

Editorial Foreword

OUR COVER

This photograph by University of Wisconsin art historian Julia K. Murray, author of the article in this issue on representations of Confucius to which it is linked, shows a stone statue depicting the famous Chinese sage. Located in the Beijing Temple of Confucius (Kongmiao), it was erected in 1993.

ASIA BEYOND THE HEADLINES

In our last issue, we launched a new genre of *Journal of Asian Studies* essays that take the form of commentaries. Like Duncan McCargo's "Asia Beyond the Headlines" piece that ran in February, these essays are written by specialists who strive to bridge the divide between academic and general discussions of subjects that are in the news. Typically, one of these pieces will be published at a time, as was the case when McCargo's "Thai Politics as Reality TV" appeared on its own, but on occasion, we will either skip an issue or carry two essays—as is the case in this issue.

The first "Asia Beyond the Headlines" commentary is written by a prominent economist, PRANAB BARDHAN of the University of California, Berkeley, who specializes in the study of topics ranging from rural institutions in poor countries to the political economy of development policies to international trade. He has written about—and given high-profile lectures in—both India and China. In his contribution here, "India and China: Governance Issues and Development," Bardhan explores the similarities and differences between the contemporary economic and political trajectories of these two massive Asian countries. Drawing on material from his forthcoming book, *Awakening Giants, Feet of Clay*, he argues for the need to go beyond simplistic visions of "democracy" as having one set of implications for development and "authoritarianism" another. Rather, as Bardhan shows, we must probe the complex ways in which the particular sort of democratic system that has evolved in India and the particular sort of authoritarian system that has evolved in China facilitate or pose obstacles to efforts to achieve a specific goal, whether it is rapid economic growth, the maintenance of stability, or the minimizing of social inequality.

The second piece in this section, "Contemporary Chinese Youth and the State," is penned by University of Southern California political scientist STANLEY ROSEN, who has done pioneering work on a variety of topics in Chinese studies, ranging from state–society relations to cinema. Here, in an essay written with an eye toward 2009's status as a year of significant round-number anniversaries, including the ninetieth anniversary of the May Fourth

Movement of 1919 (the first great Chinese student-led mass movement) and the twentieth anniversary of the June 4 Massacre of 1989 (which put an end to the student-led protests associated in many minds with the words “Tiananmen Square”), Rosen turns his attention to the political views of educated Chinese youth and their shifting relationship to the state. While not dismissing the conventional notion that the idealism and activism of the 1989 generation set them apart from today’s students, Rosen draws on survey data, commentaries in the media, and his own experiences in China to show that a full understanding of the topic requires more than just a focus on this contrast. He does not predict when or how educated youth will next make their mark on Chinese politics, but he describes the signs to watch for as this year’s highly charged anniversaries (the sixtieth birthday of the People’s Republic falls in October, too) pass one by one.

HOLY FIGURES AND SACRED RITES

The first piece in this thematic cluster, University of Wisconsin art historian JULIA K. MURRAY’S “‘Idols’ in the Temple: Icons and the Cult of Confucius,” has all of the hallmarks of a standard scholarly article, complete with detailed citations and thoughtful engagement with the academic literature. Nevertheless, it, too, takes readers “beyond the headlines,” providing an illuminating perspective on a topic that has been making news around the world. In this case, the story that has occasionally made headlines (and has often been mentioned in passing in newspaper reports) is the renewed importance of Confucius as an officially endorsed symbol of the Chinese state. The sage’s name has been used for counterparts to the German Goethe institutes that are being set up in various parts of the world, and his hometown, Qufu, was one place through which the Olympic torch passed with much fanfare last year. As recently as the 1970s, whatever a citizen of the People’s Republic of China might have thought about Confucius in private—some doubtless never stopped admiring or even venerating him—the public acts associated with his texts and image took the form of repudiation as opposed to celebration. Now, by contrast, we find him being quoted with approval by state leaders and one of his adages used to start the opening ceremonies of the Beijing Games, a high-profile and officially micro-managed event (meaning that it was no accidental or random selection of a saying). And we also see the phenomenon that is the focus of Murray’s astute and historically informed discussion: the increasing prominence of a particular iconic sculptural representation of the man himself.

