

# RELOCATION OF *ASIAN ETHNOLOGY*

Benjamin DORMAN

*Nanzan University Anthropological Institute*

**A**FTER A NUMBER of years at the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, *Asian Ethnology* returned to the Nanzan University Anthropological Institute in April 2017. I transferred from the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture to the Anthropological Institute as a senior research fellow and continue to edit the journal.

In July 2006, Peter Knecht officially retired from the Anthropological Institute and from his position as editor of *Asian Folklore Studies*. At that stage, there was no one at the Anthropological Institute who could take over, edit, and manage an international English-language journal. Given this situation, the Institute for Religion and Culture agreed to accept the journal with the understanding that once the Anthropological Institute was again in a position to host the journal, it would move back to that institute. The Institute for Religion and Culture's decision to accept the journal proved to be crucial to the journal's progress in the years that followed.

From 2007, I became acting editor of *Asian Folklore Studies* while continuing duties as associate editor for that journal and the *Japanese Journal for Religious Studies*. The following year, with the support of the members of the Institute for Religion and Culture, I was able to take up a permanent position at Nanzan University, with the primary responsibility of editing the journal. At the same time, I negotiated with Scott Schnell, professor of anthropology at the University of Iowa and long-term supporter of *Asian Folklore Studies*, to join me as co-editor.

When we began the co-editorship in 2008, we decided two specific goals: (1) to make the journal fully peer-reviewed using the double-blind review system; (2) to change the title of the journal from *Asian Folklore Studies* to *Asian Ethnology*. We did not take the decision to change the title lightly. We were, of course, aware of the political issues and academic debates surrounding the use of the term "folklore," especially in Europe and North America, but these had little bearing on our decision. Rather, we felt we needed a title that was more representative of the kind of research and scholarship the journal had long embodied, situated at the intersection of anthropology, folklore, and Asian studies. We firmly believed that folklore—as narratives, performances, and other forms of cultural expression and representation—would continue to occupy a prominent

position within the journal's contents. I am pleased to note that the journal still publishes work that would fall within these definitions of "folklore."

In addition to establishing the co-editor system, we established an international editorial board. The board members have changed over the years but their contributions have had an important impact. As with the *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, the journal has established a pattern of publishing regular special issues on particular themes. The volume and quality of submissions has increased significantly over the years. Scott Schnell retired from the position of co-editor in 2011, but he retains an active role in the journal. His replacement, Frank J. Korom, professor at Boston University, also has a long history with the journal, having published with *Asian Folklore Studies* and then serving as a board member of *Asian Ethnology*.

The advice of the members of the Institute for Religion and Culture has been invaluable in terms of developing *Asian Ethnology*. In expressing my gratitude to all the Institute staff for their understanding, encouragement, and support, I also wish to acknowledge the contributions of some members in particular. Former permanent fellow James Heisig helped with the design and development of templates for *Asian Ethnology*. Paul Swanson offered pertinent advice on all aspects of journal management. David White, associate editor of *Asian Ethnology*, deals with many of the technical aspects of the journal's production. He has also developed the book and film review section into a very robust and vital part of the journal, and has worked to expand the presence of the journal internationally by forming strong ties to academics and publishers. I look forward to working with him in the future, and collaborating with other members of the Institute for Religion and Culture in producing high quality academic publications.

*Asian Ethnology's* editorial team will continue to apply the same rigor to our review process as in the past, and we will continue to bring you innovative and interesting articles and reviews of both books and films in the years to come. We hope to expand the journal's vision by incorporating new and innovative ways of disseminating the journal's contents, as well as by adding supplementary materials, such as occasional interviews with authors, short notes and queries, reports on conferences, and so on.

Finally, on behalf of the editorial team, thank you for your ongoing support and readership.