

Announcement

## UPDATE ON *ASIAN ETHNOLOGY* (FORMERLY *ASIAN FOLKLORE STUDIES*)

Benjamin DORMAN

*Co-Editor, Asian Ethnology*

The Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture is pleased to announce that from 2008 it has assumed editorial and institutional responsibility for *Asian Ethnology*, the journal formerly known as *Asian Folklore Studies*. For many years, this journal was produced by the Nanzan Anthropological Institute, and the final issue with the name *Asian Folklore Studies*, a Festschrift honoring the achievements of former editor Peter Knecht, s.v.d., was published in 2007 (vol. 66, nos. 1 & 2). The Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture is proud to have the opportunity to oversee the journal through the next stage of its career.

The journal was founded under the name *Folklore Studies* by Austrian ethnologist Matthias Eder, s.v.d., in Beijing, China in 1942. The name was changed to *Asian Folklore Studies* in 1963, and after Eder passed away in 1980 Peter Knecht took over the editorship. For some time before his retirement from Nanzan University in 2006, the future direction of the journal was an important subject of discussion among members of the Institutes, the university administration, and interested parties outside the university.

Once the decision was made to bring the journal under the purview of the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, the members of the Institute worked to establish an editorial team. Benjamin Dorman, now a Permanent Fellow of the Institute, co-edits the journal with Scott Schnell, an anthropologist based at the University of Iowa who has been closely associated with the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture and the Nanzan Anthropological Institute for a number of years. He has acted as guest editor for two special issues of *Asian Folklore Studies*, in addition to contributing articles and book reviews.

Though rendered entirely in English, the journal draws manuscript submissions from across Asia, Europe, and North America. Topically, it occupies

a special niche located at the intersection of Anthropology, Folklore, and Asian Studies. The journal will continue to bring the important work of Asian scholars (that is, scholars of Asian nationality) to the attention of an English readership.

One of the first decisions the editors took, after careful deliberation, was to change the title of the journal from *Asian Folklore Studies* to *Asian Ethnology*. The journal will still be published twice yearly and volume numbers will continue to run consecutively: thus, the first issue of *Asian Ethnology*, scheduled for publication in June 2008, will be vol. 67, no. 1.

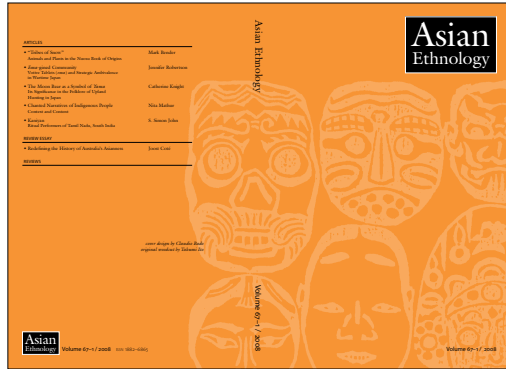
Replacing the words “folklore studies” with “ethnology” in the journal’s title obviously represents a significant change. Various concerns have been voiced over the term “folklore,” including such issues as its past associations with nationalisms of various kinds.<sup>1</sup> While the editors are aware of these issues, they did not play a significant role in the ultimate decision to change the name. They felt that the new title more accurately reflects the kind of research and the range of topical categories the journal has actually presented in the past, and the directions it will take in the future.

In remaining open to contributions from scholars everywhere, the journal will maintain its peer-review policy, and the editors have extended the range of referees for submitted manuscripts. The journal receives approximately sixty-five to seventy submissions annually, with a final acceptance rate of approximately twenty-five percent. Special care and attention are given to submissions by scholars at earlier stages in their careers.

The collaborative relationship between Nanzan University and the University of Iowa has many potential benefits, including a simultaneous, long-term presence on both the Asian and North American continents (for the purposes of promoting the journal at academic conferences and recruiting worthy manuscripts from potential contributors), and an ongoing cooperative exchange relationship to facilitate research and scholarship at both institutions.

Thus, *Asian Ethnology* is a peer-reviewed journal dedicated to the promotion of ethnographic and ethnological research on the peoples and cultures of Asia. The editorial policy is as follows:

1. For differing perspectives on related issues, see, for example, the articles in the special issue of *The Journal of American Folklore* vol. 111, no. 441 (1998).



*Asian Ethnology* publishes formal essays and analyses, research reports, and critical book reviews relating to a wide range of topical categories, including:

- ✧ folklore
- ✧ popular religious concepts
- ✧ vernacular approaches to health and healing
- ✧ local ecological/environmental knowledge
- ✧ collective memory and uses of the past

The Institute is pleased to announce that the following scholars have agreed to act as editorial advisors to *Asian Ethnology*:

Richard Bauman, *Indiana University*  
 Clark Chilson, *University of Pittsburgh*  
 Hiroko Kawanami, *Lancaster University*  
 Laurel Kendall, *American Museum of Natural History*  
 Frank Korom, *Boston University*  
 Roald Maliangkay, *Australian National University*  
 Anne E. McLaren, *University of Melbourne*

*Asian Ethnology* continues our open-access policy: all articles appearing in the journal, dating from the most recent issue all the way back to the first volume of *Folklore Studies*, are freely accessible online at:

[www.nanzan-u.ac.jp/SHUBUNKEN/AsianEthnology](http://www.nanzan-u.ac.jp/SHUBUNKEN/AsianEthnology)

The inaugural issue (67/1) contains articles on:

- ✧ Votive tablets (*ema*) and “improper thinking” in wartime Japan (Jennifer Robertson)
- ✧ Animals and plants in the Nuosu *Book of Origins* (Mark Bender)
- ✧ Chanted narratives of the Santhal (Nita Mathur)
- ✧ The moon bear in the folklore of upland hunting in Japan (Catherine Knight)
- ✧ Ritual performers of Tamil Nadu, South India (S. Simon John)

The second issue (67/2) will be guest-edited by Laurel Kendall of the *American Museum of Natural History* and is entitled “The Sacred Life of Material Goods in Contemporary Vietnam.”

*Asian Ethnology* is already an established academic journal with a substantial worldwide readership. Under the auspices of the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, and with the cooperation of the University of Iowa, the editors plan to extend its reach and influence as one of the major international outlets for ethnographic and ethnological research on the peoples and cultures of Asia.