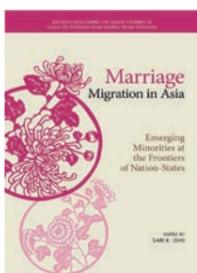


# Marriage migration in Asia

Studies on marriage migration have traditionally focused on women travelling from less developed countries in the global south to more developed ones in the global north. The focus of studies in the 1990s, on brides moving from the global south to the global north in pursuit of higher economic standing, has nonetheless created a foundation for future studies on marriage migration to build upon. *Marriage Migration in Asia: Emerging Minorities at the Frontiers of Nation-States* exceeds the initial efforts of this tradition in many ways. The 10 essays in this volume provide insights into marriage migration studies and their relationship with nation-states' migration laws. The essays push the field further by calling attention to the multiple directions marriage migration takes, making contributions in at least two domains.

Cristina Lacomba



**Sari K. Ishii (ed.). 2016.**  
*Marriage Migration in Asia: Emerging Minorities at the Frontiers of Nation-States*  
Singapore: NUS Press  
ISBN 9789814722100

The second contribution is the focus on the role of migration laws with respect to international marriage, and the strategies that surface as a result of marriage migrants trying to live the lives they long for, which at times have unknowingly detrimental consequences for their children and families. For instance, in Chapter Five, Sari Ishii focuses on the case of Japanese-Thai children whose Japanese nationality works against them when they return to Thailand, following their Thai mothers' decision to raise them there. In Chapter Six, Caesar Dealwis shows how the descendants of mixed marriages between Caucasian men and Malay women give up their ethnicity as Caucasians upon recognising the social, political and economic benefits bestowed by the Malay nation-state on those assuming a Malay identity.

In addition to these contributions, one of this book's most important points is that marriage migration sometimes occurs at the margins of state registration procedures, creating important adverse consequences for the individuals involved. Chapters seven through ten emphasise that marriage migrants without citizenship fall into very vulnerable situations after marriage, and are often unable to achieve their goals in either the sending or the receiving nation-states. This is exemplified in Chapter Seven, where Caroline Grillot writes about Vietnamese women and their children living in the borderlands between Vietnam and China. These women end up living a 'non-existing life' from the perspective of the Chinese state, as in China they are considered illegal economic migrants. Consequently, their marriages to Chinese men and their children's births are not registered. Similarly, in Chapter Eight, Hien Anh Le illustrates how children born in Korea of marriages between Korean men and Vietnamese women live in a position of 'de facto statelessness' when their mothers move to Vietnam after divorcing their Korean husbands. In Vietnam, the children lack citizenship and other social rights. Lara Chen (Chapter Nine) and Chatchai Chetsumon (Chapter Ten) further show how states deprive stateless individuals and their children of citizenship rights that would otherwise be accessible to them through marriage.

Theoretically, this book provides clear insights into the multiple dimensions and tensions that arise from the relationship between cross-border marriages and a state's interest in controlling its population. Some authors in the West have seen in universalistic discourses on human rights a decline in the power of nation-state boundaries (Saskia Sassen, *Losing Control?: Sovereignty in an Age of Globalization*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2015; Yasemin Nuhoglu Soysal, *Limits of Citizenship: Migrants and Postnational Membership in Europe*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994). Although their insights have value in some cases, such as in some aspects of the context of the European Union and in the case of the economic elite, this collection of case studies solidly shows that this

FIRST, THE ESSAYS CONTRIBUTE to elucidating the multiple geographic directions cross-border marriages take beyond the traditional south-to-north path, and the consequences for the migrants, their children and their families. For example, in Chapter One, Masako Kudo shows how Japanese wives married to Pakistani men in Japan choose survival strategies that result in some women migrating from Japan to Pakistan. As a result of difficulties in Pakistan, they often either return to Japan or migrate to another country. In Chapter Two, Chie Sakai focuses on marriages between Japanese women and Chinese men who live in Shanghai, examining two countries with similar socio-economic status. Similarly, in a case of global southern migration, Linda Lumayag shows in Chapter Three how until 2010, in Malaysia, professional migrant women from the Philippines once married to Malaysian men are submitted by law to comply with the gendered division of labour expected of married women in Malaysia. As a result, they lose access to the employment opportunities they enjoyed as single women. Some of the essays look at cross-border marriages in which both men and women from the global north travel to the global south to either marry their partners or follow them and settle there. For instance, against the traditional focus, in Chapter Four, Ikuya Tokoro discusses Japanese men who migrate to the Philippines following their Filipino wives. These men become socially and economically marginalised, both in the Philippines and in Japan, to the extent that they are unable to return to the latter.

