

## Editorial Foreword

I want to begin by noting how honored I feel to be given the opportunity to serve as editor of the *Journal of Asian Studies*. Close readers of this periodical will note some shifts from past practices. For example, in this issue we introduce a new feature, “Asia Beyond the Headlines.” These commissioned essays will offer short, topical, scholarly yet accessible looks at issues of broad interest. Readers of *JAS* will also see that many of the traditions established by my illustrious predecessors will be continued. For example, like my immediate predecessor Kenneth George (who played the key role in editing most of the pieces in this issue and some of those that will appear later this year in these pages), I will divide each issue into sections. And in Editorial Forewords such as this one, when multiple articles are clustered together under a common rubric, like Ken, I will draw attention to the links relating to subject matter, sources, methods, or theoretical concerns that tie them to one another.

Historians often discover in the course of our research that the line between novelty and tradition can be less clear-cut than we initially thought, as developments that at first seem wholly original not infrequently turn out to be resurrections or reinventions. This is the case with the “Asia Beyond the Headlines” feature. When Managing Editor Jennifer Munger and I brainstormed about this section of the journal, she encouraged me to read the earliest issues of *Far Eastern Quarterly*, the periodical that evolved into *JAS*, because she had noticed in her own readings that it carried a greater number of topical pieces than its successor.

Sure enough, I discovered that the very first issue of *Far Eastern Quarterly*, published just before the attack on Pearl Harbor, contains an essay by Kenneth Colegrove titled “The New Order in East Asia” that is very much the kind of article that I had in mind for this “new” feature. The pieces featured in “Asia Beyond the Headlines” will not be as long or as heavily footnoted as Colegrove’s, and the title for the genre has no Association for Asian Studies precedent of which I am aware (though it may bring to mind a recent book edited by Timothy B. Weston and Lionel M. Jensen, *China Beyond the Headlines* [Rowman & Littlefield, 2000], and a University of Chicago lecture series, “The World Beyond the Headline”). Still, these essays will strive to have the same immediacy and relevance as “The New Order in East Asia,” which appeared in November 1941 and included analysis of speeches given in the Japanese Diet earlier that same year.

### OUR COVER

This striking image, which was provided by Aaron William Moore to accompany his article on Japanese war diaries, appeared on a candy wrapper. It was part

## 2 Editorial Foreword

of a series of such bits of packing material aimed at convincing Japanese consumers of the Pacific War era that soldiering was an exciting profession.

### ASIA BEYOND THE HEADLINES

This first contribution to our new feature is written by DUNCAN MCCARGO, a specialist in Southeast Asian politics who has also written about Japan. He was in Thailand in mid- to late 2008 to witness a dramatic series of protests, the highlights of which included the seizing of an official television station and the occupation of Bangkok's main government complex by opposition groups.

His commentary offers nonspecialists a wonderfully clear thumbnail sketch of the complexities of contemporary Thai political conflicts. It also illuminates key issues in the standoff between Thailand's rulers and their opponents—one that is still ongoing as this is being written—ranging from the shifting contours of national pride, to enduring concerns about corruption in high places, to the special role of media companies and media events in driving high-profile conflicts. The author draws on his theory, explicated at greater length elsewhere, that a crucial element in Thai politics is the “network monarchy,” a constellation of widely varied political actors who may or may not have direct contact with the country's royal family but see themselves as working in its interests.

### SCIENCE AND THE LITERARY IMAGINATION

In her wide-ranging article, literary critic LYDIA H. LIU, who has previously published influential studies of subjects such as the politics of language and translation, illuminates hitherto overlooked aspects of the life and work of the great and much-studied writer Lu Xun. Liu focuses first on the author's interest in foreign works of science fiction in general (a natural point of departure, given that Lu Xun's early publications included a translation of Jules Verne's famous account of a lunar exploration) and stories relevant to theories of human biology in particular. This reminds us of the high value that Chinese intellectuals placed on science fiction around 1900, seeing translations of works by famous and obscure foreign practitioners of the genre as valuable ways to expose readers in China simultaneously to new forms of writing and to new ideas about the natural world.

Liu combines this discussion of Lu Xun's interest in speculative science fiction concepts—including what we would now call human cloning—and the role of Buddhist ideas and figures in his writing. This juxtaposition of the two topics has two quite different payoffs. First, it sheds new light on a central literary figure's life and body of work, encouraging us to rethink, among other things, his decision to abandon medicine for literature. And, second, it offers a new perspective on the complex and fraught relationship between science and metaphysics in China during the first decades of the twentieth century.

### THE RULE OF LAW IN CHINESE AND INDIAN HISTORY

This section takes a form that is unusual for *JAS*. It is made up of a think piece on the important topic of varied understandings of the “rule of law” in imperial China and colonial India, five responses to that article, and then a rejoinder to the comments by the authors of the original essay, JONATHAN K. OCKO (a specialist in Chinese studies) and DAVID GILMARTIN (a specialist in Indian studies). The credit for coming up with idea of using Gilmartin and Ocko’s provocative piece as the centerpiece for a forum must go to my predecessor, though we worked together on selecting commentators and I took the lead in the final stages of editing—making this a forum in which not just coauthorship but coeditorship is showcased. The value of placing Ocko and Gilmartin’s essay at the center of an exchange is that it expands the reach of an ambitious piece that already moves across a major geographic and cultural divide (that separating Asia’s two most populous counties). In the comments provided by political scientist VIVIENNE SHUE, legal scholars PAUL W. KAHN and RANDALL PEEREHBOHM, world historian LAUREN BENTON, and the theoretically minded historian PRASENJIT DUARA, cases other than the Chinese and Indian ones, disciplines other than legal history, and up-to-the-moment contemporary concerns (one respondent even discusses the ceremonies that accompanied the 2008 Beijing Olympics and alludes to the London Games scheduled for 2012) are brought into play.

