

# Introduction

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A successful first issue is important, but in many ways the second and subsequent early issues really set the tone and determine the on-going success of any new journal. By all accounts we succeeded with the first issue of *Asia Pacific World*, now here is the follow-up volume, and it is looking healthy. In this introduction I discuss some of the major contributions to the study of the Asia Pacific made by the authors of the articles included in Issue 2, outline their arguments and also summarize the comments of the reviewers of recent books and films that we commissioned. The latter deserve our close attention as a record of the burgeoning Asia Pacific literature and its contribution to our understanding of the region.

## The Asia Pacific Region

In compiling this volume the editors were once more confronted by perhaps the most difficult question faced by scholars attempting to reach an understanding of the Asia Pacific Region—agreement on its geographic, cultural and socio-economic definitions. In the first volume, Eades and Cooper (2010) suggested that the Asia Pacific Region was amoeba-like, with an agreed nucleus but also with a surrounding body in constant motion. The nucleus has always been East Asia, the 10 countries of the ASEAN group of nations and the Pacific Island nations. Other definitions have variously included the ‘Pacific Rim’ (the Pacific coasts of Canada, the USA, South America, and Russia), and South Asia (Dobbs Higginson 1995; Tow 2009).

The new global expansion of the Chinese and Indian economies (following the earlier Japanese one) has also served to promote the integration of a number of Central Asian Republics with the emerging mainstream of the Region. This realization prompted the Editorial Board to include these States in our working definition of the Region prior to the establishment of the Journal, and it is therefore with pleasure that we include in this second volume an article dealing with the peace mediation process in Tajikistan. It is to be hoped that many more such articles dealing with the growth and development, and the external relations of the former Soviet Central Asian Republics are submitted to the Journal.



## The Contents of Issue 2

As laid out in Issue 1, our editorial policy for at least the first few issues is to invite a series of position papers on major policy concerns facing the Asia Pacific Region, in addition to general articles. In the first invited paper for this issue, Ryang deals with the subject of minority groups in Japan. While the study of Koreans in Japan—a minority group whose population has never exceeded 700,000 and now numbers between 400,000 and 500,000, or around 0.4 percent of Japan's total population today—may appear as if Ryang notes a project of only minor interest or significance, but is in fact a window on the recent and important global-historical shifts in Japanese society and culture. Also, what has led this minority group to figure so prominently in English-language scholarly research during the past thirty years is a question worth answering if the policy decisions of Japan during the globalization processes of the 20th and 21st centuries are to be properly understood. Central to this understanding is the need to show how the concept of *Nihonjinron* (Japanese-ness) has been constructed and played out in policy and economic/social discourses (including its promotion of the concept of masculine dominance in 'mainstream' Japanese life) since World War II, and Ryang's paper contains an important commentary on this. Clearly, within this discourse the exploration of what it means to be *zainichi* (Korean in Japan) in today's Japan and what kind of existential anxieties Koreans (and other minority groups) face is a critical task, and Ryang carries this out with distinction. Finally, the article proposes a more central role in diaspora studies for the study of minorities in Japan, thereby making such groups more relevant in the context of a globalizing world and encouraging interaction with other areas of scholarly inquiry.

The Keynote Speech at the regional APEC meeting in Beppu (7 August 2010), entitled *APEC's Achievements and Challenges Today*, is here reproduced in full, and forms part of the APEC Japan 2010 meetings. Dr Peter Drysdale, Emeritus Professor of Economics at the Australian National University, was involved in the founding of APEC and is presently head of the East Asia Forum and the East Asian Bureau of Economic Research. As such he is eminently qualified to present an analysis of APEC achievements and its likely future agenda. His comments on structural reform and growth are timely and lead to several feasible ways forward for the organization: seeking a single Asia Pacific economy; securing finance for growth; cutting domestic barriers to commerce; opening trade in green products and services; and securing private participation in infrastructural investment are all designed to enhance the prospects for stable and sustainable development of the region.

