Since the late twentieth century, scholars and activists have begun to take stock of the deep histories and politically engaged nature of trans* cultures across the diverse societies of “Asia.” Much of this groundbreaking work has cautioned against immediate assumptions about the universality of transgender experiences, while heeding the significant influence of colonial histories, cultural imperialism, Cold War dynamics, economic integration, and migration practices in shaping local categories of queerness, discourses of rights, as well as the political, social, and medical management of gender variance and non-normative sexualities. This growing body of work on Asia joins trans* scholarship and activism across the world that has similarly sought to de-universalize and de-colonize the category of “trans.”
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