**Editor’s Introduction**
*ASIANetwork Exchange: A Journal for Asian Studies in the Liberal Arts*

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 open with Chia-rong Wu and Min-xu Zhan’s “On the Global South and Sinophone Literature,” which 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.

In “The Coral Tree: Chinese Students at Colorado College as Racial Minorities in the Early 20th Century,” Hongli Zeng uses archival sources to recover the voices and experiences of Chinese students in the 1920s United States. The article examines how these students navigated racial identity, discrimination, and political engagement, highlighting their agency in defending rights and dignity in an often-hostile environment.

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’s thoughtful review situates Kwon’s work within broader debates on Korea’s *chaebol*, the defense industry, and the U.S.–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 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.

— **Taku Suzuki**
Editor-in-Chief, *ASIANetwork Exchange*