

## In This Issue

The five essays in this issue all show, in very different ways, how scholars must often reach beyond national boundaries in order to answer many of the questions that engage us today. SUSAN MANN looks at a range of myths of Asian womanhood in order to demonstrate the distinctiveness of Chinese myths; both JOSHUA A. FOGEL and BRYNA GOODMAN examine foreign communities in Shanghai in order to examine ways in which various nationalisms are constructed. FOGEL looks at the Japanese community and GOODMAN is primarily concerned with the Western community, but both are profoundly interested in the interaction between the foreign and the local. ANDRE SCHMID argues that the study of early twentieth-century Japan is not complete without a full accounting of the ways in which the colonial enterprise transformed the metropole. AMY GUROWITZ writes about migrant workers in Malaysia, about people who cross borders out of economic necessity and the ways in which activists have (and have not) been successful in working on their behalf.

The border crossings involved in these articles had been apparent to me since I first read them, but they became startlingly evident as I tried to categorize them for the purposes of the annual index, which the *JOURNAL OF ASIAN STUDIES* publishes each November. Does Susan Mann's "Myths of Asian Womanhood" belong in "General Asia" or in "China"? Although Mann is primarily interested in China, her excursion through other myths of Asian womanhood demonstrates the distinctiveness of Chinese myths. Joshua A. Fogel's essay examines the Japan Residents' Association in Shanghai in the period leading up to and including the Second World War. Is that story properly a part of Chinese history or of Japanese history? The intellectual agenda of Andre Schmid's article profoundly complicates its categorization as part of the history of one country. And so on.

SUSAN MANN writes about the pervasive myths of Chinese womanhood and takes Hua Mulan and Yang Guifei as keys to understanding the ways myths constructed Chinese womanhood. She demonstrates that mythical women of great power are an integral part of Chinese patriarchy and argues that while girls growing up in imperial China might indeed have received heavy doses of Confucian moralism, they were also surrounded by images of powerful women like Hua Mulan. Nor are these mythical powerful women merely consigned to the past; Mann's essay tells us about the modern recuperation (and commodification) of these mythical women. In a coda at the end of her essay, she reminds us that what is perhaps the strongest Western myth of Chinese womanhood—that of a weak, oppressed, footbound woman—has no place in Chinese mythic structures, suggesting that this particular myth can tell us more about its Western propagators than about its Chinese subjects.

BRYNA GOODMAN's essay centers on the celebration in Shanghai of the Silver Jubilee in 1893, commemorating fifty years of British colonial presence. Goodman's analysis of the Jubilee provides us with a snapshot of the microhistory of a moment of semicolonialism, and an avenue to explore the processes through which it was enacted. The sources Goodman has at her disposal allow her to show us how that moment was experienced by Chinese residents of the city, as well as by the foreign celebrants. She shows how native-place associations were key to local participation in

the Jubilee and suggests ways in which these associations came increasingly to represent the nation.

JOSHUA A. FOGEL'S article looks at another aspect of the foreign community in Shanghai—the Japanese Residents' Association. He suggests ways in which the Japanese community imagined itself as extrinsic to Shanghai itself, to the extent that they called it "the city of Shanghai in the prefecture of Nagasaki." The article delineates ways in which the Japanese community constituted itself differently in Shanghai than in other Chinese cities, such as Tianjin. It further shows ways in which the Japanese community responded to Chinese nationalism, whose strong anti-Japanese component came as something of a shock to local Japanese.

AMY GUROWITZ looks at the ways in which the complicated multiethnic setting in Malaysia provides possibilities and constraints for contemporary activists interested in working for migrant rights. Her essay provides us with tools to think about multiethnic societies and the ways in which the Malaysian construction of multiethnicity offers Malaysians and migrant workers both options and constraints. The article explicitly confronts problems of migration and the ways in which nation-states take or abjure responsibility for their citizens once they cross borders.

ANDRE SCHMID'S essay directly addresses the problem of twentieth-century Japanese history as "island history." Although there has been a wealth of recent scholarship on the Japanese empire, Schmid argues that until very recently the histories of the colonies have not transformed the histories of the metropole. His essay demonstrates the restrictions that the boundaries of the nation-state place on historical explanation. The critique he offers is not simply empirical; he suggests that taking the nation-state as the level of the analysis makes it much harder to look at transnational phenomena. Transnational history (requiring translingual competence) is much more difficult to write than the history of one nation, but, as Schmid suggests, it may be necessary in figuring out the dynamics of the twentieth century. It is a point Schmid makes more directly than do the other authors, but it is a theme that runs through all five of the articles in this issue.