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Editorial Foreword

OUR COVER

Detail of "March to victory with Chairman Mao's line on revolutionary culture," artist and publisher unknown, 1968. Final 73 × 156 centimeter public assemblage consists of three pasted posters. From the Ann Tompkins (Tang Fandi) and Lincoln Cushing Chinese Poster Collection, East Asian Library, U.C. Berkeley. Published in Chinese Posters: Art from the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution by Lincoln Cushing and Ann Tompkins, Chronicle Books, 2007. Image archive available at www.docspopuli.org

RECLAIMING THE CHINESE REVOLUTION: AAS PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS 2008

ELIZABETH J. PERRY sifts through versions and commemorations of the so-called great strike at China's Anyuan coal mines in 1922 in order to recuperate for us an inspirational history of revolution. The Anyuan revolutionary tradition, explains Perry, began with Mao Zedong, Li Lisan, and Liu Shaoqi calling for "a nonviolent uprising framed as a plea for human dignity." The laborers staged a five-day strike. Unblemished by violence, injury, or property damage, it won them better wages and work conditions. The Anyuan strike became a formative experience for workers and many who would pioneer China's revolution. More than fifty years later, however, the state-orchestrated cult of Mao had denounced Li Lisan and Li Shaoqi, and had refashioned the Anyuan strike as Mao's exemplary accomplishment alone. The brutality of the Chinese revolution and the oppressiveness of the state came to obscure the "alternative revolutionary path" that was devoted not to class struggle but to human dignity. Tracing a history of paintings that have covered up or distorted Anyuan's legacy, Perry reminds us that revolutions need not take their energies from a cult of personality or class struggle. Indeed, the example of Anyuan shows that revolutionary change may arise not through violence but through grassroots idealism and organization.

TRANSNATIONAL COMMUNITIES AND HISTORIES

The next three articles examine community and history making in transnational spheres, reminding us of what is to be gained when we go beyond framing our analyses of religion, culture, and politics with reference to national or state boundaries. JOSEPH S. ALTER begins his study of an episode in Asian medical history by pointing out the tendency among scholars to index medical practices according to rigid cultural, religious, and political boundaries (e.g., Traditional Chinese Medicine, Tibetan Buddhist Medicine) and to presume an intrinsic systematicity and unity behind such practices when, in fact, empirical investigation reveals their diversity and plurality. Alter selects the figure of Hakim Mohammed Said and his effort to reconceptualize Unani (or Greco-Islamic) medicine as "Eastern Medicine" in order to show how medical history might be freed from analytic frameworks defined by colonialism and nationalism. Trained in both Unani and Ayurvedic medicines, Said founded the Society for the Promotion of Eastern Medicine in Pakistan. In 1963 he led a society delegation to China in order to gain a better understanding of "Traditional Chinese Medicine" with respect to its past and future links to medical knowledge in the Middle East and South Asia. For Said, medical boundaries in Asia were quite blurred, and yet posed the challenge of how to bring divergent theories and bodies of knowledge into a single and universal medical philosophy based on cross-cultural knowledge. Alter surveys the writings read and prepared by Said in his broad endeavor, and suggests that Said's conceptualization of Eastern medicine and its history reveals a very cosmopolitan body of medical knowledge.

EIICHIRO AZUMA looks at the expansionist orthodoxy of imperial Japan in the 1930s and its interest in the history of Japanese emigrant experience. Intellectuals, popular culture, and the state saw emigrants to Hawaii, Guam, and California as pioneers of Japanese "overseas development" and exemplars of Japanese civilizational superiority. Making use of chronicles and documents from Japanese emigrants in the United States, expansionist historians argued that the emigrants led a successful agricultural colonization of the American frontier. That narrative justified and promoted a program for an idealized, emigration-led colonization in Manchuria and other regions of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere. Azuma's study shows us the fundamentally transnational process of making history at a time of imperial expansion. Japanese emigrants, it is clear, occupied a fluid position between two national spheres, and if their own writings could be read as chapters in an immigrant success story in the United States, Japanese historians—and more than a few emigrants—celebrated them as accounts of patriotic acts that could be a model and symbol for Japan's colonial destiny. Azuma thus recuperates a transnational history from two discrete national histories, one conventionally belonging to the academic precincts of Asian American or U.S. ethnic studies, the other to Asian area studies.

