

**AAS 2019 Annual Conference**  
**March 21-24, 2019**  
**Sheraton Denver Downtown Hotel**  
**Denver, Colorado**



**AAS PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS  
AND  
AWARDS CEREMONY**

**Friday, March 22, 2019 | 5:45pm-7:30pm**

**The Association for Asian Studies**  
**[www.asian-studies.org](http://www.asian-studies.org)**

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# *The Association for Asian Studies*

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## CHINA AND INNER ASIA COUNCIL

**YI LU**, *Harvard University*

“Proletarian Piracy: Culture of Reprints in Mao’s China”

Despite clear rules banning the unauthorized publishing of Mao’s writings and speeches, the Cultural Revolution saw an explosion of underground printing. Tracing the history of a single compendium of the Chairman’s words, Yi Lu’s elegant paper shows how state secrets became instruments of popular revolutionary fervor, analysis, and even profit. Pirated works imitated the very rules of state secrecy that their existence flouted. Exploring the information circuits of a society in turmoil, the paper sheds new light on the links between texts, revolution, and security.

**YIREN ZHENG**, *University of Chicago*

“Sounding the Ineffable: On Third-Century Chinese Whistling as an Alternative Voice”

Focusing on texts from the Six Dynasties period, this paper examines the practice of whistling, as both practice and metaphor. Combining close textual analysis with concerns developed within the contemporary field of sound studies, Yiren Zheng examines two seminal Six Dynasties texts on whistling, and convincingly argues that whistling, in these texts, is a fundamentally opaque practice, positioned at the margins of meaningful expression, but that this opacity may also be viewed productively, suggesting an alternative mode of expression and an alternative poetics.

**XUE ZHANG**, *Princeton University*

“How Knowledge Travels: The Distribution of Imperial Maps in Qing China”

Historical maps are often analyzed in terms of their content or the geographical techniques they embody. This paper considers eighteenth and nineteenth-century maps of what is now Xinjiang instead from the perspective of their materiality. Zhang explores the “social life of maps,” that is, how maps were produced and preserved and how they were shared, and viewed, in order to shed light on the circulation and restriction of geographic knowledge in the Qing.

Selection Committee: Carlos Rojas, *Duke University*  
Michael Szonyi, *Harvard University*

## NORTHEAST ASIA COUNCIL

**BENJAMIN R. YOUNG**, *George Washington University*

“Mobilizing the Masses: The Vietnam War and Welcoming Foreign Leaders in North Korea”

On the basis of in-depth and original archival research, Benjamin Young takes a fresh look at the connections between the two communist states in Korea and Vietnam at the onset of the Vietnam War. The essay offers new perspectives on little-known aspects of third world Cold War alliances—Kim Il Sung’s efforts to forge a

united front of socialist internationalism among other communist leaders and their people—through which to re-examine 1960s international politics. Young’s research has the potential to contribute to a deeper understanding of third world actors and their political maneuverings both nationally and internationally. The argument is presented in a clear and cogent style.

Selection Committee: Nayoung Aimee Kwon, *Duke University*  
Yoshikuni Igarashi, *Vanderbilt University*

## SOUTH ASIA COUNCIL

**MARIA-MAGDALENA FUCHS**, *Princeton University*

“‘Act in the Living Present’: The Anjuman-i Himayat-i Islam Lahore and the Quest for a Modern(ist) Islam”

Maria Fuchs has made highly effective use of the conference paper format through a case-study crafted with clear intellectual purpose in response to unresolved problems in the historiography. She uses the understudied Anjuman-i Himayat-i Islam (Society for the Defense of Islam) of colonial Lahore to reexamine the role of education in communal and national identity formation. The paper is rich in Urdu primary sources, buttressed by secondary materials in German and English, which are carefully woven into the overall analysis. Elegantly written, her work demonstrates as authoritative a grasp of small details as it does of their big picture implications.

