

Editorial Foreword

This issue of the *Journal of Asian Studies* is my last as editor. For the past three years, I have had the privilege to learn about Asian studies from some of the finest scholars in the field. During this period, nearly a thousand authors provided me the opportunity to read their work, for which I am grateful. Epistemological and geographical boundaries remain at the center of interpreting the meaning of Asia—and, by extension, Asian studies—in nearly every essay that was submitted during my tenure. The intellectual struggle to define the parameters of the field is perhaps the *JAS*'s greatest strength. The idea of bringing together diverse disciplines, themes, temporalities, geographies, cultures, and theories in one journal has always been important to the *JAS*. As a result, representation of any area or topic within Asian studies may appear penumbral, but not if viewed from the perspective of the larger ethos of intellectual pluralism and solidarity. The quality of scholarship has been *the* priority over coverage or methodological nationalism.

The articles in this issue examine the important themes of connected histories, borders, and liminality in the studies of India and China. MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN examines the travel writings of a nineteenth-century Gujarati clerk from India in late Qing China in order to rethink the history of capitalism and intellectual history for the study of both India and China. BÉRÉNICE GUYOT-RÉCHARD argues that Burma's separation from India in 1937 was a complex historical process in which India and Burma were formed in antithesis to one another as part of a twentieth-century partition that is often marginalized historiographically. NITASHA KAUL considers Bhutan's geographic, economic, and historical positionality “inbetween” India and China to offer an alternative interpretation of Bhutan's geopolitics, which has largely been interpreted as derivative of either India or China. The focus of TAOMO ZHOU's study is the town of Bao'an, which functioned as a liminal space where socialist economic practices were challenged by capitalism from Hong Kong during the Mao era and served as an important precursor to the formation of the special economic zone of Shenzhen. TANSEN SEN examines the state of the field of China–India studies to argue that political relations between China and India have often influenced the direction of the scholarship, but future research will benefit from analyses of connected histories across the disciplines.

This issue also includes a forum titled “Power and Agency: The Discipline-Shifting Work of James C. Scott.” As one of the most influential, prolific, and celebrated scholars writing about Asia over the past four decades, Scott has shaped the direction of a number of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. The forum examines the impact of Scott's oeuvre in the fields of biotechnology, history, peasant studies, political ecology, political economy, and political science. The contributors are SHAILA SESHIA GALVIN, TAKESHI ITO, PAMELA MCELWEE, RONALD HERRING, ERIC TAGLIACCOZZO, and MEREDITH L. WEISS. The forum concludes with a response by JAMES C. SCOTT called “Works and Days.”

I am grateful and honored for having had the opportunity to contribute to the mission of the Association for Asian Studies and to Asian studies more generally. I owe special thanks to the hard work of the members of the *JAS* Editorial Board, who have provided their expertise and support to ensure the success of the journal. Kyle David's work as Editorial Assistant was extraordinary in the daily management of the editorial office. Jon Wilson has done excellent work to help with the production of every issue of the *JAS* and to ensure its high quality. Maura Cunningham has done a wonderful job as the *JAS* Digital Editor. I am very happy to introduce Professor Joseph Alter of the University of Pittsburgh as the incoming editor of the *JAS*.

It has been a genuine pleasure.

—Vinayak Chaturvedi