proposal is designed to start a process of small-scale integration of curriculum and education in ways that go far beyond sister-school or memoranda-of-understanding relationships and instead to ensure that students of each university view study at the other school as an appealing and valuable opportunity.

**Intellectual Context of the Proposal**

Both Princeton and Todai have contended — largely successfully, but with gaps on both sides — with the demands of global education. At Princeton, the demand for courses on East Asia has sometimes been unmet in disciplines geared toward general theoretical concerns, while at Todai, the academic calendar, coursework almost exclusively in Japanese, and rigorous departmental expectations have made it more difficult to promote direct international study among undergraduates. For these reasons, we propose to offer innovative and highly focused undergraduate courses on Asia that involve student and faculty exchange between the two institutions. This exchange shall enrich both institutions in a way unique to the Princeton-Todai partnership.

Like many other Japanese universities, Todai faces challenges in attracting substantial numbers of international students. Its new PEAK program is designed in part to remedy that, though there are myriad questions regarding what curricula and pedagogies might be most
valuable; experience with Princeton classrooms and faculty would be especially useful in this regard. Similarly, while EAS is eager to support overseas study, one frequent concern is the hit-or-miss quality of the content courses in other countries, particularly those that teach the host country’s history, literature, society, culture in ways that tend to reify essentialistic claims rather than to promote critical engagement (e.g., “the Japanese approach to tea is...” or “Koreans believe that...”). Furthermore, the limited number of Asia specialists in a number of Princeton’s discipline-based departments has famously left students interested in the region starving for courses on a variety of cultural, social, political, and, economic phenomena there. More generally, at a university-wide level, the difficulty of prying Princeton students out of the school’s warm embrace is one of the sources, for example, of the Global Seminar Program. By building on the wide expertise in Asia available at Tobunken, as well as its goals of developing courses that would fit well within the curricula at major universities overseas, Princeton could expose and engage a larger number of students in studying at Todai and developing skills and knowledge unavailable to them in the United States. We believe, therefore, that the complementary strengths of the two institutes map well onto the divergent needs and interests of each university in promoting internationalization.

Promotion of Global Aspirations and Longer-Term Goals of Both Units

Exchange of faculty as well as students between EAS and Tobunken will enable both institutes to complement each other’s expertise in ‘Asian Studies,’ particularly in contemporary social sciences, philosophy and art history. While we offer joint-courses for undergraduates in many fields, we also hope to train the next generation of scholars to be able to teach effectively in both settings.

The Princeton-Todai Strategic Partnership already provides opportunities for individual students interested in study at the counterpart institution, though there are as yet limited incentives and encouragement for students to avail themselves of these opportunities. Our proposal uses specific week-long visits by Princeton students enrolled in the East Asian Studies Department’s “Contemporary East Asia” course to Todai during fall break as a springboard for a planned semester-long stay at Princeton by Todai undergraduates selected by an interdepartmental committee. Our faculty exchanges are designed in part to meet the demands of Princeton students for courses on environmental, economic, and theoretical issues in East Asia while also allowing Todai faculty to develop English-language courses and pedagogies suitable for use both in PEAK classrooms and for visiting Princeton students. It will lead toward a challenging opportunity for the undergraduates from both universities to learn ‘Asian Studies’ in different global settings. Through the collaborative
teaching between both institutions, faculty as well as students will be able to share current research as well as knowledge of archival materials, mingling and promoting to globalize ‘Asian Studies.’

**Todai side**

As for the longer term programming of the home unit, we will continue to manage collaborative teaching by means of English teaching programs in the PEAK (International Program on Japan in East Asia, Komaba, short for Programs in English at Komaba) as well as the Global Japan Studies program, which will start in April 2014. We also intend to continue the joint-teaching program between Todai and Princeton by obtaining internal funds from Todai as well as external funds for endowed visiting professors by approaching the private sector.

**Princeton side**

Princeton’s students have demonstrated clear interests in East Asia, with their demands often unmet by the course offerings on campus. A recent course taught by a visiting scholar on environmental issues in East Asia attracted nearly 40 students, and students continue to request classes on the economies of East Asia. While the scholars associated with the East Asian Studies Department (and the EAS Program more broadly) offer an array of classes each semester dealing with China, Japan, and Korea, the broad expertise of scholars at Tobunken would add important dimensions to our work. While the financial crisis has affected the EAS Program’s funding, we will continue to seek funds that can continue and expand the program, particularly if it is as successful and popular among undergraduates as we expect it to be. We are also especially eager to create classroom opportunities for shared discussions between the undergraduates at the two schools.

**Engagement of Todai and Princeton Scholars, Teachers, and Students**

Our project aims to develop new opportunities for teaching exchange that build on the expertise in Asian Studies between EAS and Tobunken. The project’s mainstay is the organization of undergraduate programs between both institutions through joint participation in courses for undergraduates. As noted below, we draw from expertise on both campuses to enrich the curriculum at both universities.