Selection Committee: Srimati Basu, *University of Kentucky*  
Nile Green, *University of California, Los Angeles*

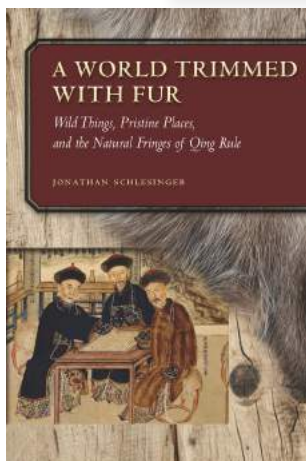
## SOUTHEAST ASIA COUNCIL

**DAT MANH NGUYEN**, *Boston University*

“Unburdening the Heart: Urban Youth and Buddhist Emotional Education in Contemporary Vietnam”

Dat Nguyen’s paper examines a form of therapeutic Buddhism being developed by urban Buddhist monastics in Ho Chi Minh City, and the resulting engagement with urban youth. Nguyen provides an intimate portrait of the tensions and angst suffered by young Vietnamese urbanites, showing that Buddhist institutions are adapting to respond to these young people as they cope with the everyday challenges, dilemmas, and uncertainties of contemporary life. Based on careful primary and secondary research, Nguyen’s paper makes a valuable contribution to understanding post-Đổi Mới Vietnam by documenting the attitudes and participation of urban youth, a comparatively understudied area of scholarship.

Selection Committee: Nam C. Kim, *University of Wisconsin*  
Oona Paredes, *National University of Singapore*  
Eve Zucker, *Yale University*



## JOSEPH LEVENSON BOOK PRIZE (Pre-1900 China)

**JONATHAN SCHLESINGER**

*A World Trimmed with Fur: Wild Things, Pristine Places, and the Natural Fringes of Qing Rule*

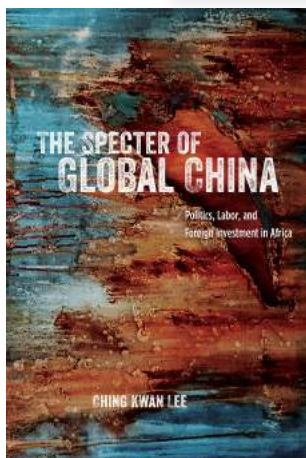
Stanford University Press, 2017

Schlesinger's remarkable book explores how the increasing demand for certain exotic natural resources transformed China and its northern frontier during the 18th-19th centuries, and eventually led to the invention of the concept of uncorrupted "nature." It vividly describes how the Qing state inadvertently created a booming commercial demand for items associated with Manchu status and identity, pearls, furs, ginseng, and mushrooms, and how its failed efforts to curb poaching and resource depletion transformed how the northeastern provinces were viewed and governed.

He integrates three fields of scholarship into a powerful, ground-breaking study, founded on meticulous archival work. It exemplifies the best of the New Qing History, with its use of archival sources in Manchu, Mongolian, and Chinese, which de-centers China while integrating it into a broader world. The work also provides a model for conducting borderlands history in East Asia, telling a vivid history from the margins. Finally, and most importantly, Schlesinger delivers a powerful environmental history that connects and resonates with developments elsewhere in the world during the 19th century and up to today, integrating China with trade networks that spanned all the way to Baja California. Schlesinger's engaging prose is beautifully crafted and at times quite evocative.

Honorable Mention: **Craig Clunas**, *Chinese Painting and Its Audiences*, Princeton University Press, 2017

Selection Committee: Anthony Barbieri-Low (Chair), *University of California, Santa Barbara*  
Janet Theiss, *University of Utah*  
Christopher Nugent, *Williams College*



