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Notes from the Editors

Marsha Smith¹ and Hong Zhang²

¹ Augustana College, US

² Colby College, US

Corresponding authors: Marsha Smith and Hong Zhang (aneditors@asianetwork.org)

Editor notes for the upcoming Volume 26:1, 2019 issue.

Keywords: ASIANetwork; Asian Studies; mindful connectivity; Medieval Khmer society; classic Chinese poetry; “red classics” and Chinese identity; women and resistance to colonial rule in Sri Lanka

We are pleased with the variety and diverse set of papers we have included in this issue. This spring issue begins with two thoughtful essays written by our keynote speakers at the ASIANetwork 2018 conference in Philadelphia, April 6–8, 2018. The conference theme, *Mindfulness Connectivity: Asian Perspectives and Influences*, is clearly evident in both essays.



The first essay, titled “Contemplative Teaching and Learning: Opportunities for Asian Studies,” was written by Judith Simmer-Brown, Distinguished Professor of Contemplative and Religious Studies at Naropa University. She briefly traces the history of the contemplative education movement in higher education, its links to both Asia and western non-sectarian contemplative practices. She discusses ways in which Naropa University has actively promoted contemplative education and the modes by which they articulate and incorporate this. She then discusses the role of Asian scholars (including ASIANetwork colleagues like Tom Coburn and Erin McCarthy) and the important roles they have played in the field of contemplative studies. Finally, her essay provides pragmatic ways in which teachers can include contemplative strategies and pedagogies into their own classrooms.



The second essay, titled “Challenging Hegemony, Building Bridges: Pedagogical Tools to Mediate Campus Polarization,” is written by Bidisha Biswas, Professor of Political Science at Western Washington University. In this essay, she examines her own experiences teaching in a discipline which is increasingly rancorous and polarizing in light of her own identity as a first-generation woman of color. She discusses how she uses her own positional subjectivity to encourage students to think more respectfully and creatively, as well as to welcome diverse views in the classroom. Finally, Biswas also provides a variety of pedagogical tips to help teachers deal with the tensions and disagreements that can emerge in the classroom where difficult political and social issues are examined.

Following the keynote essays are three individual papers. The first, authored by Paul Nietupski, is titled: “Medieval Khmer Society: The Life and Times of Jayavarman VII

(ca. 1120–1218).” Through an analysis of Buddhist monuments and inscriptions built during the reign of Jayavarman VII, Nietupski draws the reader’s attention to the proliferation of Mahayana Buddhist beliefs that infused Jayavarman VII’s political and military rule and provided a foundation for his ability to draw alliances with Khmer and Cham neighbors to build a Khmer empire.

“Teaching Classical Chinese Literature through Reception Studies,” written by Yue Zhang, draws from his experiences teaching courses in Chinese poetry in the U.S. and Canada by using major concepts from reception studies and how this approach allows students to develop critical thinking and understand more fully the significance of how classical Chinese poetry changes over time. Zhang also provides a selected bibliography of works on reception studies, translations of Chinese poetry, and scholarship utilizing reception studies as pedagogical tools for faculty interested in exploring this method for teaching and research.

Zhen Zhang’s essay, “Never Abandon, Never Give Up”: *Soldiers Sortie* as a New Red Classic of the Reform Era,” examines a TV drama series *Soldiers Sortie* (Shibing tuji, 2007) to illustrate the transformation from a socialist collectivist understanding of core values of the socialist hero to a more individualistic, capitalistic understanding of personhood that seems to be emerging in the current reform-era China. This essay contextualizes the reworking of core social values from socialist heroes to refashion a new Chinese personhood and individual and group identity in the market and capitalist economy of China today.



The final essay is the 2018 Marianna McJimsey undergraduate winning paper and is titled “(In)visible Bodies: Re-theorizing the Consumption of Bodies through Divine Possession in Post-Conflict Sri Lanka.” This essay was written by Olivia Dure, a 2017 Pomona College graduate with a major in Religion/Religious Studies. Through the use of both historical and field research, Dure’s paper argues that divine possession practiced by women in Sri Lanka can be seen in a complex interweaving of resistance to colonial rule via divine control of a body that interprets truth that counters the dogmas of the institutional hierarchies of the colonial and post-colonial nation state.

We would like to note some personnel changes with this issue. First we say goodbye to Sam Moore and Peter Ford of the Open Library of the Humanities support team, who answered our questions on managing the journal's online system and handled the publication phase of our journal. We are grateful for their support and teamwork for helping our journal make the smooth transitioning to the new editorship in the past two years. We are excited to begin working with Victoria Pike and Michael Higgs, beginning with this issue. We thank Diana Johannes, our copy editor for the past two issues, and we welcome Eileen Beran as our new proofreader.

Competing Interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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