## General Articles

In this issue we have three general articles. The first of these is by Iji, who examines the informal mediation efforts to end the Tajik civil war pursued by the *Inter-Tajik Dialogue* under the auspices of the Dartmouth Conference. The author makes the case that this was a rather successful example of unofficial involvement in a peace process and in turn the

article gives a good overview of the unofficial dialogue that occurred. The first part of the article focuses on the ways in which the unofficial dialogue was able to function comfortably and effectively alongside the UN-mediated *official* peace negotiations, while later sections discuss what contributions and benefits the unofficial dialogue brought to the official negotiations. In this way the article identifies the complementary and positive interconnections between the dialogue's intermediary roles and those played by official third parties, such as the UN and concerned states. This article underscores the importance of cooperation and coordination between official and unofficial tracks in any form of diplomacy, and shows the potential for unofficial mediators' contributions to a peace process largely managed within a formal diplomatic framework.

In a related discussion, von Feigenblatt shows how complex negotiations between large socio-political groups tend to rely on distributive negotiation. This article explores how a human security approach might be used as the basis for selecting 'standard objective criteria' to foster more constructive integrative negotiations in local conflicts in the Asia Pacific region. The complexity of the conflict in Thailand between the People's Alliance for Democracy (also known as the Yellow Shirts) and the National United Front of Democracy against Dictatorship (the Red Shirts) and the importance of the outcome make it a good representative case study on how to transcend realist/distributional methods of negotiation and conflict resolution. This case study shows that a human security model might provide an ethical yet flexible framework to guide negotiations between large social movements.

In the third article, Banyai confirms the importance of *capacity* for the effective development of a community. This study examines the basic strategies for building community capacity, including leadership development, organizational development, community organizing, and inter-organizational collaboration, and then addresses the question of how a local policy structure can be analyzed for community capacity building potential. The municipal-level policy structure of Pagudpud City in the Philippines provides the material required to reveal and analyze the importance of community capacity building components. The basics of the Pagudpud policy structure are identified as an example of how community capacity building strategies can be conceptualized as policy. Suggestions for increasing the effectiveness of municipal community capacity building strategies through revising policy structures are outlined.

## Reflections from In and Out of the Field

The invited paper by Creighton continues the Journal's examination of identity—in this case, Japanese and Nikkei (people of Japanese descent) identity—by looking at the role and experiences of the foreign anthropologist on their return from fieldwork in this country. An entertaining but also very serious review of the personal, political and social issues in undertaking social research; this is a call for a critically engaged and politically engaged anthropology involving engagement in the public issues of our time, and the spreading of our 'stories' from the field and the laboratory to a larger audience.

## The Book Reviews

In the first of our book reviews, Blumenfield discusses *Remaking Area Studies: Teaching and Learning across Asia and the Pacific* (Wesley-Smith and Goss 2010), which reports on the results of research funded by the Ford Foundation's "Crossing Borders: Revitalizing Asian Studies" initiative in the early 2000s. Tami Blumenfield's comments on this book point out a few limitations (age of the data, no mention of Confucius Institutes, etc) but overall commends the scholars involved for pursuing boundary-crossing experiments aimed at moving beyond outdated area studies paradigms in seeking understanding of the Asia Pacific and for reflecting on these in this publication.

On a more general note Bin Yang, in reviewing *Southeast Asia in World History* (Lockard 2009) notes that regional history written as world history has been a prevalent approach to our overall understanding of our world and a most frequent publication pattern in the field of cultural tradition studies. Despite this approach being utilized again in this book, Yang is convinced that it makes a significant regional and global contribution by compacting several thousand years of Southeast Asia history into a very readable and informative 205 pages. Our reviewer highly recommends it for general readers, students, and specialists.

Christine R. Yano reviews *Multiculturalism in the New Japan: Crossing the Boundaries Within* (Graburn, Ertl, and Tierney 2008). This book once again raises several difficult issues that remain unresolved in dispelling myths of Japanese homogeneity, the most fundamental of which is that of what kinds of meanings and practices might multiculturalism entail in a country that has historically prided itself on official monoculturalism? While the authors note that change is occurring when increased signage in foreign languages, the new visibility of non-Japanese in the media, and the notable presence of non-Japanese residents on the streets of small towns and in urban settings are observed, the actual implications of these changes remain subject to debate. In the end, the editors and our reviewer conclude that multiculturalism in Japan—however defined—remains incomplete.

