

CROSS-CURRENTS



EAST ASIAN HISTORY AND CULTURE REVIEW

Note to Readers

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Dear *Cross-Currents* readers,

We are pleased to present you with the thirty-second quarterly issue of the open-access e-journal *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review*.

In this special issue—"Beyond Comparison: Japan and Its Empire in Transimperial Relations"—guest editor **Satoshi Mizutani** (Doshisha University) brings together four research articles whose themes include the nature of the colonial protectorate in the British and French empires, linguistic and education policies in the German Empire, French colonialism in Indochina during the Second World War, and the anti-British activities of Indian nationalists in exile. This is not just another collection of comparative research. As the issue's title suggests, the authors—Mizutani, **Akiyoshi Nishiyama** (Kyoritsu Women's University), **Chizuru Namba** (Keio University), and **Aaron Peters** (University of Toronto)—aim to show why the very idea of comparing needs to be transcended.

This issue also includes eight review essays covering twelve new and recent publications. The first pair of review essays, by **Gil-Soo Han** (Monash University), discuss *Parameters of Disavowal: Colonial Representation in South Korean Cinema* by **Jinsoo An** and *K-pop Live: Fans, Idols, and Multimedia Performance* by **Suk-Young Kim**, books that explore Korean films produced between 1945 and the 1970s and the "liveness" of K-pop, respectively.

In another review essay, **Madeline Y. Hsu** (University of Texas, Austin) writes about *Dear China: Emigrant Letters and Remittances, 1820–1980* by **Gregor Benton** and **Hong Liu**, *Citizens in Motion: Emigration, Immigration, and Re-migrations across China's Borders* by **Elaine Lynn-Ee Ho**, and **Wang Gungwu's** *Home Is Not Here*. This trio of books significantly develops the fields of migration and Chinese overseas studies, with each

articulating key aspects of these interlocking fields in a distinct way. In combination, Hsu concludes, these outstanding monographs “highlight the considerable heterogeneity of Chinese migrant experiences, networks, and outcomes and the necessity of research that is grounded in the specific temporal and regional contexts and connections that have the greatest influence in shaping migration flows and the adaptations that ensue.”

In the fourth review essay, **Angela Ki Che Leung** (University of Hong Kong) puts three works that demonstrate from different angles the centrality of medicine and public health in China’s modern state-building since the late nineteenth century: *Intimate Communities: Wartime Healthcare and the Birth of Modern China* by **Nicole Elizabeth Barnes**, *The Invention of Madness: State, Society, and the Insane in Modern China* by **Emily Baum**, and *Body, Society, and Nation: The Creation of Public Health and Urban Culture in Shanghai* by **Chieko Nakajima**. These publications demonstrate “the great transformative power of modern subjects—such as professional women—and new entrepreneurship” as well as the equally important “resilience of traditional institutions and knowledge of the natural world.”

This issue also includes a themed set of reviews covering four 2019 publications on Vietnam.

Liam C. Kelley (Universiti Brunei Darussalam) reviews **Claudine Ang’s** *Poetic Transformations: Eighteenth-Century Cultural Projects on the Mekong Plains*, a book that contributes to a subfield of Vietnamese history focused on the southern area that the Nguyễn clan controlled in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Đàng Trong or Cochinchina). Kelley writes that, whereas earlier works have emphasized ways in which the southern Vietnamese were “less Sinitic,” Ang’s study offers a needed corrective to that view by demonstrating that we can learn a good deal about the region and its society through literary texts.

In her review, **Tam T. T. Ngo** (Max Planck Institute and Radboud University) concludes that **Christian C. Lentz’s** *Contested Territory: Điện Biên Phủ and the Making of Northwest Vietnam*, an archival study based on Vietnamese and French sources and supplemented by fieldwork, is a great contribution to the history of the conflicted making of Vietnam, “a history that is more often than not hidden in official Vietnamese historiography.” Ngo writes that with a “rich understanding of the complexity of spatial understandings among the Black River people that preceded the formation of nation-states and...continues today,” Lentz returns the battle site of Điện Biên Phủ, a powerful *lieu de memoire*, to its historical geography.

In her review, **Patricia Pelley** (Texas Tech University) writes that **Olga Dror** has articulated a genuinely innovative way of thinking about the Vietnam War in *Making Two Vietnams: War and Youth Identities, 1965–1975*. As Pelley notes, thanks to “uncommon linguistic skills” and “energetic and imaginative research,” Dror illuminates

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the wartime experiences of once-marginalized actors, resulting in a monograph that deserves to be widely read.

A review by **Allison Truitt** (Tulane University) shares that **Ivan V. Small**, throughout his *Currencies of Imagination: Channeling Money and Chasing Mobility in Vietnam*, “masterfully navigates between vividly rendered ethnographic stories and astute interpretations of anthropological and allied theory, challenging readers to rethink the gift and money anew.” Based on fieldwork in three sites, Small’s new book reveals that remittances actually magnify, rather than collapse, the space between Vietnamese and their brethren Việt Kiều (overseas Vietnamese).

Finally, in our “Readings from Asia” section, **Yoo Bada** (Korea University) reviews a book edited by **Okamoto Takashi**, *Sōshuken no sekaishi: Tōzai Ajia no kindai to hon’yaku gainen* 宗主権の世界史：東西アジアの近代と翻譯概念 [A world history of suzerainty: A modern history of East and West Asia and translated concepts]. This groundbreaking study attempts to understand both Western international law and the Chinese world order through the single concept of suzerainty.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue. As always, we look forward to receiving your feedback. Be sure to register here on our website in order to leave comments for our contributors and join the conversation.

Wen-hsin Yeh and Hyongchan Kim
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