

## Editorial Foreword 72.2 (May 2013)

### OUR COVER

Herders and monks of Tangkor Township, Sichuan, burned pelts of leopard, otter, tiger, and other animals in February 2006 after the Kalachakra Initiation Ceremony at which the fourteenth Dalai Lama stated that Tibetans should not wear them. Among the many contested rationales for this and other burnings across the Tibetan Plateau were religious loyalty to the fourteenth Dalai Lama, national unity, a desire to neutralize growing signs of wealth inequality, saving the animals as sentient beings, rectifying Tibetans' slipping global reputation through a demonstration of their environmental awareness, and a rejection of the regime of commodification of statist development efforts. Many people who filmed the events described their desire to have the videos inspire other Tibetans, to provide evidence of their heeding of religious teachings, and to communicate to the world that Tibetans were no longer backwards in their environmental consciousness. The circulation of such home videos by Tibetans has become increasingly important since the 1990s, most recently with the circulation of images of self-immolations since 2011. Photo provided courtesy of EMILY T. YEH, author of "Blazing Pelts and Burning Passions: Nationalism, Cultural Politics, and Spectacular Decommodification in Tibet," included in this issue.

### ASIA BEYOND THE HEADLINES, REFLECTIONS, AND TRENDS

This issue offers readers many familiar features, including research articles by specialists working on different parts of Asia and in different disciplines, and a wide range of book reviews, but it also breaks new ground in various ways. For example, like many recent issues of the journal, it begins with a contribution to the "Asia Beyond the Headlines" genre, but one that takes a novel form. For the first time, rather than having one or more contributors write pieces, we are publishing an extended dialogue on an issue in the news, in which two specialists in Japanese and Korean politics, respectively, respond to a series of questions put to them by DAVID C. KANG, a scholar of international relations with a Northeast Asian focus who recently joined our editorial board as an associate editor.

The subject of this exchange, which we hope will be the first of many to appear in our pages, is the late 2012 elections in Japan and South Korea. Each of these led to a much-discussed result, as the former brought the Liberal Democratic Party back into power in Japan (readers of the *JAS* will remember the "Asia Beyond the Headlines" piece we ran when they were voted out for the first time in decades) and the latter led to the election of the first female head of state in Northeast Asia. Having David pose the questions carries

forward a recently launched tradition of having associate editors of the journal play a curatorial role in special features that deal with issues they know well. The people he questions, both political scientists like himself, are DAVID LEHENY, a scholar of Japanese politics, and VICTOR D. CHA, an expert on the Korean peninsula who has held governmental as well as academic posts.

The second piece in the issue also breaks new ground, in this case by inaugurating a new *JAS* genre, which will join the “Asia Beyond the Headlines” and “Trends” articles as a periodic addition to the “front of the book” section of the journal. This genre, titled simply “Reflections,” will be made up of deeply informed but accessibly written essays that focus in on a set of interrelated texts or artistic works that would not necessarily end up the focus of regular reviews, articles, or “Trends” pieces, yet seem likely to be of special interest to a significant segment of readers of this publication. In the inaugural “Reflections” essay, PAUL A. COHEN, an acclaimed historian who has written extensively on historical method as well as specific aspects of the Chinese and global past, examines a trilogy of books by an unusually important nonacademic writer of works on China. Titled “Peter Hessler: Teacher, Archaeologist, Anthropologist, Travel Writer, Master Storyteller,” it focuses on the work of a former Peace Corps volunteer and now *New Yorker* staff writer who spent a long period of time in China and now lives in and reports from Cairo. Future contributions to this genre may, for example, take extended looks at works in languages other than English produced by theorists or scholars based in Asia, focus on the films of a particular director of unusual importance, and so on.

Following this—and rounding out the “front of the book” for this issue—is an ambitiously framed and sophisticated “Trends” essay by SANJAY SETH, a member of the Politics Department at London’s Goldsmiths College who has worked mostly on India. In this piece, he moves between Asia’s two most populous countries, exploring common themes in their intellectual, cultural, and political histories. Titled “Nationalism, Modernity, and the ‘Woman Question’ in India and China,” it adds a fascinating new dimension to the explorations of “Gender Across Asia” that was the theme of the November 2012 special issue of the *JAS*.