Rie Kido Askew contributes two reviews to this issue of the Journal. The first is of John R. Stanley's *Christianity and Female Empowerment* (2009), characterized by the reviewer as a modest, informative work that sheds light on the early history of missionary schools that created the foundation for the modern (post-1911) school system in China, and that the value of the analysis appears to be that the benefits of education outweigh criticisms of underlying Chinese traditions, from any source. In the second review Askew discusses James R. Brandon's *Kabuki's Forgotten War 1931–1945* (2009), which reveals an intriguing history of the Kabuki art form during the war at variance with the received wisdom that developed after 1945. This review notes that, in his revelations about *kabuki's* embarrassing past, Brandon shows how the attempt to ensure *kabuki's* survival by sanitizing its former imperial support role has ruined it as a traditional art form.

Unless you're a student of Japanese religions, you've probably never heard of Shugendō ('way of acquiring power') suggests our film reviewer, Marwood Larson-Harris. A

combination of several traditions, Shugendō is hard to define (it appears to be mostly a syncretic tradition practiced on and around mountains) and its beliefs are not easily accessible, yet in certain ways it typifies the Japanese experience of religion. *Shugendō Now*, a film by Abela and McGuire (2009), takes the viewer into the heart of this little-known faith, giving viewers a commentary on an unfamiliar tradition that exemplifies the history and modern development of Japanese religion.

Elizabeth Van Wie Davis examines China's newly emerging role in the region through a review of *China in Oceania: Reshaping the Pacific?* (Wesley-Smith and Porter 2010). Her assessment of the book is that China's activities in the Pacific Islands are not just in conformity to a specific set of interests, but should be seen in the context of Beijing's recent efforts to develop a comprehensive, global foreign policy. She notes that individuals who want to more fully understand Chinese foreign policy in general, and the Chinese approach to Oceania in particular, should read this book. Of particular relevance is that it challenges the sometimes disingenuous threat discourse (military, financial, etc) pervading the existing literature on this topic and argues that China's presence offers opportunities not available under established structures of power and influence in the Region.

John Thoburn discusses the contribution of *China, Asia, and the New World Economy* (Eichengreen, Wyplosz and Park 2008) to the debate on China's increasing influence on the world economy. He notes that this book shows how China has become a formidable competitor and achieved dominant market share in a wide range of labor-intensive products in the world economy, and that the book contributes strongly to the academic understanding of key economic issues in our region. As an added benefit it also outlines how trade between Asian countries has expanded rapidly, helped by bilateral and regional trade agreements, and the significance of export surpluses and consequent foreign exchange accumulation as the major source of finance for the United States' large budget and trade deficits.

Chinese cities and Chinese society have gone through dramatic change since the 1940s. While a lot of research in the literature deals with the transformation of physical urban forms, urban planning concepts, urban policies and management at the macro-scale, *The City and Chinese Modernity* (Wu, Katz and Lin 2010) focuses at the micro-scale on the lives of common people in Chinese cities. Reviewer Fei Chen notes that the particular contributions that this book makes are its detailed descriptions of how modernity has been reflected in numerous aspects of daily life in the cities, and how the state and citizen groups have interacted and cooperated on public policy-making at this level. Our reviewer notes that it is perhaps common for an edited book with contributions from a few authors emphasizing slightly different aspects of urban lives to have a rather loose structure because each paper has high degree of independency, but that this is not a major weakness in this book. A weakness that may be rather more important is that the legibility and readability of the book may be limited due to the use of historical Chinese words and syntax.

Continuing the analysis of China's relations with the world that occupies many scholars and others in the 21st century, Manying Ip discusses *Transnationalism and Migration: Chinese Migrants in New Zealand* (Chui 2008). This occasional paper from the Department

of Sociology, Hong Kong Shue Yan University and Pace University examines transnationalism through a study of Chinese migration in New Zealand, both historical and contemporary. Ip notes that this analysis and the contrastive study looking at Chinese and British transnational networks is refreshing and competently done. This paper, with its valuable empirical data, sound methodology, and strong theorization, should be consulted by all researchers on transnationalism and contemporary migration.

This issue of the Journal once again demonstrates the extraordinary diversity of the Asia Pacific region and the future tasks it faces. Expanding our knowledge and tool kits to achieve a better understanding of these will help the region to innovate successfully in the face of an ever-changing world. The common theme at the moment is the need to recognize and deal with wide diversity, but it is a diversity that is inherently strong as long as the past is squarely faced and the present is used to create a sustainable future for this region and the world.