

## News and Events

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### ***EASTS* Celebrates Its First Decade at the 4S Annual Meeting**

Founded in 2007, *East Asian Science, Technology and Society: An International Journal* is the first English-language journal dedicated to the promotion of STS and the advancement of STS scholarship in East Asia. *EASTS* has been a witness to how STS is playing an active role in the transformation of a flourishing East Asia, and the journal itself has enjoyed global visibility, as seen at 4S Annual Meetings. Therefore, the 2017 4S Annual Meeting, held in Boston from August 30 to September 2, was the perfect occasion for *EASTS* to celebrate the achievements of its first decade and to inaugurate a second.

As a part of the 4S Annual Meeting program, four sessions proposed by *EASTS* editors comprised a one-day workshop titled “Prospects in *East Asian Science, Technology and Society*” that nicely reflected the locally rooted and problem-based nature of East Asian STS and its intellectual position as STS goes global (a detailed program follows this report). The workshop not only aimed to review the changing landscape of STS through *EASTS* but also responded to a call for new strategies, trajectories, and visions to find, within East Asia, ways of doing STS that work for East Asia.

The workshop was held in the Public Garden Room of the Sheraton Hotel Boston, and it attracted about fifty scholars, including some *EASTS* editors, authors, reviewers, and local scholars, most of whom were 4S members. The subject of the first two sessions, which were organized by *EASTS* editor Hsin-Hsing Chen and his longstanding research colleague Paul Jobin, was “Toxic Torts and Persistent Polluters.” Chaired by 4S president-elect and *EASTS* advisory editor Kim Fortun, each session included four papers that discussed pollution cases and lawsuits in China, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. Unlike the conventional treatment of individual incidents, it was shown that institution, infrastructure, and collectivity are the keys to understanding why pollution events are so persistent in industrial Asia and what the social features of these lawsuits are when victims take action against polluters. As Chen pointed out, “STS scholarship can be very useful in bridging the science-law disparity in public controversies such as toxic tort, as ‘translation’ in its multiple connotations is an essential craft of the STS trade.”

After the *EASTS* editorial meeting, the theme of the afternoon sessions was “The Sensibilities of East Asian STS,” and topics of discussion included the growth of East



Fig. 1 Workshop participants

Asian STS scholarship through *EASTS*, the tasks *EASTS* editors have been taking on, and the fields that might be developed. Chaired by *EASTS* editor in chief Wen-Hua Kuo, with associate editor Michael Fischer as the discussant, the first session—“Strategies, Trajectories, and Visions”—showcased the journal’s editorship and achievements. Founding editor in chief Daiwie Fu assessed the journal’s first decade, highlighting intellectual threads that reflect how East Asia and STS have evolved in a globalized era. Echoing Fu, Kuo’s presentation used examples from four special issues of *EASTS* on traditional Asian medicines to show the various ways in which the journal has been engaging with an emerging scholarship that, with the use of STS concepts, has attempted to make sense of how Asian medicines have become what they are



Fig. 2 *EASTS* editorial meeting

today. Associate editors Hee-Je Bak and Togo Tsukahara were scheduled for a presentation on new challenges and tasks for *EASTS*; however, Tsukahara was forced to cancel his trip at the last minute due to an unexpected missile threat from North Korea. Bak, a veteran sociologist specializing in science policy, made his presentation and convincingly called for new STS research agendas to cope with the infrastructural changes in science and technology research in South Korea. Alternatively and as a result of the dramatic struggles the Japanese STS community has faced since the devastating 2011 tsunami, Tsukahara provided (via Michael Fischer's summary) a more radical agenda that urges for reform by resetting research purposes and revising research methodology.

The second afternoon session was chaired by Michael Fischer, and associate editor Sean Hsiang-lin Lei was the discussant. Unlike the inquiries into strategies and trajectories of East Asian STS during the first session of the afternoon, the discussion during this session sought alternative narratives and missing voices on East Asia's modernization. Led by former editor in chief Chia-Ling Wu, the four papers discussed during this session revealed quite a different path of East Asian modernity in the past century—not only colonial but also corporeal and therapeutic. The cases presented included household books from early twentieth-century Korea, leprosy in colonial Taiwan, in-vitro fertilization technology, and ethnic concerns regarding drug development in East Asia. Although for some STSers these topics have often been considered marginal if not wholly neglected, or too technical to manage, they nonetheless have proven their importance to global STS. They have inspired STSers to discover their own research niches as well as the possibilities for changing the technoscientific world through topics taken from everyday experiences.

Following the workshop, there was an *EASTS* Night party at a nearby restaurant—an *EASTS* tradition since our inception—which provided a relaxed atmosphere for scholars from Asia and beyond to exchange ideas. This year's party held special significance because it was the tenth time it has been held during the 4S Annual Meeting. More than eighty people attended, including some editors who had attended the very first *EASTS* Night party back in 2006!

