

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

DECEMBER 3, 2022

Columbia University, New York, NY

Dear All,

It is an honor to present our second issue of the *Columbia Journal of Asia* (CJA). Volume I, Issue 2 features fourteen creative and scholarly pieces by undergraduates and recent graduates from across the United States and Europe, presented in three sections: creative works, which include art, poetry, and prose; notes, which are brief academic essays; and articles, which are long-form research papers. These works, which span history, political science, literature, and the arts, illuminate narratives of revolution and resistance across borders—from student activism in colonial Burma, to the defiance of Chinese settler colonialism in Tibet, to comparative ideas of Socialist revolution across Asia. We believe that this is a crucial academic and artistic intervention, one that allows us to move beyond colonial-era portrayals of Asia that deny Asian subjects political agency, and to envision solidarities between Asian communities (and communities outside of Asia) across language, religion, and national borders.

Officially launched this Spring, CJA remains the first and only undergraduate publication at Columbia to focus on Asia and the Asian diaspora. When we first imagined up our journal a year ago, we saw the need for a space that would center Asian histories and narratives without creating a silo. Wary of casting our narratives as purely supplemental to the Western academic and literary canon, which is troublingly limited in its existing form, we worked to shape CJA as an inclusive platform and community. Our journal, and the stories held between its covers, are defined not by the absence of Asian narratives in Western academic and artistic circles, but by the integral role they play in broader global and transnational contexts—particularly in narratives of resistance and revolution, featured in this issue. Excitingly, CJA was able to launch a Guest Speaker Series this semester to carry this mission beyond the page, hosting Indian novelist, literary critic, and classical musician Amit Chaudhuri for a reading of his newest novel *Sojourn*, and Columbia University history professors Susan Pedersen and Isabel Alonso for a moderated conversation about historical memory and the ‘colonial era,’ taking as its point of departure the British monarchy and decolonization over the twentieth century.

Our many initiatives this semester reflect the combined efforts of a brilliant team of undergraduates, graduate students, faculty, and Columbia community members. We would firstly like to thank our Managing Editor, Jacqueline Yu, and our Director of Peer Review, Karuna Vikram, who have been with us since our editorial board was a six-person team and our journal little more than a developing idea. We are also so

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grateful for our amazing editorial board of Columbia and Barnard undergraduates, including our articles editors, creative editors, production editors, and outreach team, and to our graduate peer reviewers from Columbia University, Harvard University, Yale University, New York University, and other peer institutions, who put in such hard work this past semester to provide edits on all notes and articles. Finally, we would like to extend our deepest gratitude to the members of our faculty advisory board—Professors Manan Ahmed, Isabel Alonso, Neferti X.M. Tadiar, Manijeh Moradian, Jungwon Kim, and Timsal Masud. Their scholarship and insights have been invaluable to us, and they have also been incredibly kind to lend their time to joining our Speaker Series and other new initiatives.

The both of us—alongside Jacqueline and Karuna—are incredibly proud to be passing on the torch of our inaugural leadership with the publication of this issue, marking the completion of Volume I. We look forward to supporting this journal—and its larger mission—as it continues to grow in new and exciting ways. Thank you all immensely, and happy reading!

Mrinalini Sisodia Wadhwa CC'24 and Suan Lee CC'24

Co-Founders and Editors-in-Chief, *Columbia Journal of Asia*