

Editor's Note

Influenced by changing Asia, traditional Asian studies are facing new challenges both in research objectives and methodologies. At the same time, whereas the paradigm of previous regional histories of Asia was constructed according to divided spaces vertically layered from the world to local regions with nation states as main foci, it is also changing into newly emerging regional combinations such as world-local relations, region-maritime relations, and so on, which had been out of traditional historians' scope, under the influence of widely diversified perspectives of global history studies.

In other words, nowadays historians might say that they are witnessing a new world and a new historiography which are departing from traditional historical research objectives centered on nationality and ethnicity which has lasted for several centuries until the end of the Cold War period and even after. Under these situations, one of the peculiar fields of Asian history studies is newly emerging research field on Asian "empires," based on discussions different from previous economic and political histories' points of view.

In this number we edited a special issue on "new approach to 'empires'." Here we can find new historical subjects concerning "empires" characterized by strong ties of local networks crossing over national and ethnic boundaries, and we will also discover discussions on "empires" beyond dynastic entities, beyond center-periphery relations, and beyond colonial-empire relations from new reinterpretation of contemporaries' perspectives. These works will create wider space of new historical research on Asian "empires," which will also correspond with European scholarship on new interpretation and comparison with European and Western "empires" in world history.

Hamashita Takeshi
Chief Editor,
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