## JOSEPH LEVENSON BOOK PRIZE (Post-1900 China)

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**CHING KWAN LEE**

*The Specter of Global China: Politics, Labor, and Foreign Investment in Africa*

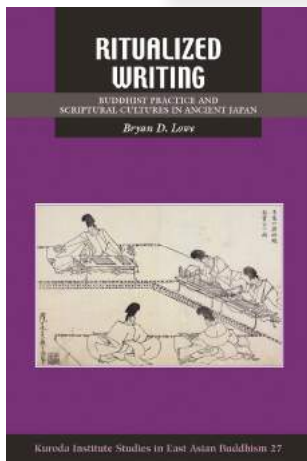
University of Chicago Press, 2017

Ching Kwan Lee's *The Specter of Global China* offers a brilliant analysis of a timely but mystified topic: Chinese investment in Africa. Supplementing her empirical, ethnographic research in Zambia with the rarest kind of theoretical sophistication, Lee makes the provocative claim that, contrary to popular perceptions, Chinese state investment in Africa does not represent a new form of colonialism and should not be analyzed as such. Instead of the moralizing framework of anticolonial critique, Lee seeks to understand what Chinese state capital actually does in the copper and construction industries. Lee distinguishes between private and state capital and compares their logic of accumulation, regimes of labor, and ethos of management. The result is a powerful reinterpretation of the "China difference" that sheds new light on the nature and future of global capitalism, on the one hand, and on China's political culture since the "going-out" policy, on the other.

Most impressive is how Lee combines ethnography with the theoretical study of capital as process, relation, and embeddedness instead of quantifiable economic units. This book is a true intellectual tour de force, full of rich ethnographic details and theoretical complexities. It is also a timely intervention in a number of contemporary debates that is bound to make waves in multiple fields beyond the author's own disciplinary home.

Honorable Mention: **Thomas S. Mullaney**, *The Chinese Typewriter: A History*, MIT Press, 2017

Selection Committee: Mei Zhan (Chair), *University of California, Irvine*  
Andrea S. Goldman, *University of California, Los Angeles*  
Petrus Liu, *Boston University*



## JOHN WHITNEY HALL BOOK PRIZE (Japan)

**BRYAN D. LOWE**

*Ritualized Writing: Buddhist Practice  
and Scriptural Cultures in Ancient Japan*

University of Hawai'i Press, 2017

Bryan D. Lowe's *Ritualized Writing: Buddhist Practice and Scriptural Cultures in Ancient Japan* provides vibrant and dramatic new understandings of Buddhist practice in the Japanese archipelago. His focus on sutra copying opens a new window on the "scriptural cultures" that united believers across region and class during the Nara period. Lowe's deep archival research into disparate collections of ancient Japanese Buddhist manuscripts (collections currently housed in Japan, other parts of Asia, and far beyond), and his careful attention to individuals from across the social, economic, political, and religious spectrums, enable him to weave a compelling narrative that will provide the foundation for scholarship on early Japanese Buddhism for years to come.

Selection Committee: Kären Wigen (Chair), *Stanford University*  
Karen Thornber, *Harvard University*  
Alan Tansman, *University of California, Berkeley*

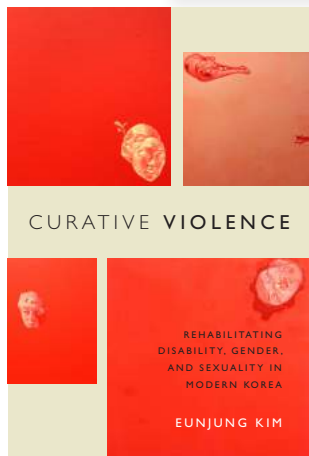


## JAMES B. PALAIS BOOK PRIZE (Korea)

### EUNJUNG KIM

*Curative Violence: Rehabilitating Disability, Gender, and Sexuality in Modern Korea*

Duke University Press, 2017



*Curative Violence* is a groundbreaking book that challenges our conventional understanding of cure or *ch'iyu* as a universal good. By exploring the intersection of cure and violence in modern Korea, Kim brilliantly unravels the heteronormative ideology that attends familial, communal, and national efforts to manage disability. The book reexamines “normalcy,” which has been constructed by numerous agencies, such as the state, media, professional societies, the family, and artists by employing a variety of sources, including Korean folktales, novels, films, media accounts, government policies, and activist practices. These cultural representations of disability and practices of rehabilitation demonstrate how “life with disability without violence” depends on negotiating the perception of cure across time and space.

