

## Editors' Introduction

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### Civility, Compassion, and Celebration

Although this book was initially intended as a twentieth anniversary commemorative volume, we soon realized its reach far extended our original objective. Throughout the United States institutions of all levels of higher education have begun to commit themselves to expanding their curricula to provide students with a more expansive understanding of Asia and its many cultures and histories. Programs such as AsiaNetwork and the Asian Studies Development Program have supported and assisted this much needed development in North American education. We also soon realized that the high quality chapters included in this volume will also prove of interest to trained Asian specialists and that this volume may be used in a variety of academic contexts ranging from undergraduate to graduate courses as well as a resource book for others or just as an informative collection of essays for the curious reader.

The diversity and breadth of content in this volume is rather striking. With essays covering India, China, Korea, Japan, Bhutan, the Sea of Malay, and Pakistan with an eye on religion, art, philosophy, music, and politics makes this a volume that will appeal to many. We have hesitated to group the articles into categories to allow the essays to give presence to the various connective threads that move readers from aesthetics to identity, through popular culture, religion and philosophy, politics and history, and geography. We are grateful to one of our anonymous reviewers for convincing us our section categories should be abandoned. As editors, we are fortunate to have contributions that naturally complement each other and share a consistent and resonating voice. This is, as our title suggests, a cultural counterpoint. We also took to heart Roger T. Ames's suggestion for the title and forsook our original. Each essay presented in this volume in its own way creates

this sense of cultural counterpoint. Counterpoint in music is an interesting strategy of polyphonic relationship. Voices remain independent at one level in their rhythm—a recurring succession of opposing elements that comprise movement in a piece of music—and are yet interdependent harmonically. This harmonic interdependence is what *The Dynamics of Cultural Counterpoint in Asian Studies* is about, yet it is also about retaining the singularity of voice that allows the harmonic to emerge. The Latin phrase—*punctus contra punctum*—captures what we seek: point against point. The voices contained within this volume emerge harmonically in their intimate interdependence, yet retain the integrity of their own voices. This polyphonic volume is accompanied by its monophonic texture—its *yin* to its *yang*, its *yang* to its *yin*—that consists of a single melodic line of seeking civility in our world with compassionate understanding through the celebration of our *difference* and the parallel resonance of our *oneness*.

Many of the chapters included in this collection offer timely and accessible discussions and approaches on rarely covered topics as one of our reviewers noted. Moreover, some of the essays include a pedagogical dimension and offer suggestions for the delivery of their content. The level of analysis and presentation in this collection shares a consistent voice, which resonates among the multiple strands of its multidisciplinary approach. Such a voice from diverse authors from various disciplines is more than any editor can wish. We are grateful for this presence and celebrate its emergence.

The occasion for this volume was the twentieth anniversary of the Asian Studies Development Program that served as the book's impetus. We conclude with comments directed toward that impetus that has supported the movement in U.S. higher education institutions' expansion of curricula on Asia and provided students with a more expansive understanding of Asia and its many cultures and histories.



Numerically, twenty years marks a new era and this book is an occasion for celebrating the accomplishments and transformation of so many of the participants from the Asian Studies Development Program (ASDP), a joint program of the East-West Center and the University of Hawai'i. These participants have fostered the ASDP mission of integrating Asian studies into the undergraduate curricula at their colleges and universities with steadfast devotion and energies. Over 1,500 professors from colleges and universities are now ASDP *alumni* and *alumnae*. Many of the successes of ASDP rest on the shoulders of these aspirants. As we have grown together for over a fifth of a century, enduring friendships have developed and a community of

scholars and adherents to the infusing model of Asian studies has emerged and contributed significantly to the direction and value of the future's education of students.

Undeniably, we've grown older together, but more significant than our aging has been our growth in other more meaningful ways. Most within the ranks of ASDP came to the program without any formal training as Asianists—training replete with formal language to access those ancient texts and contemporary writings of Asian scholars, those targets of our study that were achieved and prompted by ASDP. Most (but not all) of us lacked the historical and cultural contexts requisite to more deeply understand those to whom we were now naturally drawn. Some of us naturally came prepared in these ways before their association with ASDP, but this training was specialized primarily in one region, for example, George Brown and Jeffrey Dippmann's training in China, Joseph Overton's in the Middle East, or Paul Dunscomb's in Japan.

