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Building an Online Community of East Asia Scholars

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March 2012

Dear *Cross-Currents* Readers,

Thank you for your positive feedback on the inaugural issue of the *Cross-Currents* e-journal published in December. We hope you will find this second issue just as interesting. Please continue to share your comments online with our growing community of East Asian scholars and by email with our editorial staff (crosscurrents@berkeley.edu). All articles and essays in the e-journal feature a "Post a Comment" link that allows registered *Cross-Currents* users to easily provide feedback and initiate conversations with our contributing scholars in the context of a public forum. To register, simply provide your name and institutional affiliation and choose a password.

The first set of articles in the current issue addresses the importance of the scattered and little-known archives of surviving Japanese imperial maps (*gaihōzu*) as sources for East Asian history. The introduction by guest editor Kären Wigen (Stanford University) describes the October 2011 symposium that inspired the four papers published here and explains how each scholar's work contributes uniquely to the shared goal of exploring the ways that Japanese military and imperial maps can speak to the fields of social, diplomatic, and economic history. A link to the Japanese portal for accessing digitalized *gaihōzu* enables *Cross-Currents* readers to further explore what Wigen calls the "wealth of scholarly riches" therein. We know you will appreciate the inclusion of so many images of maps in the articles themselves and the currency of the research presented; these are just two of the many advantages of online publishing.

The articles included under the heading "Forum" tie this e-journal to another important feature of the larger *Cross-Currents* project launched jointly by Korea University's Research Institute of Korean Studies (RIKS) and the Institute of East Asian Studies (IEAS) at the University of California, Berkeley. In addition to the publication of this quarterly e-journal and a semi-annual print journal, the project also includes a biennial Forum at which scholars from both sides of the Pacific gather to share their research. In 2009 RIKS hosted the first Forum in Seoul, a conference at which many of the foundational ideas for the *Cross-Currents* project were generated. The 2011 Forum hosted by IEAS in Berkeley brought together 26 scholars from five countries to present research papers that explored the potential breadth and depth of "cross-currents" as a metaphor for the multi-directional flow of people, goods, and ideas across time and space in East Asia.

One paper from each Forum is included in this issue of the e-journal. John Lie of UC Berkeley offers *Cross-Currents* readers a critical reflection on the extent to which the concept of "Asian studies" continues to be intellectually and institutionally useful (or not) in the geopolitical and academic contexts of the twenty-first century. Hung-Gyu Kim of Korea University presents a richly illustrated, comparative rhetorical analysis of the inscriptions on monumental stones erected in Korea from the fifth to seventh centuries.

The quotidian lifeways of the residents of Shanghai's labyrinthine alleyways are captured in the unassuming black-and-white photographs featured in this issue's photo essay by Jianhua Gong. A contextualizing essay by Stanford curator Xiaoneng Yang weaves his own childhood memories of the *longtang* with historical and architectural background information to enrich Gong's images.

A review essay by Timothy Cheek (University of British Columbia) reflects on the goals of Ezra Vogel's new political biography of Deng Xiaoping and how they might inform how and why one reads this lengthy tome. And, the "Readings from Asia" section offers English summaries of important recent publications in Chinese by Ge Zhaoguang and Wang Qisheng.

Finally, we are pleased to announce that the first print issue of *Cross-Currents* (University of Hawai'i Press) will come out in May 2012. The print journal features articles and review essays selected from the first two issues of the e-journal for their scholarly excellence and particular relevance to the *Cross-Currents* mission statement. To subscribe, please visit <http://www.uhpress.hawaii.edu/t-cross-currents.aspx>.

We would like to close by thanking the *Cross-Currents* editorial board and the many anonymous peer reviewers who have generously shared their time and expertise and thereby contributed to the development of this new web portal for scholars of East Asian studies.

Sincerely,

Wen-hsin Yeh & Sungtaek Cho

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