

Editorial Foreword

It is an honor to take on the responsibility of editing the *Journal of Asian Studies*, and I greatly appreciate the trust placed in me by the Board of Directors of the Association for Asian Studies to carry forward this important work. It has been a pleasure working with colleagues whose research and writing I have long admired and whom I have gotten to know well during the transition of the editorial office from the University of California, Irvine, to the University of Pittsburgh. The move has been smooth and efficient, thanks in large part to Vinayak Chaturvedi's steady hand and Kyle David's careful management of details. Vinayak and Kyle have provided me with generous support, and I would like to thank them for their outstanding service to the *Journal of Asian Studies* and the Association for Asian Studies. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Ann Avouris, Executive Editor, Journals, at Cambridge University Press for coordinating production during an extended training period, and to Hilary Finchum-Sung, Executive Director of the Association for Asian Studies, for exceptional patience and sage counsel as we worked out the final details of the transition.

Apart from working closely with scholars who are breaking new ground in the field, one aspect of the job of editor I had not fully anticipated—but is most certainly an added bonus—is the opportunity to learn from a group of exceptional, experienced academics on the Editorial Board of the *Journal of Asian Studies*, and to work closely with scholars who serve on the regional councils of the Association for Asian Studies. Although inherent in the work of scholarship, one does not become fully aware of the extent to which research is an interdisciplinary, collaborative, cooperative endeavor until the collective effort is highlighted by the intersection of particular expertise, experience, and insights. At a time when neoliberal priorities place an ever-brighter spotlight on individual achievements—which are important and need to be acknowledged—it is nevertheless deeply satisfying to work in an intellectual space defined by the intersection of our combined, collective intellectual labor.

The articles in this issue invite us to think about the intersections and connections between institutionalized structures of state and society and cultural formations that stem from these structures in provocatively counterintuitive ways. Although oriented toward questions specific to Japan, Korea, India, Hong Kong, and China, each of the articles explores the dynamics of broad social issues—adoption and family, gender and identity, marginalization and segregation, violence and masculinity, kinship and sexuality—that extend beyond the boundary of the national entity within which they take particular shape. Indeed, each of the articles strains against the constraints of bounded regulation in various ways. The structure and power of the state is foregrounded and problematized in the first three articles, whereas the force of cultural formations provides a critical lens on social and political institutions, practices, and performances in the second set of three.

In a study that links geopolitics on the broadest level with family and kinship, YOUNGEUN KOO's analysis presents a critical perspective on the dynamics of intercountry adoption during the shifting Cold War relations between Korea and Sweden. She shows how the rules, regulations, and practices of adoption in the 1960s and 1970s were not simply reactive but defined strategically in relation to national priorities and interests. As such, Koo reminds us of the many ways in which formal politics and international relations permeate lived experiences within households that cross borders on a global scale linking Asia and Europe. SAYAKA CHATANI's article examines the way *zainichi* Korean identity coalesces in marginalized Japanese neighborhoods. At the end of World War II, *tongne* (shantytown neighborhoods) became spaces of liberation and dislocated cultural identity within the strictures of Japanese society reflected against Korean geopolitics. As Chatani points out, poverty, violence, and exclusion in postwar *tongne* shape and reshape contours of memory that find expression as pride and self-determination in the interlinkages of an increasingly globalized Asia. With a critical eye on questions of governance, rather than on repression, exclusion, and enclaved marginalization, XIAOXUAN WANG turns our attention to religion as a problem of state management and regulation. Focused on the "technological turn" in strategic governance, Wang shows how China's policy on religion must be understood in relation to rapidly changing urban development, the extension and expansion of bureaucratic structures, and, ultimately, national priorities and global ambitions.

Whereas Wang shows how religion as a cultural system in China is folded into the structures of bureaucratic surveillance, effectively secularizing belief through incorporative governance, NIRVIKAR JASSAL examines an approach to bureaucratic regulation that enclaves and essentializes gender, even though the broader goal of the policy is to structure administration to produce unbiased governance. The reification of gender identity through purposeful administrative segregation designed to counter patriarchy reproduces entrenched cultural belief about the differences between men and women. In this regard, Jassal's analysis of segregated policing as a strategy to overcome gender discrimination highlights the way in which state authority does not easily or neatly encompass cultural beliefs and practices and can reproduce and exaggerate problems that government regulation is intended to resolve.

Whereas Koo, Chatani, and Wang are concerned with the intersection of national identity and cultural forms of practice within the dynamics of modern state regulation and postwar geopolitics, SACHI SCHMIDT-HORI provides a sharp and revealing contrast, offering a cultural perspective on the articulation of gender, intimacy, and sexuality in the context of the premodern Japanese state. The focus of her article is the institution of milk kinship. Building on, but extending beyond, the role of the wet nurse within the structure of family dynamics, milk kinship involves complicated relations of erotic and domestic maternal intimacy and "function[s] as a power-generating engine of society." Attention to this complex, gendered form of motherhood provides a fascinating example of how structures of flexible kinship generate creative expressions of power, both in literary fiction and in intimate alliances of dynastic realpolitik.

CHARLIE YI ZHANG's article focuses on masculinity and the performances of power and empowerment that relate to martial arts as represented in the Hong Kong-based *Ip Man* film series. Martial arts in general are overdetermined forms of embodied cultural practice. Zhang directly confronts this, inviting readers to engage with the performance

of Wing Chun martial arts in a subtly subversive mode of counterinterpretation, turning toxic masculinity against itself to discover forms of power that effect alternatively gendered possibilities. In ways that complement Schmidt-Hori's reading of milk kinship in literature, Zhang's interpretation of gendered embodiment in films that are iconic of Hong Kong's economic, political, and cultural significance makes a significant point about geopolitics, nationalism, and resistance in contemporary Asia.

—Joseph S. Alter