Historically informed, textually nuanced, and deeply cognizant of the ethical and political implications of its own scholarship, *Curative Violence* is a pioneering book that will have a lasting impact on not only Korean studies but also transnational feminist disability studies.

Selection Committee: Jisoo Kim (Chair), *George Washington University*  
Hyaewool Choi, *Australian National University*  
Youngju Ryu, *University of Michigan*

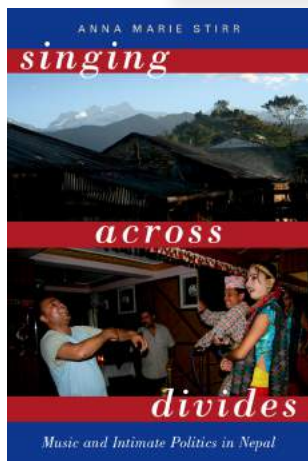
## BERNARD S. COHN BOOK PRIZE (First book on South Asia)

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ANNA MARIE STIRR

*Singing Across Divides: Music and  
Intimate Politics in Nepal*

Oxford University Press, 2017



Stirr's ethnography of Nepali *dohori* performance manages to take something quite ordinary—a rural Nepali singing tradition—and do something extraordinary with it: tell a highly readable story about gender, nationhood, political agency, honor, caste, identity, and rural-urban transitions. *Dohori*, in Stirr's telling, emerges as an anti-structural challenge to patriarchal marriage norms and caste endogamy. Stirr beautifully links quotidian concerns of love, sex, and marriage—particularly in the lives of non-elite Nepali women—to broad social forms around rural–urban migration, violence, and intimacy in Nepal, following the links formed among these subjects in *dohori* performance and its contexts.

From engaging the pleasure of shared music and the play of words to revealing the daring love that crosses many divides, Stirr stands both inside and outside the world she studies, fully engaging the dialogical nature of *dohori* in the very academic enterprise of the ethnomusicologist. Innovative in approach, bold in presentation, and lyrically delightful in composition, *Singing Across Divides* is a fitting recipient of the 2019 Bernard S. Cohn Book Prize.

Selection Committee: Christian Novetzke (Chair), *University of Washington*  
Azfar Moin, *University of Texas*  
Nathaniel Roberts, *University of Gottingen*

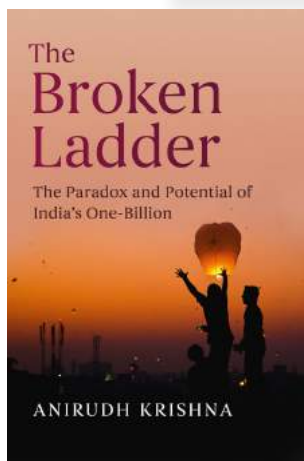
## A.K. COOMARASWAMY BOOK PRIZE (South Asia)

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**ANIRUDH KRISHNA**

*The Broken Ladder: The Paradox and Potential of India's One-Billion*

Cambridge University Press, 2017



Anirudh Krishna's *The Broken Ladder: The Paradox and Potential of India's One-Billion* wrestles brilliantly with one of India's most intractable problems: Why does poverty persist in the face of dramatic growth? Unfortunately, the "gravy train of globalization" has bypassed India's one-billion rural poor. Taking a worm's eye view, Krishna skillfully analyzes why democracy and infrastructure alone are not the answer to India's entrenched poverty. Discounting a one size fits all approach of development policymakers, he examines what ideas and policies may work in specific contexts. Local populations, he insists, must be empowered. Underinvestment in rural areas, along with ethnicized bias that assumes whole segments of the citizenry undeserving, must end. Role models and networks must reach deep into society.

Krishna is not a newcomer to the field of economic policies, and this work enlivens statistics with critical analysis of why certain ideas of development have failed. Methodologically diverse, the book is laden with rich ethnographic data that bring individual lives vividly to the fore, allowing the reader to understand the precariousness of lives on the edge. Anirudh Krishna, in short, has written a powerful book that forces the reader to stop, to think, and to re-imagine action. Readers will find this important book of relevance beyond India.

