

In This Issue

What makes a leader “respected and effective” in rural Viet Nam? Do popular notions of a good leader differ from those upheld by the party? And how do these different notions fit in with the model figure of Ho Chi Minh? By studying the careers of two local politicians in an area south of Hanoi, SHAUN MALARNEY highlights the differences between the popular conception of a good leader and the government view of such a person. This distinction underscores his model of local politics in Viet Nam which distinguishes between the state and local society and indicates that local politics in Vietnam were “never completely coopted by the socialist state.”

Through a close reading of one woman’s account of her prominent Indian nationalist family—that of her parents, W.C. Bonnerjee, the founder of the Indian National Congress, and his wife, Hemangini—ANTOINETTE BURTON dwells on the metaphoric nature of the idea of ‘home.’ Much of the essay tracks the constant movement in the life of this Anglophile Bengali family as it traveled back and forth between Calcutta and London, journeying across not only the different worlds of India and England but also negotiating the complex processes shaped by nationalism and modernity. The family, and particularly Hemangini’s story, stands as an allegory of changing gender relations and of Bengali notions of ‘home’ and the ‘world.’

JOHN SIDEL questions the utility of the patron-client concept or “weak state” versus “strong oligarchy” notions as tools for understanding Philippine politics. Instead, based on an investigation of the workings of politics at different levels in the two provinces of Cavite and Cebu, he makes a case for “bossism,” which he argues has little to do with either patron-client relations or with the existence of a “weak state” dominated by a landed oligarchy. He traces the pattern of “bossism” back to American colonial rule in the first half of the twentieth century, which, he argues, facilitated the rise of local power brokers who manipulated “mechanisms for private monopolization of the resources and prerogatives of the state.” Thus, the structure of the state and not of Philippine society ultimately explains the phenomenon of “bossism.”

NANCY PARK locates the place of corruption in eighteenth-century Qing China by discussing its legal definition as well as its treatment in official and popular writings. By viewing corruption from these three perspectives—the perception shaped by formal, written law; by official handbooks and other related materials; and by popular consciousness as reflected in nonelite discourse—she finds that its definition varied considerably depending on “time, place, context, and speaker.” Furthermore, in a society where gift giving constituted a widespread practice and possessed significant social ramifications, notions of corruption and bribery were necessarily “fluid.” This fluidity, which was further conditioned by changing political “standards of custom, ethics, and pragmatism,” meant that corruption was an integral part of the eighteenth-century Chinese state and society.

MICHAEL ROBERTS concentrates on the major figure of Anagarika Dharmapala who played a significant role in late-nineteenth-century Buddhist reform in Sri Lanka, which redefined Buddhism as a vehicle for the nationalistic aspirations of the Sinhalese.

By emphasizing both the national and the international intellectual context of Dharmapala's thinking, he constructs an argument that takes issue with analyses focusing exclusively on Dharmapala's nationalism. And by fleshing out his ties to Buddhist traditions and specific Buddhist texts, the author exposes the Buddhist roots of Dharmapala's nationalism and notions of his culture and its purity. Viewed in this context, Dharmapala and his ideas do not appear to fit comfortably into the category of Protestant Buddhism, deployed to underline the influence of Protestant Christianity on Sri Lanka.

This issue marks several changes in the book review section of the *Journal*. It inaugurates a new book review section on "Inner Asia" (previously placed together with China), which is edited by Nicola Di Cosmo, the first person to occupy the newly established position of Inner Asia Book Review Editor. The China Book Reviews will now be divided into two time periods: Joan Judge will serve as the Modern China Book Review Editor and Michael A. Fuller will assume the responsibilities of the Premodern China Book Review Editorship. Juliane Schober will henceforth be the Southeast Asia Book Review Editor, taking on that position from Craig Lockard who deserves our heartfelt thanks for his long and outstanding service in that role. Finally, this issue is the last one for our two excellent South Asia Book Review Editors, Michael H. Fisher and Paula Richman. Many, many thanks to them as well!