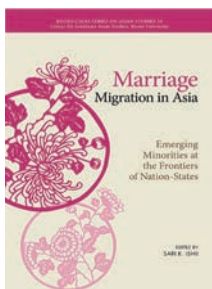


Marriage migration in Asia

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.

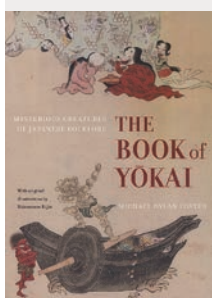
Pundits of marriage migration and citizenship will find in this collection of essays a key piece for the field. Policy experts, migrants and migrants' advocates and their organisations will value these essays for the empirical data they provide, which may be used to advocate among state agents for better 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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Also online at newbooks.asia/review/marriage-migration

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