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From the Editors

We, the Global COE program "Reshaping Japan's Border Studies," [1] are pleased to announce the founding of a new academic journal devoted to border studies here at Hokkaido University. This journal aims to integrate the scholarly expertise of Eurasia including Japan. There are some leading associations which publish scholarly journals such as the *Journal of the Borderlands Studies* of the Association for the Borderlands Studies (ABS), the *Boundary & Security Bulletin* of the International Boundaries Research Unit (IBRU) of Durham University, and Border Regions in Transition (BRIT). However, these associations are mostly based in Europe and North America.[2] In contrast, however, there is no comprehensive and qualified journal on border studies in Asia and the former Soviet Union.

It is true that Russia and India have some institutes and journals that partly cover border-related issues, particularly at academies and universities located in the border regions, and China has the pivotal Beijing-based center of China's Borderland History and Geography Research of the Chinese Academy of Social Science. However, most border studies on/around Eurasia, though very active, have been fragmented within a country or a region with little interaction beyond Eurasia.[3] In addition, Japan has growing concerns over border disputes with neighbors but neither a research unit nor an association has yet to be established because of the government's as well as general public's long-time lack of consciousness toward its own vital edge. Rising tides for rethinking and reconsidering the meaning of borders in a globalized world society force us to break from conservative inertia. Here are the realities to be overcome and the reasons for launching the *Eurasia*

[1] The Global COE (Centers of Excellence) program is carried out by Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) from FY2002. The program provides funding support for establishing education and research centers that perform at the apex of global excellence to elevate the international competitiveness of Japanese universities. The program will strengthen and enhance the education and research functions of graduate schools, to foster highly creative young researchers who will go on to become leaders in their respective fields through experiencing and practicing research of the highest standard. Please visit the website: http://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-globalcoe/index.html
The mission of our program "Reshaping Japan's Border Studies"can be seen at http://borderstudies.jp/en/

[2] Some leading scholars, institutions and journals on border studies should be noted: David Newman at Ben-Gurion University, Israel and *Journal of Geopolitics*, Nijmegen Center for Border Research of Radboud University Nijmegen, the Netherlands, Karelian Institute of University of Joensuu, Finland, Centre for International Borders Research at Queen's University, UK, and newly-born Asian Borderlands Research Network.

[3] For instance, institutions in Eurasian border areas such as the Institute of Oriental History, Archeology, and Ethnography of the Far Eastern Division of the Russian Academy of Science in Vladivostok, the Heilongjiang Academy of Social Science in Harbin, China, the Centre of Central Asian Studies at the University of Kashmir, India, and the Area Study Centre at the University of Peshawar have rich resources and materials for developing border studies if it can be co-developed and well-coordinated for mutual research benefits and interests beyond the region.

Border Review.

Why the focus on Eurasia at Hokkaido University? The strong motive is that the Slavic Research Center, Japan's top research institutes on Slavic and Eurasian studies, has developed a nationwide and international border research network. The center has compiled historical and contemporary documents and analysis on the former Soviet and East European space and its relations with neighbors, including "distant ones", such as the EU, Iran, Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, China, Korea and, naturally, Japan. Here, we define Eurasia in a wider context not as a part of the former Soviet space (overlapping Euro-Asia), but rather as a continental entity comprised of Europe and Asia, though we are inclined to focus on East Europe, Russia, the Caucasus, Central Asia and the surrounding areas. Based on the center's more than fifty years of experience, it is promising to integrate the individual regional expertise on border studies, as well as to share, compare and generalize expertise with the international associations mentioned above, and finally to engage and influence border policies worldwide as advocates.

What aspects of border studies should we target? Current border studies seem to have two different but interacting dimensions: (1) review of practice on delimitation, demarcation and management of boundaries and, (2) analysis of border and border-related representations. The former is mainly developed by practices and disciplines relating to international law and geographic research fields while the latter by sociology and the humanities. Therefore, border studies is currently being reconfigured as an inter-disciplinary and multi-spherical research field. It is toward this end that *Eurasia Border Review* targets post-Soviet and Eurasian areas to emphasize our unique strengths, while at the same time striving for commonality through joint initiatives, such as this journal.

The first volume of the *Eurasia Border Review* demonstrates the generosity of our European and North American colleagues, sharing their experiences with border specialists in Eurasia. Part I consists of Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly's and Ilkka Liikanen's excellent papers on how the Association of Borderlands Studies (ABS) and Border Regions in Transition (BRIT) overcame past challenges to border research. Part I also consists of Martin Pratt's presentation on the International Boundaries Research Unit (IBRU) and Masataka Okano's perspective on border disputes as a Japanese foreign service practitioner. These works illustrate and identify many key issues and elements that our partners have faced in the past or are facing currently, proriding a fund of valnable experience for our Global COE that is now standing at the starting line. This first part is based on the discussions at our first symposium, "First Contact: Bringing Together the Worldwide Community of Border Studies," sponsored by the Global COE program in association with the Slavic Research Center on December 19, 2009, at Hokkaido University.

Part II features border issues in Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. These papers were presented in a session held on July 10, 2009, under the auspices of the project of "Comparative Research on Major Regional Powers in Eurasia."[4] The significance of Part II is that Peshawar, Kashmir and Kabul researchers rarely join together to discuss and exchange views on local conflicts at home or abroad. This is one of the most crucial reasons as to why we named the journal *Eurasia*

[4] Refer to http://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/rp/english/index.html

Border Review. What some authors advocate in their articles may come across as less "academic" than others in the "western" sense, however, we felt it was not only valuable for our border studies community but also important to present to our audience the "voices" of local experts who struggle with difficult border issues in central Eurasia. The last but not least contribution was made by a local researcher based in Russian border region who may have not necessarily paid attention to border issues. However, the border researcher's perception of the world or of global rivalry and cooperation among greater powers must be incorporated in our line-up. The discourse of power politics is basically given by policy research circles in/around capitals but how border locals view (follow or reject, or supplement or debunk) the picture constitutes a key element for profiling the range of border studies in international review. The implications of such work is far more than just simply reading about local expertise of a scholar from areas such as the Russian Far East or Okinawa in southwestern Japan and how they perceive China and the U.S., among others.

While the *Eurasia Border Review* aims to become a distinguished scholarly journal for border studies specializing in the Slavic and Eurasian regions, we highly respect the multi-disciplinary aspect of border studies itself. Thus, we do not wish to limit the scope but wish to invite scholars in various fields to share with us their expertise on important and urgent issues pertaining to the broad sense of border studies – from national or international boundaries, ethnic or linguistic borders as well as psychological or ideological borders, to name a few.

We are eager to hear your voices from/to/around any border regions and border-related representation within and beyond Eurasia to go forward to create a closely interacive association to intensify excellent local expertise throughout the border – in this border-full or -less world.

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