

## ABOUT THIS VOLUME

Planning for this volume began in 2019 with support from the Association for Asian Studies (AAS) and with inspiration from Krisna Uk, AAS Director of Special Initiatives. Discussions and planning continued in earnest throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The early stages of the project involved workshops and roundtables with scholars and activists. In early 2020, a competitive request for proposals from regional scholars was announced, and a committee of senior scholars was established to review and rank the proposals based on merit and an eye for representative coverage. The authors of the accepted proposals were invited to a workshop hosted at Syracuse University in May of 2021. In total, nine drafts, by a total of fourteen authors and coauthors, were presented and each collected feedback from professors Lynette Ong (University of Toronto) and Dimitar Gueorguiev (Syracuse University). A subset of the presenters was invited to submit their drafts for consideration as chapters in this volume.

Volume contributions went through a rigorous peer review and editing process, including two rounds of external peer review whereby two anonymous reviewers evaluated and commented on each contributing chapter as well as on authors' revisions in response to first-round comments. The review process resulted in several of the submissions being declined. One contribution was withdrawn during the revision process. Throughout the production process, authors had opportunities to present and reconnect with fellow contributors, including at two organized sessions held during the AAS-in-Asia conference in August 2021 and the annual AAS conference in March 2022. These events were well attended, and participants benefited from generous comments and questions from the audience.

Volume contributors also had to deal with a rapidly changing, and often deteriorating, research environment. Consider the fact that during the period between conceptualizing and completing this volume, several monumental developments have raised the threat level not only within individual countries or regionally but also globally. A National Security Law (NSL), imposed by Beijing on Hong Kong in 2020, effectively extended China's reach concerning academic

censorship well beyond its borders, resulting in a chilling effect for scholars, teachers, and students both inside and outside China's administrative boundaries. A 2022 memorandum from India's Ministry of Education now requires all public universities to get prior approval for international conferences or seminars touching on a range of subjects considered to be "sensitive." The deteriorating environment even impacted a chapter on India intended for this very volume, which was withdrawn late into the review process due to academic freedom and safety concerns in a prominent Indian university. While the Indian case proved to be uniquely challenging in our own production efforts, new threats to academic freedom have cropped up across the region.

Keeping up with these developments, while also having to deal with the repercussions of a closing intellectual space, was challenging for the contributors to say the least. Their efforts, courage, and sustained communication as a group and with the editor was far greater than what might typically be expected in an edited volume. As the editor, I must extend a deep debt of gratitude to the contributors for their patience, commitment, and perseverance. The final product represents the culmination of those investments and interactions by providing a thorough, timely, and integrated collection of chapters and analyses. I also thank the AAS for envisioning and facilitating this project, the Open Society Foundations for sponsoring it, the Scholars at Risk Network for engaging it, and the anonymous reviewers and the community of scholars for advising on and steering the volume to completion. While the final product is far from a complete or definitive survey of emerging threats to academic freedom across Asia, it will hopefully spur awareness and informed conversation on what can best be described as inflection point in the state of regional scholarship and on what may come next.

*Dimitar D. Gueorguiev*