

CROSS-CURRENTS



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Dear *Cross-Currents* readers,

We are pleased to present you with the nineteenth quarterly issue of the open-access *Cross-Currents* e-journal.

This is a special issue dedicated to the theme of “Frontier Tibet: Trade and Boundaries of Authority in Kham.” In his introduction, guest editor **Stéphane Gros** (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique) explains that the research articles by contributors **Patrick Booz** (Pennsylvania State University), **Rémi Chaix** (École Pratique des Hautes Études), **Scott Relyea** (Appalachian State University), **Jinba Tenzin** (National University of Singapore), and **Yudru Tsomu** (Sichuan University) “address questions of economic history, cultural interchange, and political legitimation and contestation at critical historical junctures. They show in particular how historical developments in trade and commerce are interlaced with notions of wealth and value, and linked to political control and authority. Together the contributors bring new ethnographically oriented historical studies into the arena of theoretical approaches to borderlands and corridors of contact.” In his afterword to the issue, **C. Patterson Giersch** (Wellesley College) claims that “one of the triumphs of this issue... is that it brings together scholars who have the linguistic and disciplinary skills to interpret the complex experiences of Kham’s peoples (Khampa, Drung, Han, European, and others), male and female, commoner and noble. This work is important because we still do not possess deep and broad understandings of Kham’s history. As in many places that fall outside the cores of Asian studies regions, Kham desperately needs experts, such as those represented here.”

This issue also features three review essays. **Franck Billé** (University of California, Berkeley) discusses *Mongolian Film Music: Tradition, Revolution and Propaganda* (Routledge, 2015) by Lucy M. Rees, which he finds well-researched but short on analysis, thereby offering “an introduction to Mongolian history and culture through the prism of cinema that will appeal to all readers with an interest in the country.”

In the second review, **Steven Lee** (University of California, Berkeley) places two recent publications in conversation with each other: **Sunyoung Park**’s *The Proletarian Wave: Literature and Leftist Culture in Colonial Korea, 1910–1945* (Harvard University Asia Center, 2015) and **Vladimir Tikhonov**’s *Modern Korea and Its Others: Perceptions of the Neighbouring Countries and Korean Modernity* (Routledge, 2015). Lee notes that “pervading both books is the sense that

history could have turned out differently—that revisiting northeast Asia’s porous borders in the early twentieth century reveals the Korean peninsula’s lost, internationalist potential.”

Lastly, **Janet Theiss** (University of Utah) reviews *Runaway Wives, Urban Crimes, and Survival Tactics in Wartime Beijing, 1937–1949* by **Zhao Ma** (Harvard UP, 2015) and *Polyandry and Wife-Selling in Qing Dynasty China* by **Matthew Sommer** (UC Press, 2015). She writes, “Read together, these richly documented monographs... create a provocative and nuanced picture of diverse modes of family formation among the poor that raise profound questions about the reach of state-defined norms—Confucian or modern—and the state’s impact on family life.”

This issue’s photo essay—“Mong La: Business as Usual in the China-Myanmar Borderlands”—was created by **Alessandro Ripa** and **Martin Saxer** (Ludwig-Maximilian University of Munich), who conducted preliminary research together in 2015 along the China-Myanmar border. Through these photographs (taken by Saxer) and the accompany curators’ statement, they aim to convey an image of Mong La that “goes beyond its usual depiction as a place of vice and unruliness, presenting it, instead, as the outcome of a particular China-inspired vision of development.”

The first of this issue’s “Readings from Asia” essay by **Hoi-eun Kim** (Texas A&M University)—“A Genealogical Interrogation of Prussian Neoclassical ‘Tectonics’ in East Asia”—presents for English-language readers **Chun Jin-sung**’s *Sangsang ūi At’ene, Perŭllin-Tok’yo-Sŏul* 상상의 아테네, 베를린-도쿄-서울: 기억과 건축이 빚어낸 불협 화음의 문화사 [Imaginary Athens, Berlin-Tokyo-Seoul] (Ch’ŏnnyŏnŭisangsang, 2015). Kim writes that Chun “moves seamlessly from late eighteenth-century Prussia to briskly ‘modern’ 1920s Tokyo to 1990s Seoul, with its frantic efforts to perfect cultural nationalism... The result is an exemplary genealogical inquiry into modern architectural form and its co-constitutive modernity.”

In the second “Readings from Asia” essay in this issue—“History Reviving the Erased Voice of the Vanished”—**Ki Hoon Lee** (Yonsei University) discusses **Jung Byung-joon**’s *Hyŏn aellisŭ wa kŭ ūi sidae: Yŏksa e hwipssŭllyŏgan pigŭk ūi kyŏnggyein* 현앨리스와 그의 시대: 역사에 휩쓸려간 비극의 경계인 [Alice Hyun and her days: The tragic marginal one swept away by the history] (Dolbegae, 2015). Lee extols this publication as “an excellent new work that restores the life and thoughts of a Korean American socialist intellectual and independence activist and her family.... It also presents the history of Korean social movements through elaborate historical research and analyses covering an extensive amount of data.”

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 Sungtaek Cho
Co-editors