

From the Editor

This issue—volume 64, number 4—is the last issue of the *Journal of Asian Studies* that will be edited by the team at the University of Minnesota. It has been a good run—in five years we received nearly a thousand submissions and published about a hundred articles and nearly sixteen hundred book reviews. It seemed appropriate in my last issue as editor to see whether some general contours might emerge from the hundred or so articles we have published.

In the very first iteration of “In This Issue” in February 2001, Arun Agrawal noted that “many of the seemingly stable concepts central to typological analysis since perhaps the early twentieth century need remarkable rethinking: community, state, market, frontier, local, global, indigenous, tradition, modernity, and so forth” (60[1]:7). He remarked that the articles in that first issue were engaged in the process of that rethinking. If we take Agrawal’s list of concepts and add to it gender, colonialism, and narrative, we have a pretty fair sense of the agendas of the authors we have published in the *Journal of Asian Studies* in the past five years. Agrawal also wrote that the articles in that first Minnesota issue were characterized by their attention to transition zones and that this particular set of articles demonstrated just how analytically productive attention to transition zones could be. An interest in transition zones—spatial, temporal, and conceptual—has characterized much of the work we have published in the last five years. I draw your attention in particular to the articles in the special issue devoted to Taiwan (64[2]), in which Robert Eskildsen, Tonio Andrade, Paul Barclay, Paul Katz, and Antonio Tavares delineate the interactions between various colonial powers and indigenous peoples at the edges of empire in Taiwan. David Atwill and David Bello (62[4]) discuss areas of southwestern China that were on the fringes of Qing control. Atwill, in his comments for “In This Issue” (62[4]), wrote that both he and Anirudh Krishna (another author in the issue) are suspicious of ways in which central governments (China in Atwill’s case, India in Krishna’s case) record and report on local activities. Indeed, Atwill’s critique of the “palace-eye view” suggests that close attention to any large empire might reveal a patchwork of transition zones. David Ludden provides a way of connecting these patchworks when he wrote in his comments on the same issue that territoriality and mobility are the two key themes which define Asian history and suggested that an examination of the dynamic interaction between territoriality and mobility would be a productive agenda for further research.

The shadow of colonialism (or, more precisely, of diverse colonialisms) is cast over a great number of these articles. What characterizes the ways that colonialism is discussed in these articles is the emphasis on the particular—the precise ways in which power is imposed and negotiated (see, for example, Martin Sökefeld’s work on the Northern Areas of Pakistan [64(4)], Robert Oppenheim’s work on colonial Korea [64(3)], and Philip Constable’s work on the colonial Indian army [60(2)]), the com-

This is not meant to be an exhaustive discussion of all the articles published in the *Journal of Asian Studies* in the past five years—space precludes my discussing all the excellent articles we published. I am contemplating writing a larger article which will place this scholarship in the wider context of the American academy in the past five years. If you have comments or suggestions, please address them to me at waltn001@umn.edu.

plexities of cultural interaction (Rita Kipp's work on missionary perceptions of the Minahasa [63(3)] and Manu Bhagavan's work on Baroda [61(3)]), and the various ways in which the colonial past plays a role in the constitution of the postcolonial present (and how the present constitutes what we see of the past) (Kama Maclean's work on the Kumbh Mela [62(3)]). None of these authors diminishes the importance of asymmetrical power relations in the colonial context, but none of them regards colonial rule as something which is simply imposed upon passive subjects. The argument that colonial society is something which is produced by dynamic, if unequal, interaction is connected to a commitment we see in many of the articles to looking at process, the ways in which culture and politics are produced.