Honorable Mention: **Durba Ghosh**, *Gentlemanly Terrorists: Political Violence and the Colonial State in India, 1919-1947*, Cambridge University Press, 2017

Selection Committee: Barbara Metcalf (Chair), *University of California, Davis*  
Lamia Karim, *University of Oregon*  
Paula Richman, *Oberlin College*



## HARRY J. BENDA PRIZE (First book on Southeast Asia)

DOREEN LEE

*Activist Archives: Youth Culture and the Political Past in Indonesia*

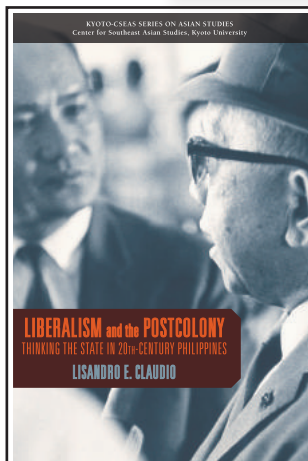
Duke University Press, 2016

*Activist Archives: Youth Culture and the Political Past in Indonesia* is an ethnography of the Indonesian student movement documenting the critical period in Indonesian history surrounding the fall of Suharto in 1998 known as “*reformasi*.” Doreen Lee gives us an intricate portrait of how young Indonesians recruit, organize, and transmit their message to an observing public and gain their sympathy. Her expanded concept of the “archive” is adapted from realities on the ground where oral histories taken from victims of violence are an important form of response to the lack of written archival histories and where she identifies ephemeral text messages, posters, resistance poems, and student demand letters as new forms of archival information.

The book examines how the movement’s historical self-consciousness – the sense that it had a history and was making history—shaped its actions, language, self-representations, and style. *Reformasi* memories permeate the contemporary moment, part of a living narrative, and a point used to compare the present to. This is a breakthrough in the study of the everyday lives of political activists and the role of young people in the struggle for justice, and is without question the most insightful account of the movement yet available.

Honorable Mention: **Jennifer Gaynor**, *Intertidal History in Island Southeast Asia: Submerged Genealogy and the Legacy of Coastal Capture*, Cornell University Press, 2016

Selection Committee: Celia Lowe (Chair), *University of Washington*  
 Patricio Abinales, *University of Hawai’i*  
 Tamara Loos, *Cornell University*  
 Geoff Robinson, *University of California, Los Angeles*



## GEORGE McT. KAHIN PRIZE (Southeast Asia)

**LISANDRO E. CLAUDIO**

*Liberalism and the Postcolony: Thinking the State in 20th-Century Philippines*

National University of Singapore Press,  
2017

*Liberalism in the Postcolony: Thinking the State in 20th-Century Philippines* offers an intellectual history of liberalism in the Philippines, told through the lives and ideas of four prominent Filipino liberals in government, academia, and international institutions from the 1920s to 1980s: Camilo Osias, Salvador Araneta, Carlos Romulo, and Salvador Lopez. The author tempers this litany of Manileño men with a beautifully wrought epilogue about Claudio's grandmother, a "fifth liberal." Claudio aims to relaunch liberalism—free markets, moderation, and democracy—as a focus of progressivism in an age of rising authoritarianism, with potential to create space for debate, reject violence, and oppose inequality. He argues that the value of liberalism as an alternative to its biggest foes, right-wing populism or left-wing Maoism, in the Philippines lies in its modesty, tolerance, practical effectiveness, and self-corrective character.

The book also features interesting and refreshing insights about global intellectual history. Well-crafted and lightened by sly humor, the book is noteworthy not only for its earnest, ambitious analysis, but also for the originality of its conception, the stylishness of its presentation, and the professional courage to mount a robust defense of this moderate political creed.