Over the years, we have witnessed career altering transformations: Steve Laumakis publishes a book on Buddhism with Cambridge University Press, Ronnie Littlejohn publishes books on Daoism and Confucianism and writes numerous articles on Chinese philosophy, and there's Nancy Hume's volume on Japanese literature, Fay Beachamp's work with *Education About Asia*, and so forth. We wish we were able to give witness to and recognize each person's accomplishments, to celebrate all the good ASDP has fostered, but that would take far too long and would inadvertently neglect someone's profound accomplishments. The editors of this volume of essays, nevertheless, have assembled this book in this spirit of celebration not only of those included, but of those who bring Asia into their classrooms, who have committed themselves to the ASDP project, and have done so selflessly and in the spirit of service. Without this celebratory spirit there can never be community, family, or even much of an organization. Our wish for the ensuing years of ASDP is to continue the spirit of this collection and the ongoing celebration of each other.

Many in the ASDP network have become family to the two of us as well as to each other. Our collaborations abound whether they are co-coordinating workshops, editing books, writing articles, sharing pedagogical strategies and programs for our students (those beneficiaries of ours and what ASDP is about in a most significant way), or writing grants that supplement and complement the work of ASDP and its regional centers throughout the United States. None of these collaborations and associations we have with each other, or the love of friendship we now enjoy, would ever have emerged, amplified, or made this organization, this community, and yes, even this family, a more complex and interesting place as it naturally has become. Our hope for the future is that it may continue in meaningful and dynamic ways, ways that

recognize and embrace the complexity to which all successful and meaningful groups must realize before they unintentionally become moribund for failing to do so.

We've all arisen from some kind of family structure, have families of our own, and we all realize that for any family to function in appropriate, meaningful, and creative ways is that the growth of our children calls out for their autonomy and participation at a higher level of parity and respect. Our civility to each other, often lost even in the academic world where we would naturally expect its loss the least, is fundamental and crucial to sustaining the productive environment we've experienced in ASDP. Our hope is that this too may continue in such a meaningful way in the future.

As editors of this book of celebration of ASDP, we also realize the need to remain kind to each other. Kindness takes an effort at first until it becomes part of our natural way of being with each other. In large part, this is an integral part of the Buddhist project of compassion and lies at the heart of Confucian ritual propriety between members of a community. Such kindness is impossible if our haughtiness, arrogance, self-serving, and hubristic condescension come forth. ASDP, as is any organization of its nature, is moribund if we do not reflect consciously upon this gift that we are to each other, this gift that has emerged through the aging family we call ASDP and its intergenerational call and reach to the next generation of college and university professors.

Calling forth a future of compassion, civility, and celebration is what sustains any aging family, and this too is an aging family, the family we affectionately call ASDP. To prolong this family as a richly robust, vital, and dynamic community of more children, and yes, even grandchildren, we must always celebrate, be compassionate, and always remain civil. If we live long enough in this life, our eternal joy is to watch the grandchildren play, develop, and learn to love. We give them back to their parents when we retreat into our own worlds of habits and routines, knowing all is fine with the world we are leaving behind. Our wish as editors on this occasion of celebrating more than twenty years of learning and teaching about Asia is that we have left our institutions, younger colleagues, and most of all our students, better off than we found them. Families should get better over time, become more open to difference, and learn to teach love over hatred, respect over jealousy, and harmony over the assertion of self-gratifying agenda. A life without hope is simply no longer worth living. And this is our hope, a hope we imagine everyone shares in ASDP. But for hope to become manifest in meaningful ways it must exercise civility continually, remind the spirit of celebration to come forth, and be compassionate to each other.

The editors of this volume of excellent essays celebrate the Asian Studies Development Program community and the Association of Regional Cen-

ters of Asian Studies, an outgrowth that has contributed significantly to the articulated vision of ASDP and was founded by Joseph Overton, an academic visionary whose good will is superseded by no one. We express our gratitude to Elizabeth Buck and Roger T. Ames for their enduring commitments and indefatigable spirits to ASDP and its membership. This gratitude is extended to the new leaders of ASDP, Peter Hershock and Ned Shultz, with our hopes of a compassionate future of civility and respect for each other and that the spirit of celebration for each other will be summoned forth on many occasions.

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