

Introduction to The One Asia Foundation and its Cooperation and Peace-Making Project

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Volume 20 Issue 2 (June 2018) Editorial 1**Asunción López-Varela Azcárate,
"Introduction to *The One Asia Foundation and its cooperation
and peace-making project*"**<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol20/iss2/1>>

Contents of **CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture 20.2 (2018)**
Thematic Issue ***The One Asia Foundation and its cooperation and
peace-making project***

Ed. **Asunción López-Varela Azcárate**<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol20/iss2/>>

Asunción LÓPEZ-VARELA AZCÁRATE**Introduction to *The One Asia Foundation and its cooperation and peace-making project***

Today, Asia is one of the most important areas in the world. While Asian groups share significant historical and social characteristics and affinities, they also have many diverse aspects. The aim of the One Asia Foundation is to make these similarities and differences known across the world in order to encourage a culture of dialogue, integration and peace; a forward-looking process for stability, mutual support, democracy and prosperity. This special issue of CLCweb is framed within the approach of the One Asian Foundation, a non-governmental institution that seeks to establish educational communities that to promote cross-cultural cooperation.

There are always constraints that prevent cooperation among regions and nations. One more the most important is economic differences, with some nations dominating international markets. There are also external conflicts as a consequence of territorial borders, and internal ones due to ethnic, economic and cultural differences amid regions within nations. In order to enable connections between nations, the One Asia Foundation has drawn a road map to build a peaceful Asian Community. Actions are first taken at individual level by means of forms of bilateral cooperation established in universities and higher education institutions across the world. From this perspective, the establishment of cross-cultural ties within the Asian Community and across the world concerns a collectivist approach which surpasses geographical and spatial national boundaries, demolishing barriers and walls, fostering inter-culturalism, and promoting tolerance amid differences. Such approach presupposes interdisciplinary angles that

include insights from anthropology, cultural studies, history, education, sociology, political science, economics, and so on.

The One Asia Community takes as model the European Union, a multiethnic, multilingual and multicultural community of twenty-eight countries and more than 500 million people who work together for mutual benefits and harmony. In the case of Asia, the aim is even more ambitious because such a community would involve over more than 44 billion people, that is, almost half of the population of the world.

Guided by a vision of peace and partnerships, the One Asia Community is open to all people, irrespective of nationality and ethnic origin. It pursues complete freedom of thought, belief and religion, and requests of its members not to be involved in political activities. For example, among the courses established by the Foundation, there are many in Chinese national universities, in spite of the sometimes-difficult Sino-Japanese relations, and the differences between the political systems of the two countries. The same can be said of the many universities that teach the One Asia program in Korea.

Chairman Yoji Sato, founder of the One Asia Community has the dream of demolishing three walls: the wall of the Self, the wall of the organization, and the wall of the nation. "Humankind has procced through all history and finally arrived to the present day while building strong egos, strengthening businesses and organizations, nations and races" (Sato 5). Breaking these walls means to move beyond personal, corporate and national interests in order to embrace communal goals. "In the future, all 7.3 billion people on this planet will reach harmony and end conflict [...] while helping and cooperating with one another" (Sato 17). This means to overcome a "world of egos" and become a "world of people", a "One Community."

If the sociological method that tries to investigate humans completely from the outside is properly and thoroughly applied, it will be clearly seen that the individual cannot be found anywhere. Even though I recognize this, I still use the word 'I'.

I think we should once again think about the fact that we are forced to use it. If every time the word 'I' is uttered we try to think about the world that is directly experienced by this I, we would no longer be able to doubt that a different way of thinking –a completely contradictory way of thinking- is necessary.

It is about seeing what this is like. Even if we dream of unity through compromise between society and the individual, without doing this, we will never awaken.

