

Editorial

Welcome to the second volume of the Irish Journal of Asian Studies (IJAS).

This issue consists of papers submitted and presented at the very successful first annual conference of the Irish Association for Asian Studies (IAAS), which was held in Dublin City University on 17th and 18th June 2016. It was jointly organised by IAAS and the School of Applied Language & Intercultural Studies at Dublin City University (DCU), and in particular, I would like to thank Dr Ryoko Sasamoto (DCU) who coordinated this event. It provided a much needed platform for lively discussions amongst Irish and international scholars from interdisciplinary fields related to Asia on the conference theme, which was ‘commemoration’.

The first article by Adrian Tien provides an interesting exploration of what it means ‘to commemorate’, from a Chinese and English linguistic point of view. It problematises the term often used to translate the idea in Chinese, *jì niàn* 紀念, suggesting it may be a modern Chinese appropriation of the western idea, also suggesting that is at variance with the way Chinese people ‘practice’ commemoration. Tien engages with Natural Semantic Metalanguage to explore the differences between other possible translations of the verb ‘to commemorate’, evoking cultural connotations that are specific to the Chinese usage, influenced by ancient traditions such as Confucianism and Daoism.

Seán Golden’s article “Commemorating the anonymous: British imperialist discourse in China and its backlash among the Irish”, captures the juncture of British imperialism in China and in Ireland. We encounter familiar names such as Sir Herbert Giles, the famous sinologist, who, it appears, was as condescending towards the Chinese as he was to the Irish. Golden’s paper highlights the Irish involvement in many key historical events in China and brings alive the Irish figures in this story. Golden has also uncovered anonymous Irish accounts of the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864), and while providing accounts of the Irish as victims of colonial powers, he also demonstrates their complicity in China. For example, George Macartney (1737-1806), who aided the implementation of British imperialistic strategies in China, while describing the people there as “semi-barbarous”, which in itself would lead to philological arguments around the use of such terms.

Till Weingärtner draws on his own rich experiences as a performer of Japanese comedy, and of rakugo in particular, to explain various ideas about commemoration in regards to the comedy culture of Japan. Using the Japanese master of comedy, San’yūtei Enchō, as a point of reference, Weingärtner’s article illustrates how this great master is used to commemorate rakugo’s illustrious past, while influencing new performers, but also gaining new fans in the process via modern TV shows. The second part of his article looks at the specific case of the Osaka Prefectural Museum of Kamigata Comedy and Performing Arts (Wahha Kamigata). It highlights the museum’s importance for the cultural heritage of the region, but also depicts how it is threatened by the cultural politics of politician Hashimoto Tōru, notorious for his insulting comments about the ‘comfort women’, victims of institutionalised rape by the Japanese military during the Second World War.

Naoko Hosokawa examines the language used to express different notions about Japan's regional and national identity by carrying out original empirical analysis on recent media discourse. She focuses on how the relationship between Japan and Asia can vary depending on two key phrases that she pinpoints: Japan is either included/remembered as part of Asia, as in (1) 'Asia such as Japan', while alternatively excluded from Asia in expressions such as (2) 'between Japan and Asia'. Her research posits that these different 'regional' and 'national' identities are linked to socio-cultural and economic/political considerations, reinforcing a key point in this paper that 'Asia' is more than a geographical classification.

Ryoko Sasamoto's article investigates the inter-generational popularity of Yokai-Watch, a cross-media product, while focusing on the popularity of its TV anime series. The author engages with the shows multimodal intertextuality to explain 'how' the show has accrued such a wide diversity of fans, while also drawing on Relevance Theory. This explains how the recovery of certain 'ad hoc' memories links viewers of the same generation by making use of their mutually manifest assumptions, while also providing enough relevance for younger viewers who cannot draw on prior presumptive cultural links, yet the show achieves relevance by tapping into their own cognitive habitus.

Allan C. Simpson has reviewed the Korean novel, *Chǒngk'ŭ* (정크), by author Kim Hyena, which has yet to be translated into English. Simpson explores how the novel deals with marginalised characters whose (queer/homo)sexualities are compromised by oppressive and anachronistic South Korean societal norms. Constantin Holzer's perspicacious review of *International Business Ethics – Focus on China* by Stephan Rothlin and Dennis McCann, emphasises the authors' ability to draw on the religious and philosophical principles of many traditions, both Asian and non-Asian, while relating them to cross-cultural management and business matters.

This issue has drawn together a heterogeneous collection of papers relating to the theme of commemoration from scholars working in many areas, utilising many approaches and theoretical frameworks. It also reinforces the importance of the international IAAS conference, which afforded the opportunity to bring such varied expertise together in Ireland, while also highlighting the wealth of expertise that exists in Ireland (or related to Ireland), evident in the articles collected here.

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