

## EDITORIAL

We are glad to present the second issue of *QUEST*.

It is exceedingly difficult to define *Asia* with any precision. There is no such thing as Asian religion, or Asian culture; there are only Asian religions and cultures in the plural. Whatever the words may refer to, they are highly heterogenous. In this issue of the journal, we are pleased to see that six articles have made it through the rigorous peer-review process. This collection of articles, as we expected, varies in subject matter and research methodology, and the authors are from very different backgrounds, re-presenting the plurality of Asia. In terms of nationality, the authors are from six regions—Hong Kong, Indonesia, Taiwan, Vietnam, South Korea, and the USA. They are from five research fields—art history, systematic theology, social sciences, feminist studies, and comparative religion—writing on cultural and religious phenomena in four countries. The differences are huge, but their common concern is apparent. All their researches engage with the social and/or cultural impact that religions are having in Asia. Moreover, three out of the six authors are boundary-crossing. Their articles discuss religions in cultures not their own, which might help the advancement of a community as proposed by Graham Ward, that is, a community, in our case an Asian one, found in a space that transcends places, walls, and boundaries. We are particularly grateful for their contributions.

The first article, written by Andrea Chen, sets out to ask a very fundamental question that problematizes a long-held belief in the field of *Jing Jiao* study of the Nestorian Crosses. It asks, “Are these so-called Nestorian Crosses part of the Mongolian Nestorian heritage?” Hers is an art historical approach, which is quite innovative in the field concerned, and could well lead to a paradigm shift. From a Catholic perspective, Bernardus Agus Rukiyanto proposes some models of faith formation he sees as an integral part of evangelization. He attempts a proposal that is on the one hand faithful to the Catholic tradition, and on the other relevant to the highly pluralistic context of Indonesia. He contends that faith formation must be ecumenical, dialogical, inculturated, articulate a solidarity with the poor, and be ecological. The third article is written by Chih-yu Shih, a distinguished professor in Taiwan, and a social scientist specializing in China studies, political psychology, and cultural studies. His paper attempts an exploration of, and comparison between, the political-philosophical foundations of a particular contradiction in United States’ interventionist policy and Chinese non-interventionist policy, and argues that religions have a crucial role to play in the differences. Ngoc Bich Ly Le’s paper is boundary-crossing—a Vietnamese studying women’s struggles for leadership in religious institutions in Indonesia. To offer a sociological explanation of the way women have achieved a good level of advancement in leadership in Toraja Church, she launches an empirical study into the relationship between agency and structure. William H. Sewell’s theory of structural transformation and Sherry B. Ortner’s theory of agency are adopted. Guydeuk Yeon’s paper is also boundary-crossing. Yeon is a south Korean, now serving as director of the Innovation Centre at Christ University in India. His paper is on the spirituality of young people. His method is empirical, and his findings reveal the validity of an idea proposed by Nicholas Cook: “Through a combination of pitches, rhythms, timbres, durations, and dynamics, music can unlock the most hidden contents of one’s spiritual and emotional being.” The author of the sixth article is a white American from Texas. His name is David Bell, although he prefers a Chinese-looking name, Bei Dawei. Fascinated by the mysticism of Asia in general and buddhism in particular, Bei has been teaching and doing research in Taiwan for many years. Comparative religion and philosophy are among his research interests, and Bei’s paper is an examination of the interreligious encounter between two religious groups in Japan in the early twentieth century.

Here in this issue, we miss another brotherly name—Dr. Glenn Shive, the founding co-editor of *QUEST*—who has recently retired from the post of Vice President for Programs, United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia (UB). Without him, *QUEST* would not have appeared. This issue of the journal welcomes a new co-editor, Dr. Angela Wong. Wong is a world renowned Asian feminist theologian. She retired as a professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and now serves as Vice President for Programs, UB.

*QUEST* welcome submissions—research papers and book reviews—that span the full spectrum of religious, cultural, theological, and interdisciplinary studies on the cultures and religions of Asia. We wish to receive your manuscripts in 2018. As we said in the editorial of the inaugural issue, “may we all learn as we share our views and our experiences with each other.”

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