

FOREWORD

We are pleased to announce the latest research publication supported by the Northeast Asia (NOA) project of the Slavic-Eurasian Research Center (SRC) of Hokkaido University. The project has been sponsored by the National Institute for the Humanities (NIHU) since 2016. This issue comes as a special edition of the on-line journal *Northeast Asia Today* (<https://hokudaislav-northeast.net/en/publication/>), part of the *Slavic Eurasia Papers* series. The project has helped to develop and promote Northeast Asia area studies in Japan and its neighbors, with our SRC team mobilizing their gifts in order to shed light on the region's international relations and the institution-building taking place there.

This publication comprises the keynote speech and subsequent kick-off session on "Positioning Asia and Kyushu in Shifting Global Geopolitics," which was held as part of the International Symposium entitled "There Goes the Neighborhood: Increasing Tensions in Cooperative Northeast Asia" (Kitakyushu City, December 17-18, 2016). The International Symposium was also part of the 70th anniversary events for the Kyushu Economic Research Center.

The publication opens with Yong-Chool Ha's opening speech and an insightful analysis of the contemporary situation in Asia from T.J. Pempel. It also includes local insights on Fukuoka presented by Hiroyuki Okamoto and a short but impressive commentary by Paul Evans. The four papers are bookended with commentary provided by Sergey Sevastyanov and Beom-Shik Shin and the discussion sparked by questions from the floor. The full papers by T.J. Pempel and Paul Evans have also been included as appendices.

Rather than providing polished papers, each speaker was asked to present raw ideas. Such a fresh and provocative record, therefore, should stimulate us to think through the realities that Northeast Asia currently faces. We also need to reflect upon how we may come together to overcome these challenges in the international field through the application of judicious wisdom and a deep philosophical engagement with the region.

Our mission is still in its opening phases, and this publication aims to promote our goal of conceptualizing Northeast Asia as a field applicable across all disciplines, and of developing a research community able to provide comprehensive coverage of the region.

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