(Kobayashi "Kojin to shakai" –The individual and society", cited in Sato 43)

Thanks to the active support of the One Asia Foundation, professors and experts from hundreds of universities around the world are engaged in activities that seek to expand the vision of an Asian community towards a world community. Held annually in various Asian regions (Tokyo 2011, Incheon 2012, Bandung 2013, Jeju 2014, Shanghai 2015, Phnom Penh 2016, Nagoya 2017), the One Asia Convention advances the process of Asian harmonization and unification, serving also as a forum for the exchange of experiences coming from the different educational programs that the One Asia Foundation is founding across the globe. Under the three principles of its activities (for vision and

principles, refer to <<http://www.oneasia.or.jp/en/foundation/idea/index.html>>), people from all nationalities and ethnicities are welcome. The One Asia pursues complete freedom of thought and religion, and no involvement in politics. The activities and forums led by intellectuals and civil societies in the non-political sphere are an arena for discussing pending issues of Asia and the rest of the world in order to find out ways to overcome common obstacles. The One Asia does not pursue a locally closed community. It aims at all of the world becoming a community with a common fate.

Under Sato's inspiration, to have "an educational platform in every university in the world [...] a place where young students can hold onto dreams and hopes for the future" (Sato 35), the One Asia Foundation conducts activities and provides research, networking and educational opportunities to teachers and university students, future citizens who can create new ways of peaceful co-existence. Lectures and in-class discussion introduce students to the problems of today and help them in searching for solutions. The advantage of these learning groups with different backgrounds is that everyone can bring their own unique perspective, inclusive and respectful. Face-to-face interaction is also important because in distance learning and online teaching responsibility towards the community is not so easily developed. In-class problem-solving provides a way of making the educational experience more productive and relevant. Working in groups, students learn to establish short term goals with brief cycles of trial and error and, thus, overcome their fear of failure. Goals are then built into an overall framework or system that include activities in the real world.

The papers collected in this thematic issue offer additional insights to those presented in "The One Asia Community in Cross-Cultural Dialogue with Europe", a course taught at Complutense University Madrid, Spain where students are trained in intercultural relations between Asia and Europe. The first paper "Innovations in Self-Consciousness. Towards Oneness with the World" by Soon-ok Myong and Byong-soon Chun present additional insights to the philosophy of the One Asia Foundation in order to suggest ways of self-innovation from an anthropological perspective. The authors argue for the need to dissolve the strong egos that make up the organization of nations and institutions and seek forms of transitional self-consciousness that enable altruistic cooperation among human communities.

The cultural background of most Asian societies did not recognize the world of the individual self, traditionally conceptualized in pantheistic terms as part of a universal divine substance from which the individual is never a fully independent. To a certain extent, it can be said that western colonialism introduced the sense of individualism in Asian communities. In *The History of Sexuality*, Michel Foucault asserted that the affirmation of the self in western culture came forth by means of the political manipulation and separation of classes, with the bourgeois being cared for, protected, cultivated, and separated from other class dangers. This isolation was initially retained as differential value, and gradually became cherished individuality (Vol 1: 123).

"China's Logic of a Confucian Holistic World Order" by Huiyong Wu traces the cultural differences between the western world and China, as well as their impact upon politics, economic relations and culture. In particular, it focuses on China's political ideal, based on Confucian moral ethics, which emphasizes inter-subjectivity over the individual subjectivity, and which holds a strong vision of communal respect, a vision somehow in conflict with the Western tradition that places individual freedom

above everything else. The paper goes on to present current initiatives like "the Belt and Road" by means of which China is promoting this logic of "A Community with a Shared Future", put forth by President Xi Jinping, a new world order that directs itself towards collectivist approaches and the ideal of demolishing barriers and walls, fostering inter-subjective approaches and inter-culturalism, promoting tolerance amid differences, and a culture of dialogue and peace.

China's efforts to seek a new model to international world order passes by a number of concrete strategies, such as the creation and support to the "Belt and Road" initiative which reinvents the cultural impact of the ancient Silk Road in order to enhance tourism and revitalize cultural and creative industries. In his paper "Cultural Industries in China and their Importance in Asian Communities", Qingben Li presents the framework for the development cultural and creative industries in China and stressing the importance of this model for the nation's economy and the recuperation of deprived areas.

Expanding this topic, Ainura Kurmanaliyeva, Nurlykhan Aljanova and Mira Manassova write about the Silk and Road project in "The Marginocentric Cultural Features of Cities along the Great Silk Road in the territory of Kazakhstan." The authors show how some of the marginal cultural features of cities along the Silk Road can become 'central' to the country's economy. The paper focuses on the city of Otrar, a space described by chroniclers as being "about one day's journey in all directions", birth-place of philosopher and scientist Al Farabi, whose works can be said to tend a bridge between Eastern and Western philosophical and political systems.