Celebratory events during the workshop included a coffee reception sponsored by Duke University Press and a presentation ceremony for Evelyn Fox Keller, a founding *EASTS* advisory editor. A preworkshop meeting was held by *EASTS* staff and members of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) STS community on August 31; this was followed by a screening of *Healing Fukushima*, a documentary film directed by *EASTS* editor Sulfikar Amir, with a postscreening discussion. Both events were hosted by Michael Fischer.

## **“Prospects in East Asian Science, Technology and Society”: An International Workshop**

**Date:** September 1, 2017

**Venue:** Public Garden Room, Sheraton Hotel Boston

**Organizers:** Michael M. J. Fischer (Associate Editor, MIT), Wen-Hua Kuo (Editor in Chief, National Yang-Ming University), Hsin-Hsing Chen (Editor, Shih-Hsin University), and Paul Jobin (Academia Sinica)

**Sponsors:** Chiang Ching-Kuo Foundation, MIT, National Yang-Ming University

Special thanks to the Society for Social Studies of Science (4S) and Duke University Press for their generous support.

### **Program**

**9:00 a.m.–10:30 a.m.**

**Session One: “Toxic Torts and Persistent Polluters” I: Persistent Polluters and Citizen Science**

**Chair/Discussant:** Kim Fortun (4S President-elect, University of California Irvine)

#### **Participants**

- Rodolfo Andres Hernandez and Zhengfeng Li (Tsinghua University): “How Naive Experts Use Citizen Science to Cope with Air Pollution in China”
- Megan Tracy (James Madison University): “Collapsing Quality and Safety: Standardizing Milk in China after Melamine”
- Jongyoung Kim (Kyung Hee University): “The Politics of Science in the ‘Samsung Leukemia’ Case”
- Wen Ling Tu and Chia Liang Shih (National Chengchi University): “Science in Pollution Politics: Schoolchildren as ‘Guinea Pigs’?”

**10:30 a.m.–11:00 a.m.**

**Celebration Reception for *EASTS* Journal** (sponsored by Duke University Press)

**11:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.**

**Session Two: “Toxic Torts and Persistent Polluters” II: Persistent Polluters Challenged by Toxic Torts**

**Chair/Discussant:** Kim Fortun (4S President-elect, University of California Irvine)

#### **Participants**

- Paul Jobin (Academia Sinica)\*: “Class Action as a Trigger for Agency and Environmental Valuation: *The People of Yunlin v. Formosa Plastics*”
- Yi Ping Lin (National Yang-Ming University): “Reconstructing Genba: RCA Groundwater Pollution, Research, and Lawsuits in Taiwan from 1970 to 2014”
- Hsin-Hsing Chen (Shih-Hsin University): “Lost and Found in Translation: Contesting US Legal Authorities in a Transnational Mass Toxic Tort Litigation in Taiwan”
- Atsushi Sadamatsu (Kyoto Koka Women’s College): “Law and Science in Minamata Disease: The Japanese Experience of Social Struggle against the Biggest Kogai”

**12:30 p.m.–2:00 p.m.**

**Lunch (*EASTS* Editorial Meeting)**

**2:00 p.m.–3:30 p.m.**

**Session Three: “The Sensibilities of East Asian STS” I: Strategies, Trajectories, and Visions**

**Chair:** Wen-Hua Kuo (Editor in Chief, National Yang-Ming University)

**Discussant:** Michael Fischer (Associate Editor, MIT)

**Participants**

- Daiwie Fu (National Yang-Ming University): “The Strategies and Trajectories of *EASTS* Journal (2006-2015) and its Social and Academic Contexts”
- Wen-Hua Kuo (National Yang-Ming University): “Tracing Living Traditions: Asian Medicines and Their Paths toward Modernization”
- Hee-Je Bak (Kyung Hee University): “Beyond the Engine of Economy: New Social Challenges to S&T in East Asia”
- Togo Tsukahara (Kobe University)\*\*: “STS in Post-3.11 Japan: Methodology, Strategy, and Adaptation”

**3:30 p.m.–4:00 p.m.**

**Tea Break**

**4:00 p.m.–5:30 p.m.**

**Session Four: “The Sensibilities of East Asian STS” II: Gender, Medicine, and the Margins of Modernity**

**Chair:** Michael Fischer (MIT)

**Discussant:** Sean Hsiang-lin Lei (Academia Sinica)

**Participants**

- Jung Ok Ha (Seoul National University): “A Cross between the Pre-Modern and Modern in East Asian Nations: Gajeongbogam (Household Treasure) in the Early 20th Century”
- Yiling Hung (National Tsinghua University): “The Modern History of Leprosy: Emergence of a Scientific Entity in Colonial Contexts”
- Chia-Ling Wu (National Taiwan University): “Governing Disrupted Reproduction in East Asia”
- Sungwoo Ahn (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University): “Seeing Like an Asian: The ‘Asia as Method’ Narrative for East Asian and American STS”

**Closing Remarks**

\* Paul Jobin could not attend the workshop; his paper was presented by Wen-Ling Tu.

\*\* Togo Tsukahara could not attend the workshop; his arguments were summarized in Michael Fischer’s comment.