The articles in general take the position that difference is something which is produced, rather than something which exists as an inherent category. Ethnic and gender difference are the primary forms of difference which engage the authors. For ethnic difference, see "In This Issue" (63[3]), David Howell's work on the Ainu (63[1]), and Charles Keyes's presidential address (61[4]). Among articles which treat gender, see Seungsook Moon's work on women in the public sphere in Korea (61[2]) as well as the works of Gail Hershatter (63[4]), Liu Fei-wen (60[4]), Bryna Goodman (64[1]), Tamara Loos (64[4]), and Tom Boellstorff (63[2]). Boellstorff and Loos explicitly look at questions of sexuality and national belonging. Boellstorff is concerned with same-sex communities in Indonesia, and Loos with sexual politics inside the royal court in Siam. Class identity plays a less prominent role in this particular body of scholarship, but it is critical in Namhee Lee's article on the workers' movement in postwar South Korea (64[4]), Andrew Walder's work on the Cultural Revolution in China (61[2]), and Douglas Howland's work on samurai identity (60[2]).

Masculinity is also a topic which *JAS* authors in the past five years have addressed. Several articles discuss masculinity in terms of sexuality (Yung-chen Chiang's work on Hu Shi [63(2)] as well as the articles by Boellstorff and Loos discussed above), but others look at masculinity and warfare (JaHyun Kim Haboush [62(2)], Mary Elizabeth Berry [64(4)], and "In This Issue" [64(4)]). Other aspects of war (and cold war) are also touched on in the articles. Gregory Kasza talks about the ways in which the Second World War played a role in the creation of welfare policies in Japan (61[2]), and Charles Armstrong talks about American and Soviet propaganda in cold war Korea (62[1]). The memory of war, and how that memory is structured and institutionalized, is the subject of JaHyun Kim Haboush's article about the aftermaths of the Imjin War and the Manchu invasion of Korea (62[2]); John Nelson's piece on the Japanese war memorial at the Yasukuni Shrine (62[2]); and Mary Elizabeth Berry's presidential address, which discusses issues of samurai loyalty in terms of the American war in Iraq (64[4]). Brian Didier looks at the question of violence from the standpoint of violence-free conflict on Androth Island, suggesting that if we want to understand violence, it is instructive to look at places where it does not occur (63[1]).

The nation-state plays a complex role in the analyses of most of these authors. While it is too early to proclaim the end of the nation-state, some of our authors (Gail Hershatter [63(4)] and Antonio Tavares [64(2)], for example) argue against the nation-state as a unit of analysis. Many more authors simply do not use the state as the level of analysis. Some analyses are very local; others are regional or, more rarely, global. But even when nation building or nationalism is central to the argument, the nation-state itself is rarely the unit of analysis. Deborah Winslow, in her discussion of the articles in 62(1), suggests that nation building is the attempt to hold together disparate elements and concludes her comments by saying that the nation can never be taken for granted.

The ways in which the present and the past are each implicated in the construction of the other is a very important theme in these articles. Mytheli Sreenivas writes that the articles in 63(4) suggest that “‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’ are complicated categories implicated in each other but also that both are shaped—rhetorically and materially—by identifiable shifts in economy and society” (“In this Issue,” 888; for other examples, see the works of James L. Watson, Ellen Oxfeld, Rochona Majumdar, and Gail Hershatler, all in 63[4]). Louisa Schein and Purnima Mankekar in 63(2) suggest ways that the dynamic interactions between past and present are mediated through narrative (see also the works of Kalyani Devaki Menon and Haiyan Lee, as well as “In This Issue,” all in 64[1]). Charles Keyes writes about how several of the articles in 61(4) discuss the issue of contests over how the past is to be remembered.

There are, to be sure, other important issues which are raised—the importance of naming and the construction of categories, sometimes using scientific evidence. Laura Dudley Jenkins and Anirudh Krishna (both in 62[4]) write about the construction and transformation of categories of caste in India. Kidder Smith (62[1]) writes about the processes whereby the early Chinese historian Sima Tan constructed his categories. An increasing number of articles dealt with space as an analytical tool—for example, Mayfair Mei-hui Yang’s study of Wenzhou (63[3]). Other articles have been interested in the materiality of spatial relations and how those relations might order experience. I am thinking here of Janaki Nair’s work on Cubbon Park in Bangalore (61[4]), William Glover’s study of object lessons in colonial Lahore (64[3]); Lisa Claypool’s work on China’s first museum (64[3]), and Todd Henry’s work on early colonial Seoul (64[3]), to name just a few. Alexander des Forges shows how time and space are essential to the narrative form of installment fiction in early twentieth-century Shanghai (62[3]). The materiality of texts and their circulation are important concerns in the work of Sophie Volpp (61[3]) and Gustav Heldt (64[1]).

