

# 2003 Vol 3 Issue No. 01 — Gender In Asia

> EDITORIAL



This issue of *Transformations* has its origins in a seminar conducted at Central Queensland University, Rockhampton, in 2001. The aim of the seminar was to bring together a number of researchers whose projects overlapped around the issue of gender, but whose disciplines were not necessarily the same or even closely related. By bringing the work of scholars from diverse areas including history, education, art history, geography, cultural studies and environmentalism, the seminar tried to spark interactions which otherwise would not have occurred, to produce new ideas and make new connections.

The Gender in Asia issue of *Transformations* consists of articles, which raise a diverse range of issues related to the way gender is both produced and utilised in power relations within different contexts in what might loosely be described as 'Asia'. The term 'Asia' means both a geographical space and an imaginary inscription in and across that space, connected globally to other spaces as well. The papers in this issue reflect the need to think of Asia in these terms.

The article by Mark McLelland entitled '["A Mirror of Men?" Idealised depictions of White Men and Gay Men in Japanese Women's Media](#)', examines the complex relations between

different representations of male sexuality in a specifically gendered Japanese media. Andrea Ash's article '[Asian women artists: a local and global perspective](#)', looks at images of women as a globalised production of female sexuality, overrunning the conventional boundaries of East and West. In his article '[On the Forest Fringes?: Environmentalism, Left Politics and Feminism in Japan](#)', Mike Danaher examines the emergence of a certain environmentalist discourse in Japan connected to the feminist movement. The article implies significant differences between Japanese and Western political affiliations in the environmental movement, and through its historical account of Japanese politics, suggests how these differences might be better understood. And finally, Than Than Nwe's article entitled '[Gendered Spaces: Women in Burmese Society](#)' examines the paradoxical place of women in Burmese society. Again, the article allows us to see more clearly the differences between gender identities in various contexts, and provides a basis for a more nuanced understanding of gender in a globalising world.

In their own way, the articles in this issue of *Transformations* allow us to see gender in its differentiated forms, spread across contemporary globalised mediascapes. Each form has its own specificity, in terms of a history, a sociality, and an economic and political reality, all of which contribute directly to the making of a specific gender relation in a particular 'Asian' context. The lesson here is that we need to understand gender as a complex productivity, unstable, contingent and historically locatable, yet powerful in its representation of human relations as well.

Warwick Mules

February 2003