

Editorial Foreword 74.1 (February 2015)

OUR COVER

This month's cover illustration is a photo by Timothy Unverzagt Goddard, Assistant Professor, School of Modern Languages and Cultures at The University of Hong Kong. He describes the scene as follows: Monday, September 29, 2014. Thousands gathered on Connaught Road Central in Admiralty, one day after police fired tear gas at democracy protestors.

IN THIS ISSUE

This issue begins with a trio of essays that range widely in geography and topic, but share a common accessibility and relative brevity. Each is somewhat shorter than the usual research article we publish, and each fits into a different genre of three—"Asia Beyond the Headlines," "Trends," and "Reflections"—that the *JAS* has introduced in recent years.

First up is an "Asia Beyond the Headlines" essay, which was timely when it was commissioned and originally drafted, as all of the works in this genre tend to be, and has taken on added layers of topicality during the period under which it went through revision and updating. The author, IAN ROWEN, is a doctoral candidate in geography at the University of Colorado. We invited him to submit an essay upon learning that he had conducted participant-observer research on a wave of protests that broke out in Taiwan last March, while he was in Taipei doing work on his dissertation. He completed a draft of the essay, which was eventually titled "Inside Taiwan's Sunflower Movement: Twenty-Four Days in a Student-Occupied Parliament, and the Future of the Region," in the middle of last year. Then, in late September, after revising it to respond to largely favorable comments from readers, he added a final section to bring in the very different, though in some ways related, protests that erupted in Hong Kong in September 2014 and are still underway as I write this two months later. The author has directly observed these as well, and he joins with some other analysts who have described the protests in the two settings as sharing a concern with pushing back against "mainlandization," seeing the struggles in Taipei then and Hong Kong now as interrelated.

Even though Rowen's essay is mainly about Taipei's Sunflower Movement as opposed to Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement, it seemed appropriate to use as our cover illustration a photograph of a scene from the latter, more recent event. Befitting an image of a struggle in which new media have played central roles, the photograph was among those that came to our attention via a crowdsourcing effort that involved a collaboration between the author, the *Journal's* managing editor, and one of our

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consulting editors, Angilee Shah. The one that we chose was one posted on Rowen's Facebook page by a friend of his. It shows a quintessentially Hong Kong protest scene, while inside the issue there is a collage of shots taken by the author last March that give a visual sense of the Taipei events that made headlines earlier in 2014.

The second contribution to the issue is a "Trends" essay by DAVID GILMARTIN, a specialist in South Asian history at North Carolina State University. Titled "The Historiography of India's Partition: Between Civilization and Modernity," it revisits a topic and casts in a new light a subject that received a great deal of attention in these pages in last year's February and May issues. Partition was also the focus of a highly regarded—as well off-taught and oft-cited—"State of the Field" piece by the same author, which was published in the *JAS* in 1998.¹ As a result, this essay can be approached appropriately as both a continuation to last year's discussions of partition in the *Journal* and a sequel to Gilmartin's previous essay.

The issue's third article is a deeply felt think piece by University of Texas religious studies scholar DONALD R. DAVIS, "Three Principles for an Asian Humanities: Care First . . . Learn from . . . Connect Histories." Like all previous contributions to "Reflections," the newest *JAS* genre, it has a decidedly personal aspect. It differs from its predecessors, though, in the fact that, while definitely engaging with scholarly concerns, Davis moves further than have earlier contributors to this genre in rooting his discussion in issues associated with his experiences in the classroom. His commentary is, he writes, an effort to help students have "something to say when they are asked, 'What is Asian studies?'"

RESEARCH ARTICLES

The rest of the main body of the issue, before the usual mix of book reviews, is made up of two articles on South Asia, a pair of essays that move between China and overseas Chinese settings and populations, and a look at a major Korean city in the immediate wake of the Second World War. Four of the five research articles were written by historians, but they remain a diverse lot when it comes to topics and methods, as well as when it comes to the geographical locations of the authors, who are based everywhere from North America to Norway to Bangladesh.

The first of the pieces on South Asia is by historian IFTEKHAR IQBAL of the University of Dhaka. Titled "The Space between Nation and Empire: The Making and Unmaking of Eastern Bengal and Assam Province, 1905–1911," it explores the curious "creation and annulment" and also enduring "legacy" of a short-lived district created late in India's period of British colonial rule.

Next up is "Mired in Reservations: The Path-Dependent History of Electoral Quotas in India," another look at South Asia, in this case by FRANCESCA R. JENSENIUS of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs. Jensenius, a political scientist, looks at "one of the world's most extensive quota systems for minorities," which involves setting aside a set number of official positions for representatives of India's "Scheduled Castes

¹David Gilmartin, "Partition, Pakistan, and South Asian History: In Search of a Narrative," *Journal of Asian Studies* 57, no. 4 (1998): 1068–95.

(SCs, Dalits, ‘untouchables’)—a system that has been both “praised for empowering members of a deprived community” and “criticized for bringing to power SC politicians who are mere tools in the hands of the upper castes.”

The following two articles, while they came in completely separately, are well worth reading together as a pair, as both propose new ways of thinking about people of Chinese descent living outside of China. The first of these, which is by University of Wisconsin–Madison historian SHELLY CHAN and titled “The Case for Diaspora: A Temporal Approach to the Chinese Experience,” focuses on individuals and issues of identity. Looking most closely at a single fascinating border-crossing person, Lim Boon Keng, Chan argues for the value of “considering how ‘diaspora moments’—when “reconnections with a putative homeland” assume importance—“emerge and create actors.” After this essay comes “Overseas Chinese Remittance Firms, the Limits of State Sovereignty, and Transnational Capitalism in East and Southeast Asia, 1850s–1930s” by Furman University historian LANE J. HARRIS. The emphasis there is on a distinctive set of innovative economic practices that linked people living in the “southeastern littoral zone of the Qing empire with the colonies of mainland and archipelagic Southeast Asia,” creating a network among overseas Chinese that spanned different territorial units.

Closing the articles section is Washington University historian LORI WATT’s “Embracing Defeat in Seoul: Rethinking Decolonization in Korea, 1945,” which looks at the “political and social history” of a city as it responded “to Japanese defeat and the end of empire in the context of American military occupation.” Her goal is to encourage an understanding of “the immediate post-World War II” situation in Seoul “less as a founding moment of the Cold War and more as an important transition in the history of decolonization.”

—JNW

Forthcoming Articles in *JAS* 74.2 (May 2015)

Reflections

The War of Translation: Colonial Education, American English, and Tagalog Slang in the Philippines

VICENTE L. RAFAEL

Trends

“Civil Religion” and Confucianism in Modern East Asia: Japan’s Past, China’s Present, and the Current Boom in Scholarship on Confucianism

KIRI PARAMORE

Research Articles

A Troubled Vernacular: Legibility and Presence in Indonesian Activist Art

DOREEN LEE

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Life in Ruins: Materiality, Meaning, and Critique in the Art of Naiza Khan
KARIN ZITZEWITZ

Prisoner Number 600,001: Rethinking Japan, China, and the Korean War 1950–1953
TESSA MORRIS-SUZUKI

Colonizing the Sacred: Allahabad and the Company State, 1797–1857
FARIDAH ZAMAN

Frugal Modernity: Livelihood and Consumption in Republican China
MARGHERITA ZANASI

The Frontier Crimes Regulation and Frontier Governmentality
BENJAMIN DAVID HOPKINS