Honorable Mention: **James Rush**, *Hamka's Great Story: A Master Writer's Vision of Islam for Modern Indonesia*,  
University of Wisconsin Press, 2016

Selection Committee: Meredith Weiss (Chair), *SUNY Albany*  
Chris Baker, Independent Scholar  
Peter Zinoman, *University of California, Berkeley*

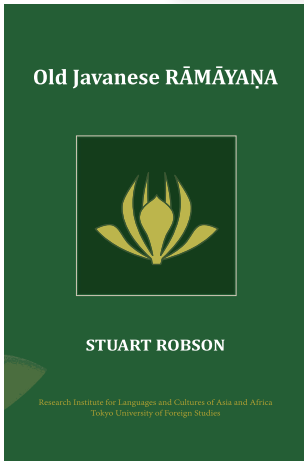
## A.L. BECKER SOUTHEAST ASIAN LITERATURE IN TRANSLATION PRIZE

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STUART ROBSON

*The Old Javanese Rāmāyana: a New  
English Translation*

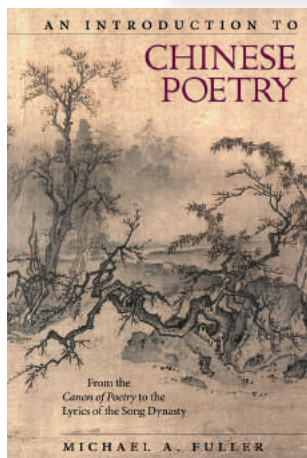
Tokyo University of Foreign Studies,  
2015



Stuart Robson's annotated translation, *The Old Javanese Ramayana*, is elegant and erudite in equal measure. Historian Merle Ricklefs, in nominating the work, wrote, with reference to one passage, that it "sings with precision, style, elegance, and indeed, poetry," and this could be said of the work as a whole. Indeed, this 800-page translation of an Old Javanese version of the Hindu epic, copiously annotated, can be described as monumental—a lifework capping off Robson's illustrious career teaching and writing about classical Javanese.

Translation from Old Javanese is scarce, and a work of this scale represents, in and of itself, a major contribution. The *Rāmāyana* has been adopted and adapted by several cultures in Southeast Asia, where it illuminates different local articulations of political leadership and ethical and moral norms; it has been an important vehicle for artistic and musical expression there. This translation calls attention to the richness of the Southeast Asian tradition as well as providing the means for scholars from across Southeast Asia to conduct comparative study. Robson's translation conveys the scale of the original work while also bringing to life its poetry in ways which, we believe, will capture the imagination of students as well as scholars.

Selection Committee: Nhung Tuyet Tran (Chair), *University of Toronto*  
Thak Chaloemtiarana, *Cornell University*  
John Marston, *El Colegio de México*



## FRANKLIN R. BUCHANAN PRIZE FOR CURRICULAR MATERIALS

**MICHAEL A. FULLER**

*An Introduction to Chinese Poetry:  
From the Canon of Poetry to the Lyrics  
of the Song Dynasty*

Harvard University Asia Center, 2018

Michael Fuller's *An Introduction to Chinese Poetry* is a well thought-out teaching tool for upper-level high school students and college undergraduates. Particularly noteworthy is the four-part format Fuller uses to present his exemplary selection of poets and poems. The original Chinese poem is coupled with a word-for-word translation which, while giving insight into the structure of the language and the poetry, is rudimentary. Fuller then offers his "technical" translation, rendering the discrete pieces into natural English verse. Finally, he compliments his technical translation with a "polished" translation by a poet-translator. With this format, Fuller not only introduces the reader to various Chinese poets, but he also gives an instructive glimpse into the craft of translating, highlighting the choices translators make when rendering a meaningful translation.

The book's supporting materials provide crucial context through robust explanatory footnotes, penetrating study questions, and background on the poets and the language in which they wrote. Although focusing on Chinese poetry specifically, Fuller's book also serves as primer on poetry itself as a genre of literature. Fuller's decision to arrange the book chronologically (rather than thematically) highlights both consistency and innovation in Chinese poetry, and allows him to discuss, in informative chapter introductions, the literary contexts of particular eras.

