

# CROSS-CURRENTS



## EAST ASIAN HISTORY AND CULTURE REVIEW

June 2014

Dear *Cross-Currents* readers,

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

We would like to thank *Cross-Currents* editorial board member **Hue-Tam Ho Tai** (Harvard University) for proposing and guest editing this special issue of the journal, which includes four research articles related to the theme “Stories and Histories of the China-Vietnam Border.” As Tai states in her introduction, “Not only does the study of border areas and border crossings ‘rescue history from the nation,’ to borrow from Prasenjit Duara, but it also points out that the highly local can be transnational, and that apparently remote places can be linked to global currents of people, ideas, and commodities.” This is a fitting depiction of the mission of *Cross-Currents* more broadly.

“‘Righteous Yang’: Pirate, Rebel, and Hero on the Sino-Vietnamese Water Frontier, 1644–1684,” by **Robert J. Antony** (University of Macau), reexamines the meaning of the label “Ming loyalist” (*minh huong*) for Yang Yandi, the subject of the article, and, by implication, for the several thousand other Chinese who arrived in Vietnam in the 1680s in the wake of the Manchu conquest of China. In “The Politics of Frontier Mining: Local Chieftains, Chinese Miners, and Upland Society in the Nông Văn Vân Uprising in the Sino-Vietnamese Border Area, 1833–1835,” **Vũ Đường Luân** (Vietnam National University, Hanoi) examines the politics of mining on the China-Vietnam border, highlighting the role of both local populations (now called ethnic minorities) and Chinese miners and traders in the economy of the northern uplands of Vietnam.

“Rebellion and Rule under Consular Optics: Changing Ways of Seeing the China-Vietnam Borderlands, 1874–1879,” by **Bradley Camp Davis** (Eastern Connecticut State University), analyzes how French consulates became elements in factional struggles that unfolded within the Vietnamese bureaucracy over the role of China in Vietnam, the employment of surrendered bandits as officials, and borderlands administration. **Nguyễn Thị Phương Châm** (Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences) conducted fieldwork for over a decade with women from the northern Vietnamese countryside who have married Chinese fishermen in Wanwei, a Jing village in Guangxi. “Cross-Border Brides: Vietnamese Wives, Chinese Husbands in a Border-Area Fishing Village” provides ethnographic proof of the continued fuzziness of the border between China and Vietnam and documents some of the intertwined stories and histories of the people living on either side of it.

This issue also includes a review essay by **Susan Glosser** (Lewis & Clark College) that discusses two new contributions to the study of women in China: **Angelina Chin's** *Bound to Emancipate: Working Women and Urban Citizenship in Early Twentieth-Century China and Hong Kong* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2012) and **Margaret Kuo's** *Intolerable Cruelty: Marriage, Law, and Society in Early Twentieth-Century China* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2012). Glosser considers, in particular, how Chin and Kuo each tackle what she calls “the double question” asked of authors by their editors and peers: what are subjects supposed to do, and what do they really do?

The contribution to this issue’s “Readings from “Asia” section by editorial board member **Kyu Hyun Kim** (University of California, Davis) introduces English-speaking readers to two recently published Japanese-language perspectives on the transnational history of modern East Asia: Iechika Ryōko’s *Shō Kaiseki no gaikō senryaku to Nitchū sensō* [Chiang Kai-shek’s diplomatic strategies and the Sino-Japanese War] (Iwanami Shoten, 2012) and Nakami Tatsuo’s *Manmō mondai’ no rekishiteki kōzu* [The historical composition of the “Manchurian-Mongolian problem”] (Daigaku Shuppankai, 2013). In this review—“Chang Kai-shek’s ‘Humanitarian Bombs’ and the Mirage Known as the ‘Manchurian-Mongolian Problem’”—Kim praises the authors for “strongly challeng[ing] limited and prejudiced perspectives of national histories, be they Chinese, Mongolian, or Japanese” and for “recover[ing] the agency of local actors—Chiang Kai-shek, Gungasangnorbu, Babujab—and cast[ing] them in the context of global relations of material exchange and discursive circulation.”

This issue’s photo essay—“Manchuria in Dongbei”—features images taken by photographer and China historian **Cyrus Chen** (University of California, Berkeley) over the course of several research trips to northeast China (Dōngběi 东北). In addition to seeking access to local archives for his doctoral work, Chen was also on a personal quest to learn more about his own family, including a great-grandfather who “came from the northern wilderness of Manchuria in a fish-skin coat and made an urban life for himself in Shenyang.” The essay’s images and descriptive captions offer an intimate portrait of the ordinary scenes Chen encountered while living in his ancestral homeland.

Finally, some staffing news: **Wen-hsin Yeh** will be on sabbatical during the 2014–2015 academic year. Editorial board member **John Lie** (University of California, Berkeley) has kindly agreed to step in as acting co-editor of *Cross-Currents* for the next four issues of the journal.

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 & Sungtaek Cho