is not the case for many marriage migrants in the East and Southeast Asian states. The tensions between nation-states' laws and migrants' lives surface clearly and transversally across the ten essays. They make the reader reflect on how states are dealing with international marriages, and what the consequences are for children and their migrant parents. The consequences vary depending on the type of registration migrants hold (if they are registered at all) with their states of origin and destination, and the migrants' overall goals. The picture that emerges from these essays is one in which states' laws hinder individuals' attempts to better their lives.

The authors prove in each of the ten case studies that despite marriage migrants' acquisition of multiple identities, affiliations and cross-border lifestyles, their experiences are bound to their legal status. Citizenship (or a path to citizenship) for them and their descendants, takes the shape of a package that may include some things (schooling for children or access to welfare) but exclude others (paid labour) in the nation-states under scrutiny. These state laws and their sociocultural, political and economic edges shape the strategies that marriage migrants use. Moreover, the ten case studies depict how the states' laws, under the purview of the volume, freeze states' cultural traditions with respect to marriage and family care. These laws create tensions between the activities that migrants (especially women) are expected to pursue, and those they wish to pursue. The authors portray how family care is viewed as women's work within the discourses of the nation-states involved. This conflicts with the interests of migrant wives, many of whom care for family in the country of origin and need (or wish) to engage in paid labour. Rights afforded by marriage do not include, in some cases, the possibility for women to find paid work outside of the family.

How can the links between marriage migration, the law and the multiple results of their combination be gauged empirically? The authors mostly use in-depth and semi-structured interviews in combination with fieldwork and some questionnaires. These techniques provide this work with a rich amount of detail that clarifies the choices these migrants make on a case-by-case basis. Given the many traps into which marriage migrants fall, the authors argue for the understanding of marriage migrants as part of a 'global diaspora' that is 'multi-marginalised' as an outcome of their relationships with the laws of the nation-states from and to which they migrate. However, as the book notes, some chapters provide more detail than others on how the category of global diaspora contributes to furthering our understanding of the multiple situations in which marriage migrants find themselves, and additional information would provide support to this valuable claim.

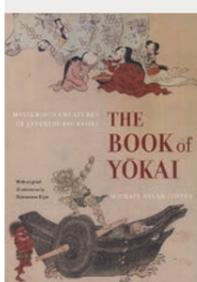
Pundits of marriage migration and citizenship will find in this collection of essays a key piece for the field. Policy experts, migrants and migrants' advocates and their organisations will value these essays for the empirical data they provide, which may be used to advocate among state agents for better policies that will allow marriage migrants to improve their lives. These case studies will also prove useful to scholars invested in researching and teaching the relationship between the law and gender together with migration, citizenship and globalisation.

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## The Book of Yōkai

If the current craze is anything to go by, the next big cultural export from Japan after manga and anime, will be Pokémon. As with its predecessors, in the translation to a global world culture, Pokémon's links to a premodern Japanese world may barely be recognized. One suspects that the majority of its global practitioners may never proceed beyond the thrill of chasing after virtual monsters. But for some aficionados, the new pastime may offer an entry into the world of traditional Japanese folklore. In that case, Michael Dylan Foster's *The Book of Yōkai* will be the hard copy *app* of choice!

Natsuko Akagawa



**Michael Dylan Foster. 2015**  
*The Book of Yōkai: Mysterious Creatures of Japanese Folklore*  
Berkeley: University of California Press  
ISBN 9780520271029

FOSTER DOES NOT WANT to be too specific in defining *yōkai* for those who have not been brought up in the culture they have traditionally inhabited. Introducing his subject, Foster's response to the inevitable first question the non-initiated may want to ask is:

So what is *yōkai*? For now let us just say that a *yōkai* is a weird or mysterious creature, a monster or fantastic being, a spirit or a sprite. ... [But] *yōkai* are ultimately more complicated and more interesting than these simple characterisations suggest ... [and] take us on a kaleidoscopic journey through history and culture (p. 5).

