

Editorial Foreword

NATION, DIASPORA, AND THE VANISHING EMPIRE In its modern life cycle, the dying empire gives rise to nation-states that are deeply imprinted by the old colonial regime. The telltale marks come in the form of governmental languages, school systems, odd traffic laws, vernacular architecture, legal codes, and military cultures. The fallen empire attracts erstwhile subjects to the metropole. They come in search of work, education, and protection. New immigrant and diasporic identities emerge as a result, at both the center and the periphery. The examples of these trends now dancing in your head probably skew toward the global north and west, toward France and Britain, perhaps Spain. Maybe you are filling the blanks with Ottoman or post-Soviet cases. As you scroll through your list of failed empires, odds are very good that even you, the worldly and sophisticated *CSSH* reader, are not thinking of ... Japan. Why? Did Japan fall too hard, too fast? Was it always an exceptional empire? Do none of the postcolonial trends apply?

Sebastian Conrad, Jaeun Kim, and Miriam Kingsberg offer fascinating answers to these questions. Conrad dissects the familiar claim that Japan developed imperial amnesia after WWII, suggesting that things were not so simple. The recent upsurge of interest in Japan's imperial legacy, he argues, has more to do with the reconfiguration of Asia after the Cold War than with the surfacing of repressed, local memories. Kim, likewise, shows how imperial Japan was shaped by its engagements with its colonial peoples and possessions. Korean identity, Kim shows us, was (re)made as part of the same process, and it was the movement of Koreans across imperial boundaries, into Japan and Manchuria, that gave intense particularity to the experience of Koreanness in diaspora. Kingsberg explores diasporic transformations that occurred among Japanese immigrants in Brazil, home to the largest population of overseas Japanese. The assimilation of Japanese communities living outside Japan, Kingsberg argues, was a process of cultural loss essential to definitions of Japanese identity in the homeland, before and after WWII. In all three papers, mobility across empire generates fluid national identities, minoritarian alternatives, and the larger historical frames in which defunct imperial infrastructures, still rich in consequences, can be remembered, forgotten, and put to new political uses.

VISIBILITY AND CIRCULATION It is possible to derive great social power from being immobile and difficult to see. Certain royal courts operated on this principle. Subjects came into the presence of the stationary ruler, who

was seated behind a screen, or a cloud of incense, or protective cohorts of eunuchs, guards, and advisors. It is hard to imagine a contemporary political culture in which visual inaccessibility and unmoving concentrations of power are the anchor stones of legitimacy. In an age of mass mediated images and market circulation, political significance accumulates around those who are seen, who are seen in many places, and whose likeness is worth circulating. To be unseen and out of circulation is, in this order of things, to be dead, but even the dead can play by the new rules, leading active posthumous lives as images. The challenge for the unseen spirit or the out-of-the-way place is obvious. If they want to matter, they must project an image; they must be worth looking at. They must, to put it simply, get around and be seen doing it.

Karen Strassler and **Wei-Ping Lin** confront different versions of a similar problem. Strassler's subject is Ratu Kidul, a spirit queen who lives in the depths of the sea. Once a mysterious figure who revealed herself only to Javanese kings, she now appears regularly in doctored photographs, erotic horror films, paintings, and other forms plainly visible to the eye. To play an active role in Indonesian politics (and in its tourist economy), Ratu Kidul must be seen, and Strassler takes us on a guided tour of the ocean queen's highly visible career as a national icon. Mei-Ping Lin leads us further out to sea, this time aboard the chartered boats that carry pilgrims from Mazu, the chain of demilitarized islands between Taiwan and China, toward new pilgrimage sites on the mainland. These "direct sailing" journeys are an attempt to recentralize Mazu. Once a strategic military outpost between Cold War rivals, Mazu has been marginalized by improved relations between Taiwan and China. The local response is to travel between island and mainland in the highly visible persona of pilgrim, creating modes of circulation that will put Mazu back on the map. If Ratu Kidul can now be seen in portraits that adorn the walls of Indonesian beachfront hotels, pilgrims from Mazu are visiting temples across China, seeing and being seen. In 2009, they sponsored a pilgrimage to the peak of Mt. Everest, where an islander left a small statue of Goddess Mazu.

ARMIES, REBELS, AND THE PEOPLE Despite the distinctive cut and color of government-issue uniforms, it is sometimes very hard to distinguish between soldiers, paramilitaries, guerillas, and the civilians they prey upon and protect. The potential for confusion is limitless. Often it is welcome. The army can be the army of the people. The rebel vanguard can have its own khakis and camouflage. The local citizens can be armed to the teeth. But insofar as armies are political institutions, they must be able to tell friend from foe. The soldier's right to kill cannot be justified if military violence is equivalent to the harm civilians inflict on each other. Civilians, meanwhile, must contend with military forces that might belong to them, to their

enemies, or to a regime whose loyalties (to its citizens and its soldiers) are impossible to determine. The anxieties that result give rise to rumors, rituals of identification, and elaborate ideological justifications that explain who holds the gun.

Neil Ketchley, Catherine E. Bolten, and Timothy Wickham-Crowley explore situations in which the relationships between soldiers, civilians, and rebel forces are constantly re-negotiated. Ketchley locates his study in Cairo's Midan al-Tahrir, where Egyptian civilian protestors neutralized Egyptian soldiers (and immobilized their tanks) by acting out rituals of fraternization. While it lasted, the Arab Spring was a festival of anxious affection between the people and the army, who were "one hand." In sharp contrast, Bolten's account of the civil war in Sierra Leone showcases a setting in which soldiers and rebels, compounded in the malign figure of the *sobel*, were assumed to be a dangerous threat to civilians. In fact, the line between soldiers and rebels was eroded by rumors of sobels intent on plunder. The rumors themselves, Bolten argues, expressed deep-seated fears of tribalism, a divisive force that could motivate armed factions of any type. Wickham-Crowley considers rebel movements that identified explicitly with the people, but whose inspiration was primarily other guerilla movements. Reviewing over fifty years of armed struggle in Latin America, Wickham-Crowley charts the origins and demise of rebel factions whose most effective opponents, in the end, were not right wing strongmen, or recalcitrant peasants, but free and fair elections.

HIS OTHER HAT If you expect *CSSH* essays to be clean, clear, free of clunky jargon, and to have a smooth style that is recognizable but is never a substitute for the unique voices of our authors, then you have acquired a taste for the masterful work of David Akin, our managing editor. Hundreds of *CSSH* contributors, and thousands of readers, have benefited from Akin's careful adjustments to the essays that appear on our pages. His skill as an editor is rooted in his talent as a writer, but also in his ongoing scholarly production. When Akin is not preparing manuscripts for *CSSH*, he is thinking and writing about the Solomon Islands, where he has done ethnographic and historical research since 1979. The results are on glorious display in his new book, *Colonialism, Maasina Rule, and the Origins of Malaitan Kastom* (2013, University of Hawai'i Press). Old rules prevent us from reviewing Akin's monograph in this journal. We can say, however, that it is a fascinating account of over one hundred years of interaction between Europeans and Solomon Islanders. Not only does the book embody the analytical aesthetics of *CSSH*—being well argued, insightful, and assembled with obvious attention to craft—it is also a chance to see one of the world's great editors practicing what he preaches. David, take a bow!