

. . . this edition is comprised of short, often dramatic and easily absorbed readings on history, aesthetics, religion, social life, economy, and political institutions ranging from speeches, official documents, and political analysis, to autobiography and other forms of literature, both traditional and modern.

ence and the resolution of its post-independence travails. This vision is made explicit in Nehru's own words in *Through Indian Eyes* via a few key primary source selections. However, students also encounter visions of India other than Nehru's, such as Gandhi's morally-inspired opposition to the industrial path favored by the secular and socialist Nehru, and the Hindu fundamentalist convictions that account for Gandhi's assassination and continue to roil Indian politics. As the text roughly equates Indian identity with both Hinduism (*dharma*) and citizenship in the Republic of India, to some degree it marginalizes Muslims and some non-elite, anti-nationalist conceptions of Indian society. However, no comparable work offers greater or more sympathetic treatment of Muslims in South Asia (including Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India) or the subcontinent's *dalits*, or dispossessed.

Like earlier editions, this edition is comprised of short, often dramatic and easily absorbed readings on history, aesthetics, religion, social life, economy, and political institutions ranging from speeches, official documents, and political analysis, to autobiography and other forms of literature, both traditional and modern. Most sources are written by Indians and each includes a succinct editor's introduction. Several selections take the form of a conversation, inner dialog, or newspaper editorial. The most effective address the issues of caste, dowry, and arranged marriage, and have long been of great value in drawing out student discussion of these significant issues. Equally valuable are selections offering opposing viewpoints or examining the divergent treatment of issues in Indian and non-Indian textbooks; these offer excellent opportunities for student skill development through textual analysis.

The greatest change in the fifth edition is the addition of material on the process of increasing globalization that traces India's voyage from victim of neo-colonial market forces and investment patterns (the Bhopal Tragedy), to its late rise as an outsourcing and software giant, to the most recent development: the Tata Group's purchase of a British corporation that makes India the world's third largest producer of steel. This event constitutes the current high-watermark of India's rising status in the New World Order.

Given the great utility of *Through Indian Eyes* as a classroom resource, each chapter, regrettably, does not offer end-of-chapter study questions. These would provide instructors and their students with directed learning opportunities and offer closure for those chapters that end without suggestive analytical or concluding remarks from the editors.

*Through Indian Eyes* has for many years been a valued tool for

approaching Indian civilization. In the past, it provided an intimate, as well as coherent, portrait of traditional and contemporary society on the Indian subcontinent. It still does. However, the fifth edition's fresh material on developments in India since 2000, including fuller discussion of India's adoption of neo-liberal economic principles and treatment of India's accelerating role in the world economy, has raised its status from timeless treasure to timely resource. ■

MARC JASON GILBERT (PhD, UCLA) is the holder of the National Endowment for the Humanities Endowed Chair in World History and Humanities at Hawai'i Pacific University.

## Gender, Sexuality, and Body Politics in Modern Asia

### *Key Issues in Asian Studies, No. 1*

BY MICHAEL PELETZ

ANN ARBOR: ASSOCIATION FOR ASIAN STUDIES, 2007

120 PAGES, ISBN: 978-0-924304-50-7, PAPERBACK

Reviewed by Jan Bardsley

This informative booklet by Michael G. Peletz, *Gender, Sexuality, and Body Politics in Modern Asia*, can serve as the model for this Association for Asian Studies series. An accessible, well-argued text, the booklet will aid instructors in taking up sensitive and often controversial issues in their undergraduate and advanced high school classrooms. Most importantly, students will learn that sexuality, gender, and body politics are not fixed, not somehow "more natural" in one location than another, and not to be taken for granted. They will see that approaching modern Asia through this lens not only sheds light on the experience of Asian people, but also makes students aware of their own beliefs as having a history. Certainly, this booklet can engage students in questioning the politics and power of definition itself.

In fewer than one hundred pages, Peletz takes on three topics: "Dynamics of Gender and Sexuality," "Bodies, Pleasures, and Desires: Transgender Practices, Same-Sex Relations, and Heteronormative Sexualities," and "Bodies on the Line." He explores each theme with examples that vary across countries in South, East, and Southeast Asia, using as his references the most influential scholarship in English. While Peletz guides his reader to see certain commonalities in regions in Asia as created by geography, religion, colonial experiences, global markets, and so on, Asia does not emerge as a monolith. Indeed, one of the many strong points about the booklet is the way Peletz manages to focus and develop his thematic essays in a lively way while offering such variety.

In the "Introduction," Peletz invites his reader to consider issues involved in defining Asia as well as gender, sexuality, and sex. Chapter Two, "Dynamics of Gender and Sexuality" introduces the concept of gender ideologies, showing how they are often inflected, legitimized, and naturalized through religious practice, familial structure,

The broad scope and the questions raised here set the stage for students in Asian Studies classes to take an in-depth look at the issues through novels, articles, films, and visual materials.

and labor practices. Discussion extends to new technologies such as the boom in cosmetic surgery and the use of medical technologies to favor the birth of boys. Chapter Three, "Bodies, Pleasures, and Desires" illustrates "the divergent . . . ways in which genders, sexualities, and bodies are aligned and combined in 'traditional' and 'modern' context." Here, the author's explanation of the influence in Asia of modern Western scientific discourse, especially sexology, and its notions of pathology, provides a striking example of the power of definition. Chapter Four, "Bodies on the Line" provides sobering accounts of prostitution, AIDS, militarization, rape, trafficking, and abduction. The "Conclusion" offers possible scenarios of the future and hints at how Asian nationalisms play a key role in today's definitions of gender, sexuality, and body politics.

The broad scope and the questions raised here set the stage for students in Asian Studies classes to take an in-depth look at the issues through novels, articles, films, and visual materials. (See Suggestions for Further Reading at the end of the booklet). In addition, the book could be effectively used in classes on global issues, such as AIDS, showing how the epidemic has been understood, and dealt with in Asia, again provoking questions about the politics of definition. ■

JAN BARDSLEY is author of *The Bluestockings of Japan: New Woman Essays and Fiction from Seito, 1911–16* (Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Japanese Studies, 2007).

The Association for Asian Studies (AAS) plans to publish two to three "Key Issues" booklets each year. Potential forthcoming titles include: *Caste in India*, *Traditional China in Asian and World History*, *Understanding East Asia's Economic Miracles*, *Global India Circa 100 CE*, *Korea in World History*, and *Japanese Popular Culture and Globalization*. For further information, please visit [www.aasianst.org](http://www.aasianst.org). If you have questions about "Key Issues" or have suggestions for topics that would be useful in your teaching please contact "Key Issues" Editor, Lucien Ellington, at [l-ellington@comcast.net](mailto:l-ellington@comcast.net).

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