

# CROSS-CURRENTS



## EAST ASIAN HISTORY AND CULTURE REVIEW

June 2015

Dear *Cross-Currents* readers,

We are pleased to present you with the fifteenth quarterly issue of the *Cross-Currents* e-journal. The research articles in the June 2015 issue—guest edited by **Elena Barabantseva** (University of Manchester), **Biao Xiang** (University of Oxford), and **Antonia Chao** (Tunghai University)—explore the theme “Governing Marriage Migrations: Perspectives from Mainland China and Taiwan.” The issue includes five articles by scholars from Japan, Germany, the UK, Taiwan, and Hong Kong who are engaged in critical analysis of cross-border migration for the purpose of marriage in the People’s Republic of China and Taiwan as a subject of governance. As the guest editors emphasize in their introduction, cross-border marriage is “perceived to be inseparable from a wide range of other issues, such as sexual morality, family norms, national identity, and border security.” The contributors—**Hongfang Hao** (Kyoto University), **Caroline Grillot** (Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology), **Elena Barabantseva** (University of Manchester), **Mei-Hua Chen** (National Sun Yat-sen University), and **Hsun-Hui Tseng** (Chinese University of Hong Kong)—offer valuable new insights on international marriage migration in their multidisciplinary and fieldwork-based studies.

The June 2015 issue also features two review essays. In the first, **John DiMoia** (National University of Singapore) discusses the “distinctive brand of comparative imperial history” offered by **Hoi-eun Kim**’s *Doctors of Empire: Medical and Cultural Encounters between Imperial Germany and Meiji Japan* (University of Toronto Press, 2014), a new publication that “brings a different approach to bear on the central question of a nascent Japanese medical community undergoing its own radical form of reinvention.”

In the second book review, **Erik Harms** (Yale University) teases out interesting connections among four new ethnographic perspectives on gender, class, and space in Ho Chi Minh City: **Ann Marie Leshkovich**’s *Essential Trade: Vietnamese Women in a Changing Marketplace* (University of Hawai‘i Press, 2014), **Kimberly Kay Hoang**’s *Dealing in Desire: Asian Ascendancy, Western Decline, and the Hidden Currencies of Global Sex Work* (University of California Press, 2015), **Catherine Earl**’s *Vietnam’s New Middle Classes: Gender, Career, City* (NIAS Press, 2014), and **Annette Miae Kim**’s *Sidewalk City: Remapping Public Space in Ho Chi Minh City* (University of Chicago Press, 2015). Throughout this extended essay, Harms points to the intellectual rewards of “getting out of the critic’s armchair and talking to people,” of

seeing how people navigate the city and “understand their own position within the spatial division of labor.”

This issue’s photo essay—“Consistency in an Ever-Changing City: An Old Clock Tower in Contemporary Hong Kong”—features historical and contemporary photographs of Hong Kong’s only standing clock tower. In her accompanying essay, titled “Old Objects in a Futuristic World: Re-Imagining Hong Kong through Its Clock Tower in the Eyes of Western Settlers and Local Citizens” —curator **Catherine S. Chan** (Hong Kong Baptist University) is especially interested in recognizing the tower as “a continuous and transformative agent capable of both shaping society and being redefined by external changes.

This issue’s “Readings from Asia” essay by **Mark Caprio** (Rikkyo University)—“A Japanese Perspective on Late Nineteenth-Century Korean Reform Movements”—considers the ramifications of **Watanabe Sōki**’s *Chōsen kaikoku to nisshin sensō: Amerika wa naze Ni hon wo Shijishi, Chōsen wo mikagittaka* [The opening of Korea and the Sino-Japanese War: Why did the United States support Japan but abandon Korea?] (Sōshisha, 2014). Caprio concludes that Sōki’s new publication provides “a fine example of Japanese national historiography; that is, history aiming to provide evidence to support a fact, rather than critically challenge the significance and truth of a fact,” an approach that “succeeds in strengthening domestic nationalist pride [but] also increases the chances of encouraging international rivalry, strife, and, at the ultimate extreme, unnecessary war.”

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.

Sincerely,

Wen-hsin Yeh and Sungtaek Cho  
Co-editors