

# CROSS-CURRENTS



## EAST ASIAN HISTORY AND CULTURE REVIEW

September 2015

Dear *Cross-Currents* readers,

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

The research articles in the September 2015 issue—guest edited by **Wen-hsin Yeh** (University of California, Berkeley), **Klaus Mühlhahn** (Freie Universität Berlin), and **Hajo Frölich** (Freie Universität Berlin)—explore the theme “Rethinking Business History in Modern China.” The five articles by scholars from Hong Kong, the United Kingdom, Taiwan, and the United States look at how business linked China and the world from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, and how Chinese and foreign companies interacted with one another, as well as with political power, long before today. Some authors concentrate on material connections—shipping, banking, the building of railroads, the spread of the motion picture industry, international treaties, and the formation of knowledge—while others investigate the role of business culture and how entrepreneurship and networks of trust crossed borders. Both of these aspects are set against the backdrop of simultaneous Chinese state-building efforts that became evident in the state creation of a national market and the formation of political borders. All the contributors—**Bert Becker** (University of Hong Kong), **Ghassan Moazzin** (University of Cambridge), **Tsu-yu Chen** (Academia Sinica), **Matthew D. Johnson** (Grinnell College), and **Robert K. Cliver** (Humboldt State University)—draw on case studies of individual entrepreneurs or companies and on new historical and theoretical scholarship to fill out the picture of China’s economic development within global processes.

The September 2015 issue also features three review essays. In the first, **Johan Elverskog** (Southern Methodist University) discusses **Franck Billé’s** *Sinophobia: Anxiety, Violence, and the Making of Mongolian Identity* (University of Hawai‘i Press, 2014) and **Christopher Kaplonski’s** *The Lama Question: Violence, Sovereignty, and Exception in Early Socialist Mongolia* (University of Hawai‘i Press, 2014), two new works that bring Mongolia into larger intellectual debates about the state of violence in the world today through an engagement with two distinct theoretical approaches to the question of violence: Giorgio Agamben’s political philosophy and Lacanian psychoanalysis.

In the second book review, **Douglas Fix** (Reed College) discusses **Bi-yu Chang’s** *Place, Identity and National Imagination in Postwar Taiwan* (Routledge, 2015), which offers a “broad-ranging picture of the Kuomintang’s attempts to employ cartographic representations, yearbook spatial

discourse, elementary-school geography textbooks, and urban planning to solidify domestic support for its rule in Taiwan and to legitimate its claims over the ‘innate national territory’ of Free China.” Although he finds much to admire in the book, Fix also contends that “Chang has overestimated the power of the party-state’s spatial representations and discourse, while granting too little agency to consumers of state spatiality in each of the four case studies presented.”

The third review, by **Matthew H. Sommer** (Stanford University), asks, “What does it mean to be a man in China?” in his discussion of **Bret Hinsch**’s *Masculinities in Chinese History* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2013) and *Men and Masculinities in Contemporary China* (Brill, 2014) by **Geng Song** and **Derek Hird**. Sommer concludes that both works are “useful contributions to the rapidly growing body of scholarship on Chinese masculinities,” but is “startled to find that the working poor, the peasantry, imbalanced sex ratios, and same-sex desire are all more or less invisible in these accounts.”

This issue’s photo essay—“Gendering Modernity: Korean Women Seen through the Early Missionary Gaze (1880s–1910s)” —features photographs of Korean women collected, produced, and documented over three decades by Protestant missions, mostly drawn from the Methodist Episcopal Church. In her accompanying curator’s statement, **Heejeong Sohn** (Stony Brook University) notes that these images—some of which were widely circulated, while others are relatively unknown—were captured during Korean women’s encounters with modernity and the West at the turn of the twentieth century, a time when most women were still generally segregated from public space and constrained by strict gender norms.

This issue’s “Readings from Asia” essay by **Geoffrey Voorhies** (National Taiwan University)—“Taiwan’s Austronesians, from Colonization to Neoliberalization: An Introduction to Ying-kuei Huang’s *The Path Towards ‘Civilization’*”—summarizes for English-language audiences **Ying-kuei Huang**’s “*Wenming*” *zhi lu* “文明”之路 (Taipei: Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica, 2012). This three-volume work, the result of over forty years of research on an Austronesian group living in Taiwan’s high central mountain range, provides an ethnographic account of Bunun culture and society and shows how it has changed over the course of colonization and modernization, and, most recently, under the new neoliberal order. Voorhies concludes that “even while emphasizing the changes that have transpired in the past decade or so, Huang also takes pains to trace the continuities that connect the Bunun of today with the culture of the past and provide potential guideposts for future developments.”

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