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978-1-107-08208-3 - Sites of Asian Interaction: Ideas, Networks and Mobility

Edited by Tim Harper and Sunil Amrith

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Sites of Asian Interaction

Ideas, Networks and Mobility

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Preface

These essays appeared originally as a special issue of *Modern Asian Studies* in March 2012. We are delighted that Cambridge University Press, India, have decided to republish them in book form. As the introduction mentions, the collection originated at a workshop in Dubai in February 2008, funded by the Social Science Research Council. It was one of twelve structured around the theme of 'Inter-Asian Connections'. For most of us at our workshop, it was a first meeting and a first encounter with Dubai. The time, place and circumstances – travellers chance-met in a caravanserai, as it were – spoke eloquently to our theme of 'Sites of Asian Interaction', and generated what was, for us, a particular exciting and fresh discussion. We are grateful to everybody who took part in the meeting: both to our authors and to C. J. Wee Wanling and Engseng Ho. For the journal issue we solicited new contributions by Chua Ai Lin and Carolien Stulte, whose research illuminates the diversity of the 'sites' of interactions in exciting ways. For this edition, we have added an essay by Tim Harper, which also first appeared in *Modern Asian Studies* in November 2013, and which was very indebted to the workshop. All the essays are reprinted here with the kind permission of *Modern Asian Studies*, for which our warm thanks go to its editor, Joya Chatterji.

These essays capture a moment in a continuing, broadening debate over how, and by what paths, ideas travel across Asia and how they are reshaped by myriad encounters along the way. For this reason we have not attempted to embellish or update the original chapters for this volume. But it is a pleasure to reflect that conversations begun in Dubai have been carried forward into other collaborations and publications. We would like to acknowledge all those who have been a part of our project on 'Sites of Asian Interaction: Networks, Ideas, Archives', at the Joint Centre for History and Economics at Cambridge and Harvard since 2010. The project emerged out of the Dubai workshop and was made possible by a grant from the Isaac Newton Trust. Throughout, we have been hugely indebted to Emma Rothschild, under whose programme on 'Exchanges of Economic, Legal and Political Ideas' the project falls; to Inga Huld Markan, for her support; to Amy Price, for her work on the website; and to Natasha Pairaudeau for helping to take the

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endeavour forward. Finally, we are deeply grateful to Debjani Mazumder and Suvadip Bhattacharjee of Cambridge University Press, India, for their hard work and enthusiasm in making this edited volume possible.

Tim Harper
Sunil Amrith