The revival of the Silk Road is not just an economic project for the Republic of Kazakhstan. The civilizations and cultures that emerged in these territories are of importance in order to unveil the common heritage of the Eurasian continent and the connections with Europe. The United Nations first suggested and promoted the implementation of the Great Silk Road revival in its 1993 General Assembly, contemplating it as important channel of the international cooperation in diplomacy, culture, science, trade, tourism. In 1988, the project "Integral study of the Silk Roads: Roads of Dialogue" was adopted by UNESCO, scheduling an extensive and detailed study of the history of this ancient route in relation to the formation and development of cultural relations between East and West, and the improvement of connections and international cooperation between the nations of the Eurasian continent.

Along the same lines, expanding the theme of inclusion of minorities and marginal groups, the paper "On the Culturalization of Ethnic Economy in China" by Liu Yi and Xiao Jia-Yan mentions the impact of cultural and creative industries in the development of ethnic areas in China. The paper argues that culture can afford the most efficient pathway for these ethnic areas in terms of economic transformation and development, since economic progress can be made by the culturalization of human resources, industries, enterprises, products and institutions. Interestingly, one of the ethnic regions mentioned in the study, the Yunnan area, was likely the point of origin for the migration of some ethnic groups towards Malaysia and Indonesia in previous centuries.

Indeed, the Dayak people, studied by Lugman H. Zainuri in his paper "Dayak Lundayeh: A Report from the Border," are one of the indigenous communities in Indonesia. They live in the border between Indonesia and Malaysia in Borneo Island. Although separated by a national border, the Lun Bawang of

the Kelalan Valley and the Lun Dayeh of the Bawan Valley have similar cultural patterns and kingship ties. The paper stresses the importance of preserving traditional cultures, helping their integration by means of education and the development of cultural and creative industries in marginalized ethnic areas.

Cultural aspects are also important in shaping consumer patterns and forms of commerce. The paper "Differences and Integration of Consumer Cultures between China and Western Countries and their Impact on the Recovery of Ethnic and Marginal Areas", by Shi Yan, analyzes conflicts and differences from the perspective of consumption habits and patterns, and studies the characteristics, existing problems and attitudes towards the integration of China and western consumer culture. The final part of the paper addresses the problems of the integration of marginal ethnic areas in China by means of the development of structures of cultural industries that might include new forms of consumption, helping in the development of these areas.

China launched its large-scale poverty reduction campaign in 1986. It has continued to alleviate poverty by means of relocating poor population, utilizing assert income, small-scale public welfare courses, and awards and subsidies, among other methods. LinHua Guo writes about the "Trust Mechanism, Cultural Difference and Grameen Bank's Regional Poverty Reduction Practice", showing how the banks' philosophy, based on trust mechanism that includes the provision of loans to women, supervised by teams of five persons, monitored frequently and with a weekly repayment method, can be successful in China. The paper shows how the Grameen model has unique advantages in poverty reduction. It also shows how the trust mechanism is effective in supporting cooperative institutions.

In a different line, "Educating in Tolerance in Kazakhstan," a paper by Shamshiya Rysbekova, Ainura Kurmanaliyeva and Karlygash Borbassova, considers the problem of education in tolerance amidst young people in the Republic of Kazakhstan. The authors unveil some of the controversies and problems encountered with regards to the prevention of terrorism and extremism, and illuminate the efforts of Kazakhstan for international transparency. The paper begins with a revision of Kazakhstan law on matters of religious freedom, religious groups, and religious education, and goes on to present some of the external reports elaborated by various sources such as the United Nations, the European Community, or the United States.

Idham Badruzaman also explores tolerance and peaceful integration in "Collective Memory in Advocating Peace. The Nanjing Incident as a case study." The paper explores Chinese and Japanese efforts for reconciliation after the incident, a describes the different acts carried out: publishing a book about Nanjing, building the National Memorial Hall, Annual Commemoration, setting up the National Memorial Day, registering the inscription to UNESCO, establishing the Peace and Research Institute, and eventually registering the city of Nanjing to become the city of peace. The paper explores the forms of public recollection and the efforts to create such a collective memory of the Nanjing Incident in the spirit reconciliation.

