Priscilla Song’s Biomedical Odysseys awarded 2018 Francis L. K. Hsu Book Prize

The Society for East Asian Anthropology awards the 2018 Francis L.K. Hsu Book Prize to Priscilla Song (University of Hong Kong) for her book Biomedical Odysseys: Fetal Cell Experiments from Cyberspace to China (Princeton University Press, 2017).

The Francis L. K. Hsu Book Prize is awarded by the American Anthropological Association's Society for East Asian Anthropology (SEAA) for the best English-language book published in the previous calendar year judged to have made the most significant contribution to the field. The prize is named for the late Francis L.K. Hsu (1909–2000), renowned cross-cultural anthropologist and former President (1977–78) of the American Anthropological Association. The 2018 Hsu Book Prize selection committee was chaired by Yukiko Koga (Hunter College, City University of New York) and included Nicholas Harkness (Harvard University), Satsuki Kawano (University of Guelph), and Jie Yang (Simon Fraser University).

2018 Francis L.K. Hsu Book Prize Citation:

In this meticulously researched study, Priscilla Song creatively synthesizes anthropological works on medical anthropology, science and technology, and China. This is accomplished through innovative methodology that captures an emerging medical regime. By examining interactions between online and offline worlds as well as patients’ transnational journeys in search for cutting-edge treatments, Song makes visible this new terrain of medical practice, knowledge production and the community of care. In so doing, Song demonstrates how the nationalized policies and regulations have driven the emergence of such terrain that simultaneously defies and confirms these national boundaries of medical knowledge production and patient-care practice. The longitudinal data gained from the author’s extensive fieldwork are used effectively to support the argument developed in this study. Song’s ethnography provides a nuanced account of the interface between foreign patients’ journeys to China and ambitious Chinese clinicians’ culturally defined projects. By exploring the little-known worlds of neurosurgeons experimenting with fetal cell transplantation and patients living with neurodegenerative disorders in diverse societies, the book makes notable contributions to the anthropology of East Asia, the anthropology of science and technology, and medical anthropology.