

Editorial Foreword 73.4 (November 2014)

OUR COVER

This month's cover illustration is a photo by our "Asia Beyond the Headlines" author, Simon Creak. He says of the photo: "I took this shot at the opening ceremony of the 27th SEA Games in Naypyitaw, Myanmar. As the games flame was ignited and fireworks blasted from the perimeter of the Wunna Theikdi stadium, thrilled spectators leaped to their feet and captured the scene for themselves."

IN THIS ISSUE

The *Journal of Asian Studies* prides itself on showcasing work by a wide range of authors in every issue, but this one includes an even more diverse set of contributors than usual. Its opening section features two essays by historians of Southeast Asia, one an "Asia Beyond the Headlines" look at Myanmar and the other this year's AAS presidential address, plus a pair of linked pieces on the Chinese artist Ai Weiwei, written by, respectively, a scholar of international relations and a specialist in the history of the Mao and post-Mao eras. Next comes a forum on climate change that opens with a central essay by an archeologist whose main research focus has been Japan, with comments by, in turn, a scholar of religious studies whose geographical area is Central Asia, a specialist in the study of South Asia trained in science and technology studies, a scholar of comparative East Asian literatures, an international journalist who edits a bilingual online publication devoted to Chinese environmental issues, and a cultural anthropologist who looks to the sky in Indonesia to determine local astronomy and marine navigation. This is followed by three research articles and two review essays by the following kinds of scholars: a literary specialist working on Taiwan, an ethnomusicologist who studies Sri Lanka, a cultural anthropologist primarily concerned with Laos, an ethnographer of greater Tibet, and an economist who brings his expertise on issues of race in America to bear on two geographically wide-ranging volumes on subaltern groups edited by a scholar of South Asian and comparative history. The issue wraps up with the usual array of book reviews.

ASIA BEYOND THE HEADLINES AND THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

The issue begins with essays that start off in Myanmar in one case and Thailand in the other, then expand from there to deal with other places. SIMON CREAK's "National Restoration, Regional Prestige: The Southeast Asian Games in Myanmar, 2013" piece, starts with interviews the author conducted and observations he made while in the country

flagged in its title. Readers soon find out as well about the experiences that Laos and Indonesia had hosting the SEA Games, the regional counterpart to the Olympics, in 2009 and 2011, respectively. THONGCHAI WINICHAKUL's presidential address, "Asian Studies across Academies," meanwhile, opens with comments on Thailand, which is the author's country of birth and one whose history he has explored in an important book. The essay then moves across Asia and between Asia and the West, while addressing broad intellectual and political shifts, including the impact of the Cold War and globalization on scholarship and debates over the issues of language and translation in area studies.

REFLECTIONS

The next three pieces all deal with China and all belong to the "Reflections" genre, the journal's newest. The first, international relations specialist WILLIAM A. CALLAHAN's "Citizen Ai: Warrior, Jester, and Middleman," wrestles with how best to characterize the life, art, and public roles of a complex Chinese figure. Paired with it is TIMOTHY CHEEK's response, "Citizen Intellectuals in Historical Perspective: Reflections on Callahan's 'Citizen Ai,'" which places Ai Weiwei into a "venerable Chinese tradition of social insubordination" that was kept alive in the last century by various intellectuals, including those who challenged "the Nationalist Party state of Chiang Kaishek in the 1930s and 1940s," but has roots that extend back far into the imperial past. The issue's last "Reflections" essay, DILIP K. BASU's "Chinese Xenology and the Opium War: Reflections on Sincocentrism," includes a prefatory "Editor's Note," so nothing further about it needs to be said here.

Following those opening sets of essays comes our latest "JAS at AAS" forum, which, like previous ones in this November feature, is primarily made up of revised versions of presentations made at an annual meeting panel sponsored by this publication. The live event opened with a presentation by archaeologist MARK J. HUDSON, and this has evolved into the essay "Placing Asia in the Anthropocene: Histories, Vulnerabilities, Responses," which serves as the centerpiece of this forum. The first four responses to it—commentaries by religious studies scholar JOHAN ELVERSKOG, historian of science KAVITA PHILIP, literature specialist KAREN L. THORNER, and journalist and editor ISABEL HILTON—are similarly revised versions of presentations made at the annual meeting. A final comment, though, by GENE AMMARELL, like some contributions to previous "JAS at AAS" clusters, came into the issue via a different route—in this case, when we decided that things he had to say about the forum, when we asked him to read drafts of the other pieces as part of our vetting process, were so insightful that they deserved to be reworked to share with a wider audience than just this publication's editorial team. (We do not do this often, but this is not the only example in this issue of a commentary that began as a peer review assessment, as Cheek's contribution evolved out of a request to him to offer advice to the editorial team about Callahan's essay.)