Because of the differences in academic calendars, the project will be conducted through a combination of semester-based courses and short exchanges during fall and spring breaks. The proposal is currently asymmetric in its structure, reflecting the somewhat different challenges and goals for internationalization at the two universities. With Todai just starting its PEAK program, faculty in different departments are being encouraged to develop English-
language courses to offer, and so there may well be more obvious initial demand among Todai faculty to teach courses at Princeton as efforts to build their curricula. We expect that there may be some interest among Princeton faculty in teaching at Todai during the summer; our hope is that the success and popularity of the initial program will make semester-long stays at Todai viable for faculty and for Princeton.

That said, we expect the program to benefit the faculty and students of both institutions in myriad ways. Exposure to and experience in Princeton classrooms will help Tobunken faculty as they develop their own course for the PEAK curriculum, while their expertise will be valuable for the graduate and undergraduate communities alike at Princeton. Similarly, Princeton faculty will have the opportunity to engage Tobunken faculty for lengthier stays than our previous contacts have allowed, and will also offer a richer sense of the research programs and educational goals of their Todai counterparts. Additionally, pedagogies and course strategies in the PEAK program will also offer opportunities to rethink how East Asia is taught to Princeton’s highly diverse and international student body.

**Detailed plan for the operation and activities of the initiative**

Our project is meant to be a modest but important first step in integrating the undergraduate programs of the two partner universities. It begins with limited but carefully designed faculty exchanges meant to prepare teachers for working on joint course opportunities in the second and third years, namely through a week-long study trip by Princeton students to Todai in 2014-2015, and then a small number of Todai PEAK students visiting Princeton for a semester in 2015-2016.

To that end, we propose semester-long teaching stints in Princeton by 2-3 faculty at Tobunken who have significant experience teaching and/or working in English. Professor Jin Sato (Todai) would begin with a course on environmental politics in East Asia in spring 2014; this course would meet student demand that had been revealed in an earlier course on environmental issues in East Asia taught in the EAS Department in 2012. Possible subsequent courses would involve financial and economic history in East Asia (Prof. Michael Schiltz, Todai) and intellectual traditions in East Asia (Prof. Takahiro Nakajima, Todai).

Professor David Leheny would be willing to spend a summer at Todai to contribute to PEAK courses and development, though would have to plan around a Cotsen Teaching Fellowship that affects his summer compensation and may complicate acceptance of a visiting summer position at Todai. Other members of the Princeton side have expressed some interest in spending summers as visiting faculty at Tobunken under the auspices of the program, though for the time being their commitments in this proposal are focused on advising the visiting Todai students who study at Princeton in 2015-2016.
With regard to the student exchanges, the 25 Princeton students would stay at a hotel in Tokyo during the week-long visit. For the Todai students at Princeton, we would ask that their room and board charges be waived, along with their tuition, and that they be allowed to reside in residential colleges at Princeton during their semester-long stay. In both cases, students would have library privileges, and visiting faculty would be afforded office space by the counterpart institutions.

Todai side
Members:
- Jin Sato, Associate Professor, Development Studies/ Politics of Natural Resources
- Takahiro Nakajima, Associate Professor, Chinese Philosophy and Comparative Philosophy
- Michael Schiltz, Associate Professor, Economic History
- Masaaki Takeda, Associate Professor, Literature
- Norihisa Baba, Associate Professor, History and Thought of Theravada Buddhism
- Misato Ido, Assistant Professor, Japanese Art History

Course and Credit
We intend to pursue the exchange by collaborating with two Todai programs that involve English-language education. The new PEAK (International Program on Japan in East Asia, Komaba) curriculum is designed to enhance the management of the teaching programs in English and encourage a more flexible exchange system, including credit exchange for the participants from both universities. We expect that working with PEAK and building from its experience may enable a smoother integration of Princeton and Todai students.

We also, however, hope to collaborate with AIKOM, a short-term academic program for overseas students at its Komaba Campus. In particular, its Global Japan Studies courses may offer a useful starting point for considering which areas of interest have been most popular among American students in Japan, and therefore contributing to the short-term study stays among Princeton undergrads.

Princeton side
EAS Participating Faculty:
- David Leheny, Professor, Japanese Politics
- Amy Borovoy, Associate Professor Japanese Society and Culture
- Atsuko Ueda, Associate Professor, Japanese Literature
- Federico Marcon, Assistant Professor, Japanese History
The relatively heavy (4 course/year) teaching load of faculty in the EAS department will likely limit the number of courses Princeton faculty can teach overseas, though we hope that the possibility of summer visits to Todai or of integrating a visiting professorship into a sabbatical year might induce Princeton faculty to consider teaching at Todai during the academic year. That said, our primary goal is to ensure that the experiences of our undergraduates are enriched through the opportunity to learn from faculty and students at Todai. To that end, our initial proposal is a relatively modest one, with a group of 25 students traveling from Princeton to Tokyo during fall break (October 26-November 2) of 2014, as an element of David Leheny’s Contemporary East Asia course (EAS 229).

