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INTRODUCTION TO INTRA-ASIAN NETWORKS

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The meaning of "region" and "regional integrity" is currently changing greatly because of globalization. In the same way, the meaning of Asia is also changing greatly because of the tendency to re-emphasize localization under globalization. Global history studies explore Asia in the context of inter-regional interactions rather than the previous East–West dichotomous comparison. Local Asian studies, on the other hand, are raising agenda regarding their indigenous entities to enable their local regions as a unit to deal with inter- and intra-regional perspectives.

According to these different ideas, and through the layers of regions and regional networks, the idea of Asian regions are being reshaped in the course of a number of new research trends in regional studies. First, perspectives of regional studies are being combined with those of global and local history studies, such as Globalizing South China, by Carolyn Cartier (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001) and Recalling Local Pasts, edited by Sunait Chutintaranond and Chris Baker (Bangkok: Silkworm Books). These perspectives allow us to reinterpret previous ideas about regions which have tended to be rather exclusive and indigenous by placing them within the historical globalization process.

Second, maritime history studies and long-term historical perspectives have given us a new understanding of the regions of Asia by looking at regional networks, trade, migration, and cultural exchange in the maritime arena, which is very different from a land-based power structure and from a nation-state-based historiography. Such studies include *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce 1450–1680* by Anthony Reid (Yale University Press, 1988) and *The Resurgence of East Asia, 500, 150 and 50 year perspectives*, edited by Giovanni Arrighi, Takeshi Hamashita and Mark Selden (Routledge, 2003), which discuss intra-regional networks through a multi-dimensional perspective of the regions of Asia.

Third, Asia can also be discussed in terms of intra-cultural networks. *How Does Asia Mean? Yazhou Yiwei zhao Shenme: Wenhua jian de Riben* by Sun Ge (Taipei: Juliu, 2001) attempted to place Japan in terms of intra-Asian cultural relations, while *Where China Meets Southeast Asia, Social and Cultural Change in the Border Regions*, edited by Grant Evans, Christopher Hutton, and Kuah Khun Eng (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 2000) discusses cross- and inter-regional relations.

"Intra-Asian Networks", the special theme of this issue, focuses on various aspects and different perspectives of intra- and inter-Asian networks, and we will continue this direction of discussion in following issues.

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