

## Editorial Foreword

The *JAS* enters its seventy-ninth year of publication in 2020. If the founding of the journal emerged out of the context of World War II, the life of the *JAS* follows different trajectories and framings today. The focus on studying the impact of human-made climate change is part of a growing interest in topics related to environmental and agrarian studies. The themes of nationalism, capitalism, and religion continue to impact the direction of a number of works. Research on popular culture also has a presence, increasingly on topics related to cinema, literature, music, and digital culture. These examples underscore the point that today's global concerns often influence the type of scholarship that is produced. My comments here reflect the submissions that I have read in my capacity as editor since 2018. While the *JAS* receives approximately 300 submissions per year—a small sample size in comparison to the total number of manuscripts on Asian studies that are submitted to journals globally—what it publishes illuminates new directions in the scholarship, while also offering examples of how long-standing debates are being cast in new terms. The articles in this volume of the *JAS* promise to bring together both types of research.

ELIZABETH CHATTERJEE'S article considers the processes of electrification in India, China, and Japan as a way to rethink debates about the Anthropocene that privilege the historical nexus between colonialism and fossil capitalism. TIRTHANKAR ROY'S examination of the history of the musical instrument *esraj* in the eastern Indian town of Gaya provides a new perspective on the emergence of modern forms of classical music in colonial India. PETER BANSEOK KWON writes about the role of companies as catalysts of national economic development and military modernization in South Korea in the 1970s. NATHAN VEDAL considers the transitions of Chinese intellectual culture in the sixteenth century as a means to understand important shifts in the history of knowledge production in China. The focus of NIKOLAY KAMENOV'S study is the centrality of cooperatives in the making of social, political, and economic histories of twentieth-century India. MATTHEW J. NELSON'S article examines the intellectual influences from Ireland and India that shaped the writing of Pakistan's constitution on the topic of religious freedom.

In collaboration with Dr. Maura Cunningham, Editor of *#AsiaNow*, we have started a new feature to supplement every issue of the journal: the *JAS* Author Interview Series. The purpose of the series is to highlight the work of select *JAS* authors—especially early-career scholars—by having an exchange between the author and a scholar in the field about the significance of the article within broader debates on theory and methodology in Asian studies. The first four interviews in the series are available at *#AsiaNow* on the website of the Association for Asian Studies, with more to come this year.

—Vinayak Chaturvedi