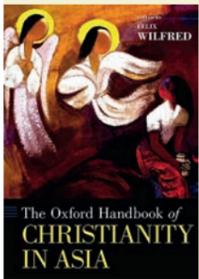
The aim of the book is to lead through that mysterious world. Foster, by his own account, has lived and breathed *yōkai* since graduate days and is the author of a number of publications exploring Japanese folklore, including the celebrated *Pandemonium and Parade: Japanese Monsters and the Culture of Yōkai* (University of California Press, 2009), for which he received the Chicago Folklore Prize. This book is a synthesis of the author's long involvement with this genre and aims to provide a convenient overview of the field for the English-speaking newcomer.

*The Book of Yōkai* is a two-part distillation of scholarship that draws upon an extensive corpus of literature on the subject (testified by 16 pages of references), as well as on interviews

# Return to origins: Christianity and Asia

At the Catholic School I attended in Long Island in New York, Jesus was always milky-white. I can still see the full-size version of him hanging on the cross, a streak of bright red blood where the nails pierced that whiteness. I think I also believed he spoke English. Church history seemed to revolve mostly around Europeans, whether decreeing, conquering, or heroically witnessing to their faith. The Church was Europe (and increasingly, America, though the Vatican did not always seem to realize this). Subconsciously, I probably thought Jesus was an English-speaking Milanese or Venetian based on art museum exhibits. When I was in a Catholic Church in San Francisco years later I did a double take at the statues of a noticeably Confucius-like Jesus. Thus, began a slow, but steady reappraisal and fascination with what can be called global Christianity, liberation theology, and intercultural theology – leading to my ongoing work today in interfaith theology.

Peter Admirand



**Felix Wilfred (ed.). 2014.**  
*The Oxford Handbook of Christianity in Asia*  
Oxford: Oxford University Press  
ISBN: 9780199329069

JESUS, OF COURSE, did not speak English and was not Italian. Fortunately, the Jewishness of Jesus, born and reared in the Middle East, has been stressed with greater appreciation since the moral failures and horrors of the Holocaust. Yet, the idea of Jesus as Asian or highlighting the Early Church's deep Asian (and North African) roots still remain an underdeveloped and often misunderstood foundation among many Christians (and non-Christians). The future of Christianity, though, is a return in many ways to its original past in Asia, with its billions of (mostly non-Christian) peoples – and a diversity of cultures that would seem to render any book on Christianity in Asia an impossible task.

For those familiar with the Oxford Handbooks, they are generally comprehensive, wide-ranging, and interdisciplinary. They also demand a reader's commitment with their length and girth, averaging around 750 pages per volume. The *Oxford Handbook of Christianity in Asia* (684 pages) is ably edited and structured by Felix Wilfred, a preeminent Catholic Indian theologian and Editor of the important Catholic journal *Concilium*. Wilfred was also capably assisted by a Who's Who of academics involved in research and publication in

Christianity and Asian studies, including Francis X. Clooney, Edmund Tang, and Wong Wai Ching Angela. Wilfred, in particular, is one of those theologians who has his pulse on the global scene of Christianity, and in Asia in particular. The work is a noteworthy and valuable contribution to the Oxford Handbook series and to Asian studies, more broadly. The wide-range of authors manage to be nuanced and localized, but still reflect on the broader geographical, linguistic, and cultural diversity in Asia, and in turn, such repercussions for our globalized world. The handbook is structured into five main parts which each include introductory essays written by key scholars to render the volume of interest for the general reader, too.

