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Editor's Introduction

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It is with great pleasure and deep gratitude that I introduce the first issue of *ASIANetwork Exchange* published under my editorship. This summer, I had the privilege of stepping into the role of Editor-in-Chief, following in the capable footsteps of Dr. Ron Green and Dr. Susan Bergeron of Coastal Carolina University. For the past five years, Ron and Susan provided outstanding stewardship of the journal, expanding its scholarly reach and ensuring that it remained a vibrant forum for innovative research and pedagogical reflection in Asian Studies. I am indebted to their dedication, vision, and collegiality, and I know our readers join me in thanking them for their remarkable contributions.

I approach this new role with enthusiasm for the journal's dual mission: to publish both cutting-edge research articles and insightful pedagogical studies that speak to the needs of those teaching and learning about Asia in the liberal arts context. Our community thrives on the interplay between research and teaching, and I am eager to continue fostering that synergy in the pages of the journal. The current issue showcases the diversity of approaches and topics that characterize our field, featuring five research articles that traverse literature, film, politics, and history, along with a substantive book review.

We begin with Madeline Y. Hsu's "The Third World Strikes and Asian American Studies as an Institutional and Intellectual Project," based on her keynote address at the 32nd annual *ASIANetwork* conference in San Antonio, Texas, in March 2025. Hsu revisits the legacy of the Third World Strikes by shifting attention from the iconic campus protests to the less visible but equally consequential institutional labor that followed. She traces how student activists, faculty, and community organizers reshaped universities through admissions, tenure-line hiring, curricula, and program authorization, creating the enduring structures of Asian American studies. By situating the field's development within both radical activism and strategic institutionalization, Hsu underscores the generational continuities that have made Asian American studies integral to broader intellectual formations around race, migration, empire, gender, and inequality.

Following this keynote contribution, Chia-rong Wu and Min-xu Zhan's "On the Global South and Sinophone Literature" initiates a timely conversation about how the framework of the Global South can expand the horizons of Sinophone studies. Drawing connections and distinctions between the Global South and Third World theory, the authors revisit the histories of Chinese diaspora in the South Seas and Taiwan, engage with topics from Malayan communism to Austronesian cultures, and survey recent scholarship on Sinophone literature in the Global South. Their work offers both conceptual clarity and an invitation to further dialogue.

In “A Tale of Two Cities: Parasitical Interdependence in Bong Joon-Ho’s *Parasite* and Kurosawa Akira’s *High and Low*,” Patricia M. Welch examines two cinematic masterpieces separated by more than half a century. Welch compares the visual and thematic architecture of the films—set against the sharply divided worlds of modernist mansions and working-class neighborhoods—to reveal shifting attitudes toward capitalism, class struggle, and the possibility (or impossibility) of change.

Pamela Lynn Runestad’s “‘A Christmas Present’: Satoshi Kon’s *Tokyo Godfathers* as Japan’s Social Problems All Wrapped Up” offers a fresh reading of this animated classic, challenging Western interpretations that frame it as a simple “three wise men” story. Instead, Runestad argues, Kon’s film uses the festive trappings of Christmas to package a sharp critique of gender norms, nationalism, and exclusionary social practices in contemporary Japan—while also imagining a more humane political community.

Turning to political analysis, Christopher Lloyd Truksa’s “Trust the Process: Evaluating China’s Social Credit Systems” interrogates the popular portrayal of these systems as a monolithic, Orwellian instrument of surveillance. Drawing on careful examination of local variations, Truksa finds a fragmented, reward-oriented patchwork that seeks to rebuild social trust—without dismissing the genuine concerns such systems raise. His work offers a nuanced foundation for future scholarly and policy debates.

Finally, this issue features Brandon Palmer’s review of *Cornerstone of the Nation: The Defense Industry and the Building of Modern Korea Under Park Chung Hee* by Peter Banseok Kwon. Palmer situates Kwon’s work within broader debates on Korea’s *chaebol*, the defense industry, and the US–ROK alliance, praising its nuanced analysis while also noting areas ripe for further exploration.

Collectively, these contributions exemplify the breadth and depth of scholarship that *ASIANetwork Exchange* seeks to promote. They remind us that the study of Asia—whether through the lens of activism, literature, cinema, politics, or history—offers critical insights into global structures, local experiences, and the pedagogical challenges and opportunities we face as educators. I am excited to share this issue with you, and I look forward to working together as a community to continue shaping the journal’s future.

Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