The second piece in the section, “*Ch’udo yebae*: A Case Study in the Early Implantation of Protestant Christianity in Korea,” by JAMES HUNTLEY GRAYSON, professor of modern Korean studies at the University of Sheffield, focuses not on the resurgence but on the past adaptation of Confucian ideas and practices. He draws attention, through a close look at one particular national setting, to how rituals associated with Confucianism have influenced the way in which imported religions—in this instance, particular forms of Christianity—are transformed as they find a foothold in a novel East Asian cultural milieu.

Telling a story that resonates with religious developments in other parts of the region, Grayson adds a new dimension to the story of Christianity in Asia and Korean religiosity, while also underscoring the degree to which Confucianism needs to be understood in terms of a protean as well as persistent set of beliefs and actions.

Our cluster concludes with a shift in geographic focus from East Asia to South Asia and a turn from Confucianism and Christianity to Sufi traditions. Still, more than a common emphasis on religious issues links “Saved by the Saint: Refusing and Reversing Partition in Muslim North India” to the articles that precede it. This article’s author, ANNA BIGELOW of North Carolina State University’s Department of Philosophy and Religion, is interested in the way in which elements drawn from different sects and creeds can intertwine—in this case, not through a religion with hybrid practices (of the sort that Grayson explores) or a state ideology that remains avowedly secular while making space for religious iconography (the current situation in China), but rather through a shrine coming to serve as the centerpiece of a “multireligious cult” that has meaning for residents and pilgrims of varying faiths and doctrinal affiliations. Most intriguing in her account is Bigelow’s examination of the way in which this shrine has kept the Punjab town of Malerkotla largely free from the kinds of internecine violence and strife that have afflicted many nearby areas since the 1947 partition of India and Pakistan. While religious ties have often served as a factor in exacerbating conflict in the surrounding region, the shrine in question has helped make Malerkotla, in the words of the *Hindu*, one of India’s leading newspapers, an “oasis of tolerance,” Bigelow tells us. The town, in fact, enjoys a reputation as a “communal utopia,” thanks in large part to the shared way its founding saint is viewed by people of varied backgrounds and ties.

MEDIA AND MASS COMMUNICATION

The first of the two articles in this thematic cluster, “Testing Concepts about Print, Newspapers and Politics: Kerala, India, 1800–2009,” is by ROBIN JEFFREY, who was trained in South Asian history but worked as a journalist before graduate school and, after receiving his doctorate, taught in the Politics Program at La Trobe University (where he remains an emeritus faculty member). This background is worth mentioning, as his piece moves between past and present, engaging with the literature on print that has developed in different disciplines (from philosophy to sociology) and interdisciplinary fields such as communication studies, all the while insisting that readers think about newspapers in the most pragmatic fashion (that we know the names of the people who publish them, pay attention to the numbers of issues they sell at particular points in time, and so on), even while grappling with what theorists known for thinking abstractly (Hegel and McLuhan, to name just two who get cited) have said about print. Zeroing in on Kerala, “India’s most newspaper-consuming state,” Jeffrey assesses, in particular, the relative fit of Jürgen Habermas and Benedict Anderson’s visions of print media and historical patterns in modern times, concluding that, in this

setting at least, the former's ideas are easier to square with what happened on the ground during the last two centuries.

In the second article, "Interests, Wireless Technology, and Institutional Change: From Government Monopoly to Regulated Competition in Indian Telecommunications," we again see a scholar with ties to two disciplines (undergraduate training in economics, plus a doctorate in political science) focusing on media in India. This time, though, the author, RAHUL MUKHERJI of National University's of Singapore, is concerned not with print but rather with "India's booming telecommunications sector," and his purview is national rather than a single Indian state. Engaging with the work of economist Douglass C. North and other theorists of institutional change, Mukherji traces shifts in regulatory policy over time, stressing—in a manner that will make it interesting to see how events unfold in India's telecommunications industry in the months to come—that during times of "financial crisis," patterns in this realm, as in so many other, change significantly.