History making is but one dimension of community making across national boundaries. MARTIN RAMSTEDT assesses the value of spiritual capital (as a subspecies of social capital) as it is being negotiated in Hindu networks linking India and Indonesia. The economic and spiritual solidarities discovered between Indian and Indonesian Hindus have sprung from fertile soil: The rise of Hindu nationalism in India has coincided with vastly expanded economic opportunities in the Asia-Pacific markets, fueled by resentments over Western bids for technological and political-economic hegemony, and fed by tensions with Muslim citizens and fears of Islamic militancy and violence. In Indonesia, the very small Hindu minority fears its place in an increasingly Islamized archipelago and looks to institutional frameworks for transnational commerce and community. Further factors include, within India, the universalization of Hindu Dharma, which constructed Hinduism as a coherent religious system along Semitic models of religion, and within Indonesia, the broadening of Hinduism institutionally as a universal religion worthy of government support and surveillance. Ramstedt uses this backdrop to reflect on institutional and mission exchanges and to assess the highly personalized nature of prominent spiritual and commercial linkages.

Legacies

We continue with our series of occasional papers on the contributions of past empirical research in Asia to disciplinary or comparative studies. In this issue, Sally Ann Ness discusses the "lost legacy" of Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson's collaborative ethnographic fieldwork in Bali (1936–38). Usually celebrated for their methodological contributions to visual anthropology and critiqued for their theoretical dispositions, their romanticism, and their refusal to interest themselves in a comparative understanding of Hindu South and Southeast Asia, Mead and Bateson imagined "Bali" as a place in which the masking or distorting effects of language might be evaded in an analysis of embodied culture. Although informed by the already popular reach of its art forms into New York's intellectual and cosmopolitan circles, Mead and Bateson's selection of Bali as a site for fieldwork allowed them to make some unheralded breakthroughs in the analysis of culture and performance. Place mattered. Ness describes how the muted iconicity of Balinese dance, its intensely rule-governed choreographic discipline of bodies in motion, and its accentuated coordination and simultaneous isolation of more than twenty body segmentations yielded a corporeal metaphor of balance, which Bateson later would postulate as an ontological force in Balinese culture as a whole. Ness sees prefigured in the Mead/Bateson collaboration key theoretical prospects for contemporary performance studies, and tantalizing possibilities for the comparative study of Asian performance traditions.

Politics, Style, and Signs of the Modern

Our next two essays explore the cultural politics of style and the way in which fashions in dress and hair have been read as signs of modernity. Making the point that the meaning of garb is "irreducibly plural" and open to contest, Chie Ikeya looks at popular outcry and commentaries over women's "modern fashion" in late colonial Burma. The Burmese "modern girl" who sported high heels, a jacket, and perhaps a sheer blouse frequently came in for criticism: She was, critics would say, unethical, unpatriotic, too Western, too materialistic, too chummy with colonial men, and inclined to abandon her Burmese identity. Ikeya asks why women, not men, came in for extensive public critique, in that Burmese men too, dressed in Western or hybrid styles. Ikeya insists that an account of the plural and contested meanings of "modern fashion" and the "modern girl" in late colonial Burma must include consideration of gender politics, specifically the crisis in masculinity taking place with respect to male efforts to control women. Its other semantic and indexical functions notwithstanding, modern fashion clearly served to distinguish the "new" woman" from the old, a "modern" woman who enjoyed greater social mobility and authority than her predecessors. Nationalism and anticolonial sentiment may have motivated some of these critics, but fashion's threat to gender norms played no small role in the drama of modernity in Burma.