Selection Committee: Patrick Hughes (Chair), *University of Pittsburgh*  
Jared Hall, *Hotchkiss School*  
Duane Johansen, *University of Illinois*  
Arnold P. Kaminsky, *California State University, Long Beach*  
Lynn Parisi, *University of Colorado*  
Emily Rook-Koepsel, *University of Pittsburgh*



**SYLVIA JANE VATUK**

Professor Emerita at *University of Illinois, Chicago*



Sylvia Vatuk studied Anthropology at Cornell, SOAS, and Harvard, and then had a long and prolific career at the University of Illinois, Chicago.

Beyond the academic excellence of her work, Sylvia's most significant contributions come from the subjects she has chosen to explore. Throughout her career, she has demonstrated a willingness to take risks and to go beyond conventional disciplinary norms. One of her former students called Sylvia "a visionary in continually re-imagining the potential scope of anthropological field work in India." Undeterred by binaries of North and South, Hinduism and Islam, folklore and law, Sylvia pioneered the study of urban anthropology, kinship, marriage, and old age in India, as well as the nexus between religion and law—always with an emphasis on understanding the lives of women. A superb ethnographer, she is equally at ease in the archives.

Sylvia is renowned for her generosity as a teacher, a mentor, and a colleague. Dynamic in the classroom, she instilled in beginners a love of anthropology, demanded intellectual rigor in graduate seminars, and untiringly mentored doctoral students in a wide range of fields. Sylvia has been an exceptionally supportive colleague to many academic newcomers, especially women. She is "extremely open to learning from, and collaborating with," scholars "many years her junior," explained one of them. Sylvia's grateful former students and junior colleagues span the globe.



**MICHAEL PASCHAL**

Executive Director at *Association for Asian Studies*



Executive Director Michael Paschal will retire on March 31, 2019, concluding 23 years of service to the Association for Asian Studies. Raised in Nebraska and California, Michael attended the University of California, Davis, and earned a master's degree in International Studies (East Asia/Japan) at the University of Washington. From 1974 to 1978, Michael lived in the Netherlands, where he met his wife, Gerda; they have two sons, Ian and Lucas.

Prior to his arrival at the AAS Secretariat in Ann Arbor, Michael's diverse career included time as a furniture designer and craftsman, an apprenticeship studying stringed instrument design and repair, a year teaching English in Japan, and a stint on staff at the Japan Foundation in New York. He joined the AAS in 1996 as Associate Director, then assumed the role of Executive Director four years later. During his tenure at the AAS, Michael has overseen a significant expansion in the association's size and scope. He has ensured that the organization remains true to the mission of its founders even as it changes, and has led the AAS with a calm assurance that keeps the association on an even keel.

As Michael enters retirement, the staff, Board of Directors, and members of the Association for Asian Studies wish all the best to him and his family.

ANNE FELDHAUS

*Arizona State University*  
AAS President, 2018-2019



***Biography as Geography***

Geography is central to the 13th-century Marathi biography entitled *Lilacharitra*. In 1,000 lively episodes, this text records detailed recollections of the deeds and words of Chakradhar, a wandering holy man whose followers see him as an incarnation of the one and only supreme God. The text identifies precisely, in minute detail, the places where Chakradhar sat, ate, slept, and stayed. Geography is also crucial to the framing of each chapter and to the structure of the text as a whole. Indeed, whatever chronological order can be found in the *Lilacharitra* depends largely on geography.

One key to understanding this is Chakradhar's mobility. The text traces his travels: what routes he took, where he stopped, and how long he stayed in each place. It also chronicles the comings and goings of other people who interacted with him: wandering ascetics, itinerant cloth merchants, horse traders, married women, soldiers, government officials, and Chakradhar's close disciples, as well as a number of people who were powerfully attracted, but less firmly committed, to him. The *Lilacharitra* thus portrays Chakradhar's world as one of nearly constant motion, with people, objects, and messages traveling back and forth and around and around in a complex network.

My talk will demonstrate the *Lilacharitra's* geographical structure and analyze the network of travel and communication it portrays. I will also attempt to explain why geography and mobility are so prominent in Chakradhar's disciples' memories of him and to ask what this tells us about other life stories, including our own.

SEE YOU IN 2020!

**2020**  
**AAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE**  
**BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS**  
**MARCH 19-22, 2020**





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