Religion, especially religion in the context of social change, is an important topic in a number of the articles. Daniel Gold looks at Hindu-Muslim interactions at a Sufi shrine (64[1]); Ellen Oxfeld looks at funerals in a contemporary Chinese village (63[4]), and Irene Eng and Yi-min Lin write about religious festivals in another contemporary Chinese village (61[4]). In August, 2002 (61[3]) three articles dealing with religion appeared—Patrick Jory writing about the ways in which Buddhism served state-building in Thailand; Lauren Leve writing about the construction of selfhood among Theravada Buddhists in Nepal; and T. M. Luhrmann writing about Parsis in Bombay.

The debate in 61(2) (and responses in 62[1]) among Kenneth Pomeranz, Philip Huang, Robert Brenner, Christopher Isett, James Lee, Cameron Campbell, Wang Feng, and Bin Wong about the relative economic development of Jiangnan and England, sparked by Pomeranz’s *Great Divergence* (the Wong article was published on the Association for Asian Studies’ Web site at www.aasianst.org), is one of the rare examples of sustained comparative work published in the journal; the liveliness of the debate serves to show just how hard comparative history can be, as well demonstrating its importance.

David Atwill makes a strong claim for the importance of crossing geographic and intellectual boundaries in his comments in “In This Issue.” He writes, citing the work of Willem van Schendel, “if we do not begin to think beyond the boundaries of area studies, we run the risk of missing important trends, flows, and exchanges, thus creating self-imposed blinders which have all of the markings of becoming a sort of early twenty-first-century Orientalism” (62[4]:1055). The articles in these issues in general look beyond the borders of the nation-state; most do not look beyond the

region. As scholars trained deeply in the particularities of language and culture and deeply committed to those particularities, most of us are still searching for ways of crossing borders which extend beyond our own areas of expertise. The problems that face us as scholars are how to reconcile the particular and the general, how to think about time, space, difference, narrative—none of these questions which pertain particularly to Asia. But, there may be specific dimensions to how we pose these questions, how we frame our answers, and how we engage in dialogue with scholars in Asia.

The final point I would like to make has to do with the ways we, as scholars of Asia publishing in a journal edited in North America, produce knowledge about Asia. There are three points I would like to raise: the particularity of the knowledge published in the journal, dialogue with Asian scholars, and finally issues of representation. Most of the articles in this body of scholarship deal with the particular. They are very rich case studies of specific events, processes, phenomena. Many (though not all) of the articles engage with the question of generating new questions, new ways of looking at issues, which emerge from the specifics of cases. Seungsook Moon, for example, suggests in her comments for “In This Issue” for 61(2) that new ways of looking about modernity will emerge from a close attention to the specifics of varying cases.

Several authors have drawn attention to the ways in which articles do (or might) draw on concepts and theories derived from the particular locales that they study in their analyses. Janaki Nair suggests in her “In This Issue” comments for 61(4) that the concepts derived from the Euro-American experience are not adequate to understand the emerging politics of China and India (1158), which is a different stance than saying Western theory is irrelevant to Chinese or Indian cases. Patrick Jory, in his “In This Issue” comments for 61(3), suggests ways in which Theravada Buddhist concepts of the self change our theorizing about the nature of the self, and he extends that notion to a call for taking very seriously the theories that are generated by the societies we study—theories that are not packaged like the theories in the Western academy, but we would do well to pay closer attention to them. In so doing, we would not only understand our subject matter better, but we would also enrich the theoretical repertoire of the Western academy.

These conversations will continue—the journal is now in the capable hands of Kenneth George at the University of Wisconsin–Madison (jas@intl-institute.wisc.edu). My final word is one of thanks—to authors, who not only wrote superb articles but also reflected on their articles for “In This Issue”; to associate editors; to readers; and to the wonderful *JAS* staff, Susannah Smith and Ellen Gerdt.

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