Closing out the main section of the issue are three very different research articles, followed by two review essays. The first of the trio of research articles is JOSEPH R. ALLEN's "Picturing Gentlemen: Japanese Portrait Photography in Colonial Taiwan." Drawing on theoretical work by figures such as Roland Barthes and John Tagg on photography, and Homi Bhabha on colonialism, the author explores the symbolic and also business sides of a genre of portraiture in which, he says, one can see "an unusual

form of colonial mimicry” evolving, as Japanese colonizers and Taiwanese subjects alike find attractive “the image of a young, clean-shaven man of modernity wearing a Western suit in a mug-shot presentation” that is rooted in a culture that is not either of their own but associated with a third group.

The second research article also engages with issues of colonialism, art, and representation, but takes us from Northeast Asia all the way down to the tip of South Asia. Written by ethnomusicologist GARRETT M. FIELD, it is titled “Music for Inner Domains: Sinhala Song and the *Arya* and *Hela* Schools of Cultural Nationalism in Colonial Sri Lanka” and is aimed to show, in part, how in the setting in question the nation was sometimes defined “not in relation to the West but in opposition to North India”—an idea floated with an eye toward challenging one aspect of Partha Chatterjee’s influential work on the workings of anticolonialism in South Asia.

The issue’s final research article is by anthropologist SARINDA SINGH, who argues that, while there has recently been much “productive scholarship” done on “the links between religious resurgence and authoritarian governance,” some “common assumptions about state authority” have limited the “comprehensiveness” of many investigations of the subject. He proposes a new way to grapple with central issues involved in his essay, “Religious Resurgence, Authoritarianism, and ‘Ritual Governance’: *Baci* Rituals, Village Meetings, and the Developmental State in Rural Laos,” the focus of which is ceremonies related to “spirit propitiation.”

In this issue, we have two review essays. The first, by anthropologist CHARLENE MAKLEY and entitled “The Promise and Perils of Native Anthropology in the PRC,” takes an extended look at Tenzin Jinba’s *In the Land of the Eastern Queendom: The Politics of Gender and Ethnicity on the Sino-Tibetan Border*, a recent publication that is “one of only a handful of books and articles (in any language)” to appear “since the 1990s” that addresses “gender politics among Tibetans.” The book that is the focus of her essay, Makley claims, is significant both for providing an “unprecedented glimpse of the complexities of contemporary identity politics” in a “particularly hybrid and marginalized” setting, and also because it may be “a harbinger of a new era of PRC frontier ethnography to be dominated by scholars who are citizens of China.” This latter point leads to ruminations on the specific political pressures faced by PRC scholars dealing with frontier zones, which may lead them to bury certain topics in footnotes or leave them out of their accounts completely, as well as reflections on the less obvious but still important ways that “working under the pressures of China’s authoritarian capitalism” can constrain or inhibit efforts by those from other countries who publish on those same settings. The other review essay, WILLIAM DARITY JR.’s “Race, Caste, Class, and Subalternity,” discusses a pair of comparative volumes edited by Gyanendra Pandey, who is best known for his work on India but has long been interested in placing issues of hierarchy and prejudice into cross-national perspective. Darity, whose areas of specialization include public policy as well as economics, uses the two books in question to explore the challenges and considerable pay-offs of placing side-by-side “intensely marginalized” groups located in different parts of the world, and the moves that have been made—and moves that still need to be made—to create what he calls a much needed “comprehensive theory of subaltern resistance that can inform practice.”

—JNW

Forthcoming Articles in *JAS* 74.1 (February 2015)

Asia Beyond the Headlines

Inside Taiwan's Sunflower Movement: Twenty-Four Days in a Student-Occupied
Legislature
IAN ROWEN

Reflections

Three Principles for an Asian Humanities: Care First . . . Learn From . . . Connect
Histories
DONALD R. DAVIS

Trends

The Historiography of India's Partition: Between Civilization and Modernity
DAVID GILMARTIN

Research Articles

The Space between Nation and Empire: The Making and Unmaking of Eastern Bengal
and Assam Province, 1905–1911
IFTEKHAR IQBAL

Embracing Defeat in Seoul: Rethinking Decolonization in Korea
LORI WATT

Caught between Design and Expectations: The Path-Dependent History of Political
Quotas in India
FRANCESCA R. JENSENIUS

Overseas Chinese Remittance Firms, the Limits of State Sovereignty, and Transnational
Capitalism in East and Southeast Asia, 1850s–1930s
LANE J. HARRIS

The Case for Diaspora: A Temporal Approach to the Chinese Experience
SHELLY CHAN