

EDITORIAL

GREETINGS FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Scholarly networks for research and discussion are becoming broader and faster with the globalization of research information, allowing individual regional research and individual case studies to be compared and connected with one another quite rapidly and directly, and so losing their “closed individualities” and “exclusive specialities”. This requires, and enables, us to develop new directions and perspectives for inter-related research and discussion in Asian studies, particularly in terms of inter-regional and interdisciplinary approaches.

The *International Journal of Asian Studies* is being published as a journal for international cross-regional and interdisciplinary discussion and communication in Asian Studies, primarily in the social sciences and humanities. It will also act as a “forum” to discuss and exchange ideas, methodologies, disciplines, and research materials on Asian studies. In particular, it hopes to focus attention on the work of Asian scholars, some of it translated from Asian languages, in an attempt to encourage multi-directional scholarly communication among scholars working in Asian studies.

Much contemporary Asian scholarship on Asia draws on a long tradition rooted in the common use of classical Chinese as a mode of scholarly communication in China, Japan, Korea and Vietnam in the distant past. From this background emerged national traditions of research in Asian studies that thrive today. However, in spite of its strength and creativity, much of this scholarship is in vernacular languages and known only locally, often just in the home countries of the researchers concerned. There is, therefore, much to be gained by opening channels of communication between Asian scholars and their counterparts in other countries. While the *Journal* seeks to support the work of Asian scholars, it invites submissions from all scholars doing research on Asia, irrespective of nationality. We hope this mix of scholarly traditions will facilitate the joint development of new ideas and frameworks, and help integrate Asian scholarship more fully into the international academic community.

The *Journal* will examine Asia on a regional basis, emphasizing patterns and tendencies that go beyond the borders of individual countries. For example, intra-Asian networks, taken up in this issue, have at various levels played a major role in the shaping of modern Asia, but their internal operations and position within worldwide networks remain poorly understood. The *Journal* will cover all regions of Asia, though it will retain a special interest in eastern Asia (particularly Korea, Japan, China, Taiwan, and Vietnam) since the gap between Asian and non-Asian scholarship is wider here than elsewhere. It has also been one of the most important locations for intra-Asian networks, and with its rich history and historiography has provided scholars with various unique models and frameworks for analysis. Some of these subjects may either provide a basis for comparison with other

regions of Asia, or help scholars challenge conventional wisdom based on western history alone.

Modern and contemporary Asia has witnessed dynamic transformations in cultures, societies, economies, and politics, and as a consequence confronts issues of collective identity formation, ecological crisis, rapid economic change and resurgence of religion. The clarification of these past experiences can help produce a deeper understanding of contemporary changes. For this reason, the *Journal* wishes to emphasize the location of contemporary changes within a historical framework, though it will not limit itself to historical analysis, and welcomes analyses of contemporary issues also.

The *Journal* will support inter-disciplinary approaches by publishing issues built around specific topics, drawing on various academic disciplines. The dominant tendency in scholarship on Asia is to examine Asian societies explicitly or implicitly against the yardstick of European experience, and to focus on specific regions or on the connection between colonizing European countries and the colonized Asian regions. The *Journal* will seek to foster an outlook that moves away from this tradition, and so places special importance on the promotion of comparative studies involving various regions within Asia.

The *Journal* plans also to introduce and exchange research information, such as catalogues, bibliographies of research results, and original research documents in fields related to the published articles, in order to encourage further research on the local, regional, and global in Asia. We invite submissions from scholars studying Asia from their various perspectives, since the successes of the *Journal* will be directly related to the dialogue it engenders.

Hamashita Takeshi, University of Kyoto, Japan
Editor-in-Chief, *International Journal of Asian Studies*