If this proves successful, other faculty will consider how their courses might incorporate travel to Tokyo during fall break (which will work reasonably well for the Japanese academic calendar, unlike spring break) or whether a subsequent one-month seminar at Todai for a smaller number of Princeton students in the summer might be a viable model. In the meantime, the Princeton faculty will coordinate with their counterparts from Tobunken and will also serve as advisors to Todai students studying at Princeton in 2015-2016.

As noted above, the key components of the proposal involve early faculty exchange, primarily from Todai to Princeton, followed by two specific student exchanges: Leheny’s EAS 229 course to Tokyo for a week in fall 2014 and then 4-5 Todai students at Princeton for one semester each in 2015-2016. Our budget includes some flexibility with regard to scholarly exchange. If one member of the Princeton team is willing spend a summer or semester at Todai, with the expectation that s/he would teach a class there, s/he will be compensated as visiting faculty at the appropriate rank. If Princeton faculty are not able to travel to Japan, Todai would send up to two faculty to Princeton for short stints as visiting scholars, with the expectation and hope that each would offer one or more guest lectures in Princeton courses while also sitting in on Princeton undergraduate courses as short-term auditors.

**Profiles and Interests of Sponsoring Departments**

**Todai side:**

Because the key institution at Todai is Tobunken, a research institute that does not itself have students, the faculty there will collaborate with PEAK and AIKOM in developing the curriculum and courses. Tobunken faculty do teach courses at the Komaba campus on a continual though irregular basis, and coordinating with PEAK and AIKOM is expected to be relatively simple.

• Tobunken

The Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia was founded in 1941 as a research institute
attached to The University of Tokyo (Tokyo Imperial University at that time) with the objective of carrying out “comprehensive studies regarding Oriental culture.” In academic terms, it spans almost all fields and disciplines of the humanities and the social sciences, including archaeology, history, philosophy, religion, literature, art, cultural anthropology, folklore studies, sociology, politics, and economics. Archival research (of both written and non-written materials) and on-site research occupy their complementary place at our institute. All of our fellows have extensive networks domestically and abroad. Not only do they engage in on-site research and studies abroad, but they are constantly receiving researchers from overseas as well. It is thus no overstatement to designate our institute as one of the foremost centers of Asian studies on the globe.

· PEAK

The International Program on Japan in East Asia emphasizes two key terms: “international” and “interdisciplinary.” It aims to provide students with a well-grounded knowledge of theories in the humanities and social sciences so that they may utilize that knowledge to understand the cultures and societies of Japan and East Asia. The courses are offered in English but the program also emphasizes mastery of Japanese language.

· AIKOM

In 1995 the University of Tokyo started a short-term academic program for overseas students at its Komaba Campus. The program, called AIKOM (“Abroad in Komaba”), is offered by the University's College of Arts and Sciences, Japan's foremost public institution for liberal education. It is designed to provide upper-division undergraduates from around the globe with an exciting learning experience in the company of superbly trained professors and active, highly motivated students from all over Japan. The courses are offered in English, and credit can be recognized by the students' home universities.

Princeton Side

East Asian Studies at Princeton traces its roots to the Department of Oriental Languages and Literatures, founded in 1927. The East Asian section of Oriental Studies grew steadily during the 1960s, primarily in the areas that would remain at the core of the future Department of East Asian Studies: Chinese and Japanese language, history, and literature. The Department of Oriental Studies split in 1969 into East Asian Studies and Near Eastern Studies. EAS currently focuses on three Asian languages: Chinese, Japanese, and Korean. Among its faculty are specialists in history, literature, anthropology, film studies, political science, and linguistics, and each year enrolls hundreds of students in its
language and content courses.

Tobunken and EAS have long had a strong working relationship, and they together comprise two-thirds of a substantial research project (with Fudan University in Shanghai). Tobunken also hosted the 2012 Princeton Global Seminar in Japan.

Given the long track record of interaction between Tobunken and EAS, as well as the interdisciplinary nature of each set of programs, we expect that this will be an easy partnership, and with the broader and larger faculty at Tobunken but the more developed undergraduate curriculum and teaching portfolios at EAS, we believe that the programs complement one another in an ideal manner for teaching exchange.

**Funding Contributions from Home Units**

Todai will contribute three million yen from Tobunken and five hundred thousand yen from PEAK for the first year. As for the following years, Tobunken and PEAK will respectively contribute one million yen and five hundred thousand yen annually.

To guarantee the initiative’s sustainability, we will utilize the internal fund of Todai for visiting professors who teach courses in Todai. In addition, we will also approach private sector endowments to receive external funds for foreign visiting professors.

Limits on the EAS department’s endowment make similar contributions from the EAS side difficult, though if permitted we will certainly seek private support for the initiative, in line with the special PIIRS contributions to support global seminars. Leheny’s Cotsen fellowship over the next three years includes support for two graduate fellows, and through this, we expect to have crucial administrative and curricular support for the program, as part of the Cotsen application involved the Todai-Princeton Partnership. We also expect to ask one of our two Cotsen Graduate Fellows to precept for a course taught by a visiting Tobunken faculty. This will ensure that the visiting Todai faculty have Princeton graduate students working with them while also integrating their courses into the EAS curriculum that Leheny’s Cotsen fellowship is designed to support.