Like Ikeya, Suzanne G. O'Brien feels that it is more than splitting hairs to insist upon the plurality of meanings in style when exploring Asian modernities. O'Brien looks at hairstyles in Meiji-era Japan (1868–1912), focusing in particular on the shorter styles adopted by men. It often is claimed that these shorter styles signaled an embrace of modernization and the West. O'Brien complicates the picture. The Meiji experimentation with hybrid hairstyles—which could and did yield shifting and hard-to-pin-down meanings—followed upon the regimented symbolism of hair in the preceding Tokugawa era. What one meant by cutting one's hair in a particular way during the Meiji might convey political affiliation, ideas about civilization, social status, or attitudes toward rapid social change, tradition, and modernization. Yet one's intent could in no way contain the unruly politics of interpretation and symbolic domination, and O'Brien shows how laws and taxes pertaining to hairstyles cropped up in various prefectures.

Subaltern Struggle in India

Our closing pair of essays touches on the prospects and limits of Dalit political consciousness and power in India. Ronki Ram explores how Dalit consciousness in Punjab emerged within devotional religious practices surrounding Guru Ravidass. Ravidass was a lower-caste Chamar poet-saint from the fourteenth century whose teachings about compassion have been mobilized to improve Dalit welfare by pursuing a "middle path" that avoids religious conversion and social assimilation into other castes. Ram reviews hagiographic details of Ravidass's life and teachings, and then considers their institutionalization in the religious compounds (Deras) that draw Dalit pilgrims, such as Dera Sach Khand Ballan. Ram asserts that the Deras have deepened a sense of Dalit identity, served as a key site for social protest, and made possible a psychic emancipation for effective participation in local politics.

Raised political awareness of this kind has been credited with launching a "Dalit revolution." Yet Craig Jeffrey, Patricia Jeffery, and Roger Jeffery find only limited and contradictory evidence in support of outward and pragmatic transformation of political structures. Their study of village politics in western Uttar Pradesh indicates that Dalit efforts to co-opt state institutions usually meet effective resistance from dominant castes of ethnic Jats. The authors show how Dalits, notwithstanding their educational gains and the rise of "new politicians" among them, understand and endure their subordination to more powerful local political actors. Aware that interpreting political change has its own politics, the authors call for a political economy approach that takes into account local cultural interpretations of on-the-ground political realities.

SPECIAL REVIEW ESSAYS

Most book reviews in *JAS* are quite short—perhaps 800–1000 words—and will have to remain so. Yet as scholars, we often hunger for lengthier essays that engage with several books, or with a broad and monumental study that seems destined to push our conversations in new directions. I have invited our book review editors to commission essays of this kind from time to time, and we are pleased to include in this issue THOMAS GIBSON's discussion of three recent works on mystics in Muslim Asia, and JOHN CREIGHTON CAMPBELL's critical appraisal of several volumes on aging and demography in Japan. I thank Andrew Willford for commissioning Gibson's essay, and Stephen Vlastos for commissioning Campbell's.

—KMG

Forthcoming Articles in *JAS* 68:1 (February 2009)

Life as Form: How Biomimesis Encountered Buddhism in Lu Xun
Lydia Liu

Forum on the Rule of Law in Indian and Chinese History

State, Sovereignty, and the People: A Comparison of the "Rule of Law" in China and India
Jonathan Ocko and David Gilmartin

Public and Private Realms in the Japanese Nation and Empire

Inconspicuous Consumption: Saké, Beer, and the Birth of the Consumer in Japan
Penelope Francks

The Chimera of Privacy: Reading Self-Discipline in Japanese Diaries from the Second World War (1937–1945)
Aaron William Moore

British Power and Asian Identities, 1870–1949

Strategic Hypocrisy: the British Imperial Scripting of Tibet's Geopolitical Identity
Dibyesh Anand

Mimicry, Masculinity and the Mystique of Indian English: Western India, 1870–1900
Shefali Chandra