

CROSS-CURRENTS



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Dear *Cross-Currents* readers,

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

This special issue, which focuses on the theme of “Mapping Vietnameseness,” was conceived in conversation with the ideas put forth in Thai historian Thongchai Winichakul’s groundbreaking book *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* (1994). In her introduction to the issue, guest editor **Hue-Tam Ho Tai** (Harvard University) explains that the three research articles by contributors **Liam C. Kelley** (University of Hawai‘i at Manoa), **Vũ Đường Luân** (Vietnam National University, Hanoi), and **Vũ Đức Liêm** (Hanoi National University of Education) all explore these fundamental questions: What do maps in fact represent? What is meant by “territory”? How are territorial limits conceived? While many of Thongchai’s insights apply to the Vietnamese case (as Kelley’s article shows), the conclusions of the other two papers (which focus specifically on the construction of borders and the associated production of maps in the nineteenth century before French colonial conquest) depart from his insights, especially regarding the formation of a Vietnamese geographical consciousness before the colonial period.

This issue also features two review essays. **Adam Clulow** (Monash University) discusses Xing Hang’s *Conflict and Commerce in Maritime East Asia: The Zheng Family and the Shaping of the Modern World, c. 1620–1720* (Cambridge UP, 2016) and Gang Zhao’s *The Qing Opening to the Ocean: Chinese Maritime Policies, 1684–1757* (U of Hawai‘i P, 2013) and concludes that “reading these books together reminds us that China—or Japan, for that matter—was never closed to the world during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and that the focus on the European experience has obscured a great deal.” In the second review, **John P. DiMoia** (National University of Singapore) places two recent publications from the University of California Press—Kyung Moon Hwang’s *Rationalizing Korea: The Rise of the Modern State, 1894–1945* (2015) and Theodore Jun Yoo’s *It’s Madness: The Politics of Mental Health in Colonial Korea* (2016)—in conversation with each other. DiMoia notes, “Although the two titles offer very different perspectives on their respective subjects within the late Joseon and succeeding colonial period, they share a common desire to reframe the period and to examine the rise of new forms of bureaucratic practice and knowledge-making.”

This issue’s photo essay—“Jiangnan: Views of a Contemporary Chinese Water Town”—is a personal and scholarly collection of images and text created by history PhD student **George Zhijian Qiao** (Stanford University), who comes from Shengze, a water town situated on crisscrossing rivers in Jiangsu Province. Qiao took up photography as a form of therapy after

surviving the 2013 Asiana plane crash at San Francisco’s airport; it led him back to Shengze, where he immersed himself in documenting old memories and new transformation in his post-traumatic state. He writes, “Caught in the clamor of streets, the traumas of life, and the dramas of history, these people [of Shengze] are not just following the waves of progress like water follows a river. They are the water that makes the river.” In his brief preface to Qiao’s essay, **Gordon Chang** (Stanford University) observes, “Some things in George’s images look like they will never change, while others are ephemeral, waiting for destruction, reconstruction, and transformation. Does he want us to sing or sigh?”

In this issue’s “Readings from Asia” section, an essay entitled “A History of Court and Commoner Clothing in Vietnam,” **Liam C. Kelley** (University of Hawai‘i at Manoa) introduces English-language readers to Trần Quang Đức’s *Ngàn năm áo mũ: Lịch sử trang phục Việt Nam giai đoạn 1009–1945* [One thousand years of caps and robes: A history of Vietnamese clothing in the period 1009–1945] (Nhã Nam, 2013). This monograph documents in great detail the history of the sartorial decisions made at various Vietnamese courts, from Quyên’s time until the end of the Nguyễn dynasty. Kelley writes, “Based on an extensive examination of Vietnamese, Chinese, European, and even Korean sources—most of which only briefly mention clothing in various periods—Đức has succeeded in producing a comprehensive overview of the clothing of Vietnamese rulers and their officials.”

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