What makes Christianity in Asia so fascinating and challenging (from a European or North American perspective) is its generally minority status (outside, principally, the Philippines and South Korea); the deep ongoing structural injustice and poverty in vast parts of the continent; and the rich interfaith cultures and ways of life still extant, even as such have been challenged by various ethnic, cultural, and religious ideologies from Communist China and Vietnam, to Sinhalese Buddhism in Sri Lanka, Hindutva ideology in India, and growing, wide-spread Islamism. While Christians look to a poor, itinerant miracle worker and preacher as their Divine source, Christendom, bulwarked by political and military power (and boots on the ground and people in the pews) generally betrayed its source and foundations. But when Christians are the minority, the themes, language, and theology inevitably shift—there is need for more dialogue, give-and-take interactions, and mutual learning. There is also no hiding poverty in many parts of Asia – and so (as with liberation theology in South America) it demands some kind of response. The reality of deep religious pluralism and more cases of multi-religious belonging can all help to humble and keep Christianity in perspective – for it is a humble Christianity that is the most potent and valuable, morally, spiritually, and theologically.

In this regard, Christianity in Asia is often linked (with Africa) to the future of Christianity. Of crucial import is the role and claimed uniqueness of Jesus, an issue of paramount importance in much of the West, but playing a more expansive and open possibility in Asia, as Michael Amaladoss writes in his interesting and solid contribution, "Asian Theological Trends." The handbook, in fact, produced two

particularly 'wow' passages, one of them by Amaladoss, who ends his essay: "Finally, harmony and nonviolence will find their support and inspiration in an experience of reality that is relational and non-dual, having its roots in the *advaita* of India, the *Dao* with its *yin* and *yang* of China, the 'inter-being' or mutual interdependence of Buddhism, and the Trinity of Christianity (cf. John 17:21-23)" (p. 116). Such a quote is representative of the fruit and limitless potential of Christianity immersed in its roots and future in Asia, one of deep interreligious learning and partnership without sacrificing core principles and identity. There is confluence and overlap but also distinction.

Peter Phan hits a similarly high and deeply laudable passage: "Moreover, because of its intrinsically plural character, Christian spirituality is fundamentally open and receptive to other spiritualities, learning from their distinct emphasis on the divine (e.g., in Hinduism), or on the human (e.g., in Confucianism and Buddhism), or on the cosmos (e.g., Taoism)" (p. 512). Other highlighted works include Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid's careful analysis of the historical and contemporary plight of Christians in Syria, Iraq, Palestine, and Lebanon, while David Mark Neuhaus helpfully examines the history, developments, setbacks, and key themes of Jewish-Christian dialogue in West Asia. Such a context, as he reminds scholars like me, is different than the one happening in Europe and the United States – or in the Arab-Muslim world. He challenges scholars to broaden their conception of Jewish-Christian dialogue in predominantly Buddhist, Hindu and "other Asian religious milieus" (p. 376).

Finally, I also want to highlight Gudrun Löwner's fascinating piece on Christian art and architecture in Asia, which had me seeking out monographs specifically examining the theme. While not every essay will appeal to every reader, the strength of collections like this is to get a sample of the diversity and range of material in various related fields and themes examining Christianity in Asia (such as worship, music, spirituality, migration, evangelizing, gender, peace and conflict, and other interfaith contexts involving, for example, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism) to begin to form a more nuanced and holistic picture while providing opportunities and material for deeper, more focused study or research.

In this regard, the handbook continues my ongoing learning and awareness of global Christianity and interfaith dialogue, perhaps first sparked in that Catholic Church in San Francisco a few decades ago. The Confucian Jesus does not replace the milky-white one in my mind, as they subsist together, sometimes harmoniously, but more importantly, side by side with other images and conceptions. How such multifaceted or interfaith reflections and realities bear on faith journeys, beliefs, and identities remain a key question moving forward. So-called traditional faith may be diminishing or adapting in many parts of the West, but beliefs and a need for believing and belonging endure. Examining *Christianity in Asia* won't give all the answers, but it will provide many of the key questions, which in some contexts, is as important.

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conducted by the author. In Part One of the book, Foster takes readers on a journey through the world of *yōkai*, before providing, in Part Two, a broad sampling of its manifestations. Part One outlines the 'cultural history of *yōkai* folklore and *yōkai* studies'. As well as introducing readers to the world of monsters and spirits, and the nature of the tradition of *yōkai* folktales, Foster introduces the influential writers who have inducted succeeding generations of Japanese into its mysteries. Part Two, a 'Yōkai codex', provides a sampling of some of the ghostly characters and the literary genres in which they appear. Readers are invited to approach the book in any way they choose, and many will no doubt want to begin with Part Two, to find out about the wide variety of good and bad monsters, before moving back to Part One when ready to gain a wider appreciation of the genre's cultural context. A special enticement to do so is provided by the addition of original illustrations by Shinonome Kijin which, even in their small, pencilled format, provide a rich accompaniment to text.