Reconciliatory forms of self-narrative is the topic of I-Chun Wang's paper "Personal Geography, Floating Identities and Inter-Asian Migration in Stories by Migrant Workers in Taiwan." Here, the consciousness of the authors, in this case migrant workers, imagines a thematic structure where the speaking subject strives to come to term with his/her identity. These semi-fictional, semi-

autobiographical accounts become conjectural documents for the development of individual subjectivity projected in discourse, but a strategy to articulate their experiences of violence, oppression, human trafficking and so on. The act of writing helps the narrator to come to terms with those experiences that problematize the relationships between society and migrant, as well as between the public and the private spheres of the protagonists. The borderline condition of these narratives causes them to challenge and question the legitimacy of hegemonic semiotic codes (including discourse as well as other types of sign systems such as images) and power structures of society. As well as their floating identities, the paper also explores the possibilities of integration and the ways through which these migrant workers map their own personal geographies.

The recognition of differences while promoting discourses of cross-cultural understanding that open up futures with a common horizon is one of the fundamental reasons why the One Asia Foundation sustains its academic dialogues and courses across the world. Thus, the paper by Xiana Sotelo "Differences and Similarities in the Discourse of Equality in Cross Cultural Academic Dialogues Europe-China" provides a brief historical background to Chinese feminism and compares it to European positions on gender studies. The paper argues for the need to recognize intersectional and regionalized narratives of equality as a guaranty of ethical transnational communication beyond Eurocentric approaches. Sotelo shows how discourses of equality, similarities and differences are constantly in motion under socio-cultural negotiations, and defends the need to situate ourselves in the world of others, reaching harmony by dissolving our strong egos, as Chairman Yoji Sato claims.

In the same line, exploring gender issues, Korean scholars Seohyeon Lee and Soon-ok Myong analyze the life of Korean women divers, *Jeju Haenyeo*, portrayed in the news articles of the *Maeilshinbo*, the only Korean newspaper during Japanese occupation (1910-1945). Their paper "Portraits of *Jeju Haenyeo* as Models of Empowerment in the Korean Newspaper *Maeilshinbo* during Japanese Occupation" shows how the *Haenyeo* can be seen as emancipatory pioneers and economic agents, displaying initiative and protecting their rights and interests by organizing a democratic decision-making body. From a proto-feminist perspective, the lives of *Haenyeo*, declared UNESCO World Intangible Cultural Heritage, can function as models of empowerment to contemporary women.

The last paper in the volume, "The subversion of East and West in Orhan Pamuk's novel, *The White Castle*", by Adile Aslan, also provides a hindsight to the unprecedented westernization of Turkish society and the efforts to consolidate a "one nation-one language-one culture" which the author characterizes as a case of internalized colonization. Orphan Pamuk's novel captures these tensions and makes visible the problematization of polarities such as East and West.

More and more countries all over the world recognize the need to align Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) practices with values, needs and social expectations allowing to identify and deliver solutions to social challenges. In this process, education is a fundamental aspect that engages a wide range of civil stakeholders. The One Asia Foundation is aware that the ethical dimension of activities undertaken to improve society needs to be taken into greater consideration. Significant intercultural disparities prevent social advance towards conflict resolution, whether economic, political, armed, etc. Thus, the Foundation establishes courses throughout the world to encourage intercultural dialogue, the

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understanding of differences, commitment to help low-performing countries in educational innovation as well as networking instruments for academics, students and other social actors. The programs bring outstanding scholars to universities in those countries who have the potential to increase high quality human resources and implement structural changes necessary to achieve excellence and the introduction of RRI in education. The Foundation introduces specific measures for spreading excellence by engaging academics in a constant exchanges across a wide range of institutions in many countries, promoting formal and informal forms of educational innovation implementation and problem solving attitudes. In this way, the Foundation helps build on a huge potential of networking for excellence through knowledge transfer and exchange of best practices between participant institutions and partners.

The present volume, presents a range of topics introduced by the One Asia Foundation in its educational programs. Overall, the collection contains an interesting group of papers that explore the impact of Social Sciences and Humanities upon the well-being of the world in the twenty-first century, and following the vision of the One Asia Foundation, pursues the maintenance of world peace and the encouragement of initiatives to foster increasing cooperation at all levels.

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