## RESEARCH ARTICLES

Starting off the research articles that make up the core middle section of the *JAS* is “Warlord Colonialism: State Fragmentation and Chinese Rule in Kham, 1911–1949,” a nuanced work of historical scholarship by JOSEPH D. LAWSON, a New Zealand-trained scholar now based at Academia Sinica. His essay illuminates continuities in and breaks between the governing strategies used by officials of the Qing (1644–1912) and their less powerful Han Chinese successors in striving to control and extract resources from the ethnically Tibetan population of the Kham region. As its title suggests, a key theme of Lawson’s article is the varied ways that colonialism can work in frontier zones.

Following this is University of Colorado cultural geographer EMILY YEH’s powerful article, which is also on a Tibetan population but zeroes in on actions taken by members of that population rather than by outside colonial authorities. Her main topic is pelt-burning rituals, which began after a 2006 pronouncement by the fourteenth Dalai Lama that Tibetans should stop wearing clothing made from the skins of endangered

animals. To illustrate her arguments about the meaning of these events, as well as to bring them to life in a manner that goes beyond verbal descriptions, Yeh's piece is the first that we have ever run that is accompanied by embedded videos (see <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayJournal?jid=JAS>). This foray into multimedia publishing, which we hope will be followed by others that explore different topics and make use of different sorts of materials, was made possible by a generous grant from the Shelley and Donald Rubin Foundation.

Closing out the issue's core section are three essays that move us through time and space from China of the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), to Southeast Asia from the late eighteenth century to the aftermath of World War II, to late colonial India. The authors, a trio of historians, are SARAH SCHNEEWIND of UC San Diego, SHAWN MCHALE of George Washington University, and ABIGAIL MCGOWAN of the University of Vermont. Schneewind's "Beyond Flattery: Legitimizing Political Participation in a Ming Living Shrine" offers a compelling argument for treating "the Mandate of Heaven ideology as more than a mask of authority hiding brute imperial power." McHale's "Ethnicity, Violence, and Khmer-Vietnamese Relations: The Significance of the Lower Mekong Delta, 1757–1954" is a sophisticated effort to show how historical events and myths have come to shape Cambodians' attitudes toward their neighbors in Vietnam. McGowan's "Convict Carpets: Jails and the Revival of Historic Carpet Design in Colonial India" skillfully moves between aesthetic, economic, and cultural realms in considering the production and consumption of a symbolically laden set of objects.

## BOOK REVIEWS

The issue ends, as always, with a "back of the book" section devoted to reviews. This opens with two extended review essays. The first is "Pogrom in Gujarat, 2002: Neighborhood Perspectives," by HOWARD SPODEK of Temple University. It discusses three recent books on a set of violent events that, as the reviewer puts it, was "one of the worst in India since partition in 1947" and "drew responses of horror from across India and the world." The second is "South Thailand: Politics, Identity, and Culture" by RAYMOND SCUPIN of Lindenwood University. This essay pulls together works by a number of experts sharing their knowledge on the contested lives, politics, and religion of the region.

—JNW

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## Forthcoming Articles in *JAS* 72.3 (August 2013)

### *Asia Beyond the Headlines*

Will Demographic Change Slow China's Rise?

KAREN EGGLESTON, JEAN C. OI, SCOTT ROZELLE, ANG SUN, ANDREW WALDER,  
AND XUEGUANG ZHOU

*Research Articles*

Drawing Sexual Violence in Wartime China: Anti-Japanese Propaganda Cartoons  
LOUISE EDWARDS

Hindu-Christian Conflict in India: Globalization, Conversion, and the Coterminal Castes  
and Tribes  
CHAD M. BAUMAN

Enlightenment Geisha: The Sex Trade, Education, and Feminine Ideals in Early  
Meiji Japan  
AMY STANLEY

A True Sino-Japanese Amity? Collaborationism and the Yokohama Chinese (1937–1945)  
ERIC HAN

Understanding Currency Policy and Central Banking in China  
GREGORY T. CHIN

Everyday Politics in North Korea  
CHANGYONG CHOI

Forgotten Futures: Indian Muslims in the Trans-Islamic Turn to Japan  
NILE GREEN