### PUBLIC AND PRIVATE REALMS IN THE JAPANESE NATION AND EMPIRE

The two articles in this section take up what might at first seem radically dissimilar issues. PENELOPE FRANCK is interested in using the case of Japan to test assumptions about how consumption works that have been derived primarily from the Western experience. Looking in particular at the contrasting ways that sake and beer were bought, imbibed, and thought about (as “domestic” versus “foreign” products, for example), she paints a complex picture of the cultural and economic meanings of the birth of consumers in industrializing Japan, arguing for the need to break free of overstating the importance of the shift that took place when Japanese contact with the West increased dramatically in the 1800s. She also links the actions and worldviews of nineteenth-century Japanese consumers of novel products and luxury goods to the “shoppers who throng the temples of consumerism in present-day Tokyo and Osaka.”

AARON WILLIAM MOORE, on the other hand, is interested not in what people buy and consume but what they write, particularly in private and confessional modes. His temporal focus is also very different: Rather than ranging across wide swathes of time, he zeroes in on the 1930s and 1940s, the years when the soldiers that interest him kept their diaries. The geographic interplay that concerns him is less that between Japan and Europe—though he, too, is interested in bringing a Japanese case study into a literature that has tended to focus on the West—than that between Japan and China, in part simply because the diaries he

## 4 Editorial Foreword

studies were kept by Japanese soldiers fighting in Chinese territory. As a result of his focus, he explores not simply Japan as a nation but the Japanese empire.

Still, the two pieces are worth placing side by side, and readers will gain from reading them together, for several reasons. One is that each problematizes the distinction between the private and public realms. Though consumption and diary keeping are generally thought of as private acts, each of these articles draws attention to their public sides. In Japan, as elsewhere, the consumption of luxury goods or foreign products can be a way of signaling to others one's status or aspirations, and alcoholic drink is often imbibed in social settings. Soldiers' diaries, meanwhile, as Moore shows, were sometimes written for very private reasons, but by no means always, as they were created at times with an eye toward being read, even potentially published, following publicly circulated models for and ideas concerning journals. Another link between the two articles has to do with advertising. We are used to thinking of products being sold through advertising, but Moore reminds us that political causes—even wars—are as well. This is underscored by the image from his essay reproduced on the cover of this issue, which, as noted, was one of a series of candy wrapper visuals intended by the state to sell soldiering as a profession, much as a company might sell sake or beer.

### BRITISH POWER AND ASIAN IDENTITIES

The last two articles in this issue are concerned with the side effects and legacies of the British Empire. This might suggest that they cover familiar ground, given how much has been and continues to be written about the consequences of Britain's expansion into Asia. In fact, though, each approaches the subject from a unique angle, and each is concerned with an aspect of colonialism that often goes overlooked.

The main feature of British imperialism that interests historian and gender studies scholar SHEFALI CHANDRA, for example, is a linguistic one: the ways in which Indian English came to function as a language of power. Drawing upon a range of sources, in Marathi as well as English, she argues that control of the uses and teaching of Indian English often worked to legitimate preexisting hierarchies rooted in class, caste, and, above all, gender. Historian and scholar of international relations DIBYESH ANAND, meanwhile, makes a strong and effective argument for the need to trace current disputes relating to Tibet's status back much further than the 1950s (a common starting point), as the groundwork for much of the current confusion lies in British claims about Tibetan rights to self-governance. When read together, the two pieces underscore the very different kinds of impact that the British Empire could have on groups and geopolitical entities in Asia, sometimes helping to reinforce and sometimes helping to recast dramatically local power relations and identities.

—JNW

Postscript: Books are sometimes dedicated to the memory of a recently deceased colleague who inspired the author or editor of a volume, but journals rarely if ever follow this practice. Were this a book rather than a journal issue, I would ask, as Editor, that it be dedicated to the memory of G. William Skinner, who as a path breaking scholar and teacher had a profound impact on several generations of anthropologists as well as many specialists in Chinese studies working in other disciplines. His contributions to the Association for Asian Studies (an organization for which he served a term as president) and to the *Journal of Asian Studies* (for which he wrote a tremendously influential series of articles) were enormous. He died October 25, 2008. He will be greatly missed.

## Forthcoming Articles in *JAS* 68:2 (May 2009)

### *Asia Beyond the Headlines*

India, China, and Governance Issues of Development

PRANAB K. BARDHAN

Youth and the State in Contemporary China

STANLEY ROSEN

### *History and Holy Figures*

Idols in the Temple: Icons and the Cult of Confucius

JULIA K. MURRAY

Ch'udo yebae: A Case Study in the Early Emplantation of Protestant Christianity in Korea

JAMES H. GRAYSON

Saved by the Saint: Refusing and Reversing Partition in Muslim North India

ANNA BIGELOW

### *Politics and Media*

Testing Concepts about Print, Newspapers, and Politics: Kerala, India, 1800–2005

ROBIN JEFFREY

Interests, Wireless Technology and Institutional Change: From Government Monopoly to Regulated Competition in Indian Telecommunications

RAHUL MUKHERJI

### *Barriers and Borderlands*

Disarming Violence: Democracy, Development and Security on the Borders of India

RAVINA AGGARWAL AND MONA BHAN

Venturing into “Barbarous” Regions: Trans-border Trade among Migrant Yunnanese between Thailand and Burma, 1960s–1980s

WEN-CHIN CHANG

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