BOUNDARIES AND BORDERLANDS

The first essay in this cluster, written by anthropologist WEN-CHIN CHANG of Taipei's Academia Sinica, is titled "Venturing into 'Barbarous' Regions: Transborder Trade among the Migrant Yunnanese between Thailand and Burma, 1960s–1980s." The author, drawing on extensive ethnographic work in sections of Southeast Asia near the boundaries of the People's Republic of China, argues that we need to see the actions of traders moving in and out of this area from China's southwestern Yunnan Province as taking part in a distinctive set of cultural and economic activities. Their relationship with local authorities and the Thai and Burmese with whom they did business during the period in question was complex, as was the way in which their actions fit in with (or, rather, in most cases took place outside of) the regulatory mechanisms of the national regimes based in Bangkok and Rangoon. According to Chang, these traders from Yunnan were part of a "transnational popular realm" that could alternatively or even simultaneously challenge and be incorporated into Thai and Burmese bureaucratic structures.

The final piece in the section and the last article in this issue, "Disarming Violence: Development, Democracy, and Security on the Borders of India," is the result of a collaboration by two anthropologists: RAVINA AGGARWAL of Smith College and MONA BHAN of DePauw University. In some ways, their essay brings us back to the subject taken up in the first piece in the issue, in the sense that, like Bardhan in his "Asia Beyond the Headlines" commentary, Aggarwal and Bhan also want to place into a novel perspective the relationship between democracy and development. In this case, though, the focus is not on two countries (China and India) but on land to which two nation-states (India and Pakistan) have laid claim. Their interest, more specifically, is in how the Indian government has tried to counteract the delegitimizing effects of years of civil insurgency and wars in the Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir by

launching a program whose name can be rendered into English as “Operation Goodwill,” which is “an initiative” that includes a strong social welfare component while striving to achieve goals associated with securing and keeping pacified a borderland region.

POSTSCRIPT

This is the second issue of the *Journal of Asian Studies* to have my name on it as editor, but it was, like the previous one, largely shaped Kenneth M. George, my predecessor. Most of the articles were accepted under his watch. In addition, the robust disciplinary diversity of the issue, as well as its geographic breadth—in two senses, both in terms of the locales of the authors and the places they examine—is a credit to long-term trends (which go back to his own predecessors as well) and specific initiatives under his watch. It is noteworthy, I think, and a reflection of Ken’s commitment to combining goals of inclusiveness with maintaining very high standards of quality (always a tricky balancing act), that in a single issue, as the preceding brief descriptions of the articles indicate, we find contributions by scholars trained in fields ranging from art history to economics, who specialize in the study of all four of the Association for Asian Studies’ main regional divisions (Southeast Asia, South Asia, Northeast Asia, and China and Inner Asia), and who are now based everywhere from Singapore to Southern California, Taipei to Melbourne, Yorkshire to North Carolina.

—JMW

Forthcoming Articles in *JAS* 68:3 (August 2009)

Asia Beyond the Headlines

Pink Globalization by
CHRISTINE YANO

Writing Across Borders

Rewriting Collaboration: China, Japan and the Self in the Diaries of Bai Jianwu
MARJORIE DRYBURGH

Creative Responses to the Japan Vogue in Greater China: Murakami Haruki and the Quest for Cosmopolitanism
MARGARET HILLENBRAND

Transculturation in Early Twentieth-Century Intra-East Asian Literary Contact
Nebulae: Censored Japanese Texts in Chinese and Korean
KAREN THORNER

Gender and Politics

Selling Sex under Occupation: The American-Japanese Encounter after 1945
SARAH KOVNER

Suffragist Women, Corrupt Officials, and Waste Control in Interwar-era Japan
MARIKO TAMANOI

Colonial Contexts

Politics and Pageantry in Protectorate Korea
CHRISTINE KIM

Everyday Life as Critique in Late Colonial Korea: Kim Namch' on 1934–1943
SUNYOUNG PARK

The Word is Mightier than the Throne: Bucking colonial education trends in Manchukuo
ANDREW HALL