What does the reader learn about *yōkai*? Foster avoids providing too simplistic a definition because as we come to learn, their identities 'are not set in stone: they are contingent on the perspectives of the humans interacting with them' (p. 21). Rather, he prefers to describe the context in which such monsters and spirits are brought to life, their nature, and the scholarly tradition that has further defined and refined the genre over time, as well as sustaining it across generations.

In Chapters 2 and 3 of Part One, Foster examines the contribution of the Japanese *yōkai* scholars and the sources of the tradition since classical times. In large part, the

contemporary popularity of *yōkai* is due to the publications of early 20th century writers, Inoue Enryō (1858–1919) and Englishman Lafcadio Hearn (1850–1904) ('one of the most important foreign-language interpreters of Japanese culture' (p. 55)), and more recently, the post-war 'revivalists' Mizuki Shigeru (b. 1922), Miyata Noboru (1936–2000) and Komatsu Kazuhiko (b. 1947). While the latter can be credited for retheorising the *yōkai* tradition for a postwar generation, it was particularly through the work of novelist Kyogoku Natsuhiko (b. 1936), that, according to Foster, *yōkai* has achieved its current popularity, and arguably, influenced the more recent development of the Pokémon boom.

In Chapter 3 of Part One, Foster moves beyond the theory and history of *yōkai*, to focus on its everyday meaning, both in terms of everyday practice and local relevance. This discussion also addresses the question of the commercialisation and (the corruption of) 'authenticity' that has accompanied the popularisation of *yōkai* in Japan. Although Foster is not inclined to use the term 'heritage', in making a case for recognizing *yōkai* as 'a permanent (though ever changing) feature of the cultural landscape [in Japan]' (p. 74), he presents what in another context would amount to a cogent argument for recognizing this story-telling tradition as integral to Japan's intangible cultural heritage, and as such, a heritage to be safeguarded. Foster's response to the current commercialisation of the genre is to argue that 'commercial production is one way in which *yōkai* stay relevant and viable and ever changing' (p. 79), a conclusion that may well be relevant to a consideration of the significance of Pokémon currently.

Apart from avoiding simplistic definitions, throughout the book, Foster also warns against any essentialist or orientalist interpretation of *yōkai*'s cultural significance. In concluding Part One, Foster reiterates the point that Japanese *yōkai* should be regarded as part of a much larger global folkloric tradition, a phenomena that has its counterpart in the folk cultures of many other countries. Inevitably, however, it remains the case that "the particular shapes [that *yōkai*] monsters and spirits assume are anything but universal. They are sculpted by the distinct cultures and societies

in which they emerge, evolving through specific historical moments and with the changing desires and challenges of the people who tell their tales" (p. 33).

Readers will be fascinated (as well as teased) by the kaleidoscope of creatures, malignant and benign, briefly described in Part Two. Many of these are 'humanoid'. They range from figures such as *ono*, a human figure with clawed hands and protruding fangs, the unfortunate *kuchi-sake-ona* (the slit-mouthed woman), the 'example of modern urban-suburban monster', or *mōryō*, the child-like monster that eats body parts, to the more benign human-like creatures associated with good fortune, such as *Azuki-araim* the 'bean-washer', *Ningyo*, a 'real' mermaid, or *Kijimuna*, the unreliable trickster, and traditionally imagined as ugly but now often imagined as 'cute'. Others take on animal or spirit forms, such as *kodama*, the tree spirit or *kappa*, a water spirit, or even manifest themselves as 'an animated rectangular wall', in the case of *nurikabe*.

Readers, whose appetites are whetted by these descriptions and illustrations in Foster's book may wish to continue their hunt for *yōkai* via the 'yōkai finder' provided by [yokai.com](http://yokai.com) or they might want to consult the colourful collection of paintings in Miyata Noboru's book, *Yōkai no minzokugaku: Nihonno mienai kukan* (Folklore of monsters: Japan's invisible space) (Iwanami Shoten, 1990).

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