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Editorial Foreword: Welcome to *JAH-Q*

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As Japanese universities continue to internationalize and change in tandem with internal and external forces, the impetus for English-language publications created by and for Japanese institutions has grown. Japanese universities have an increasing number of permanent and visiting faculty whose mother tongue is not Japanese, classes taught in English, Chinese, Arabic, German, French and other languages, and students from all corners of the globe. *Journal of Asian Humanities at Kyushu University (JAH-Q)* was conceived in this environment and for several reasons.

The Faculty of Humanities at Kyushu University, both undergraduate and graduate (School of Letters, Graduate School of Humanities), is retooling the curriculum to accommodate changing student profiles while maintaining a core curriculum of premodern and modern courses in four areas: Philosophy, History, Literature, and Human Sciences. To nurture Japanese university faculty members' changing outlooks and respond to pressures to strengthen their ties with the global academic community, *JAH-Q* was born. We hope it will demonstrate the diversity of Asian humanities research, the strength of humanities scholarship at Kyushu University—and in Japan more broadly—and

stimulate discussion and publishing opportunities in a wide range of humanities topics concerning an equally wide swath of cultures and nations in Asia.

The “Asian” in Asian Humanities is used with full cognizance of recent critiques of area studies, disciplinary ambiguity (in both “Asian Studies” and the “Humanities”) and the difficulties of defining a place or space called “Asia.” At the same time, the “Q” in *JAH-Q*—a frequent abbreviation for “Kyushu” around campus and around Japan—is for this editor and her colleagues a sign of expansion and inclusion (the circle) as well as an invitation to a new or divergent path (the tail). Kyushu’s historical position as a gateway to and from Asia informs *JAH-Q*’s viewpoint of Asia, but that viewpoint is not Kyushu- or Japan-centric.

Asked to establish this peer-reviewed journal, the faculty of the International Master’s Program (IMAP) in Japanese Humanities solicited and crafted articles on topics of Japanese and Chinese humanities. The essays in volume one of *JAH-Q* were penned by IMAP faculty, participants in IMAP conferences, and an IMAP graduate student. In the future we will broaden our range of contributors and readers. This first volume of the journal bears the thematic title *Envisioning History*. Each article deals in some way with the writing or rewriting

of history, especially the veracity of widely assumed biographies, viewpoints, or facts, and also reflections on context and agency in history.

Van Goethem and Reiter take up historical texts, documentation, and ritual practices in studies of site selection and site divination, and Daoist exorcism, respectively. In the former, the natural habitats of the four directional deities are linked to trees and other landscape features that allow for substitution. These links are strengthened through associations between seasons and directions, the native cultural and geographic origin of a plant, and other features of a site's context. In the latter essay, certain Daoist priests serve as substitutes for divinities through transformation; unlike in spirit possession, the priest's knowledge enables him to adopt a divine alter ego through self-transformation. These two studies touch on ritual reformulation that is part of historical transformation and manipulation. The practices of agents leave historical traces that are incorporated into future practices and histories. These studies of two widely misunderstood subjects (site divination and Daoism) make valuable contributions to the field.

Matsuda and Zhou take up created histories in reverse gear. Matsuda argues that Shinzei, the best known disciple of arguably the most famous Buddhist master in Japanese history, Kūkai, augmented the respect and fame the master had garnered among court and clergy in the last decades of his life. Shinzei's actions, Matsuda convincingly argues, were taken not only to honor his teacher but "were intended to generate political and cultural capital for himself in the turbulent years immediately following Kūkai's death." Zhou tackles a similar reformulation of history in her study of the significance of the Chinese master Ganjin. She argues that his earliest biographers set in motion a process that led ultimately to their master's designation as founder of the Ritsu school during the Kamakura period (1185–1333). Zhou reminds us that the attributes of Ganjin found in many popular works—and still lingering in scholarly studies—are recreated attributes with histories of their own.

DeWitt and Kochinski discerningly observe history and its agencies. DeWitt excavates parallel histories at Mt. Ōmine, pairs them with current practices, and calls attention to the practice of "gendered exclusions" from religious sites. The exclusion of women from sacred mountains is an active cultural issue and political debate that has long historical roots. She shifts away

from assumptions regarding the timeless quality of the mountain's traditions to an examination of how those assumptions truly manifest in women's and men's current practices at the mountain, making an original contribution to the scholarly literature. Kochinski investigates the ontological status of Japan's kami, a history-in-the-making of great magnitude. She builds upon the recent work of Japanese religions scholars in her examination of *jingūji*, combinatory worship sites. She adds an important emphasis to the scholarly discourse in terms of *kami* relations to human agency and the buddhas. Hers is not just another consideration of agency in history; she brings voice, initiative, and mutually constituting effects to our envisioning of *kami* in the history of Japanese religions by emphasizing the power of the oracular and the visionary to impel human action.