

## In This Issue

The four articles and the presidential address in this issue deal with state power, category making and category defying, and maps and borders. DAVID LUDDEN'S address deals explicitly with processes of mapping and their consequences. His essay suggests ways in which the conflict between mobility and territorialism is one of the fundamental dynamics of history. He further suggests that modern concepts of territoriality (embodied in cartographic practice) both distort the past and marginalize mobile people in the present. He thus argues for a richer understanding of mobilities, past and present, and proposes that we as a field "can realistically envision Asian studies as a mobile intellectual space that intersects many national territories."

The other four articles in this issue deal with the southwest Qing frontier (Atwill and Bello) and with caste in India (Jenkins and Krishna).

DAVID G. ATWILL looks at ethnic relations in southwest China through the lens of the mid-nineteenth-century Panthay Rebellion. He is particularly interested in the way that Hui (usually glossed as Chinese Muslims) conceptualized their identity and shows that religion is but one strand of Hui identity in nineteenth-century Yunnan.

DAVID BELLO writes about opium production in Yunnan Province, in areas that were on the fringes of Qing control. He shows how opium was not simply a coastal problem but, rather, was rooted in socioeconomic and administrative processes of the Qing empire, long before the Opium War.

LAURA DUDLEY JENKINS shows how two "People of India" projects, one by Sir Herbert Risley and the other by K. S. Singh, nearly a century apart, have striking points of similarities in their discussions of caste but come to "different conclusions about Indian nationalism." Both projects show the authority of scientific categorization and the ways that government anthropological identification interacts with people's self-identification.

ANIRUDH KRISHNA documents the rise of a group of non-caste-based political entrepreneurs in contemporary northern Indian villages. He attributes this rise to three factors: the spread of education in rural areas, an expansion in governmental expenditure, and an increase in political competition.

As is now my practice, I sent the articles to the authors in order to elicit their responses to one another's work. Not surprisingly, the most obvious connections (and contrasts) were between the two pieces which deal with Qing China on the one hand and the two pieces which deal with caste in India on the other.

Let us turn first to the two articles about caste in India. On the face of it, Jenkins and Krishna come to differing conclusions about the persistence of caste in contemporary India. To be sure, they are approaching the question quite differently—Krishna through fieldwork in villages, Jenkins through the study of government-sponsored texts which delineate "caste." Bello notes a fruitful disjuncture between the two arguments and comments on it:

While on the surface, Krishna's basic conclusion—that caste is becoming politically irrelevant in a number of rural Indian localities—seems to conflict with that of Jenkins, this apparent conflict can be understood as evidence of a disjunction between one part of the state, as represented by the state employees involved in the new People of India project, and another, namely the Indian education system. Krishna shows how the state's own education policies, among several other factors, have succeeded in eroding the influence of caste in parts of the Indian countryside. It was quite instructive to read Krishna and Jenkins together as a disaggregation of the Indian state. In combination, they present a picture of one part of the state's implementing policies based on assumptions that are being undermined by the implementation of another—inadvertently antagonistic—set of policies by a different part of the same state.

(e-mail, 30 July 2003)

Krishna comments that Jenkins's discussion of the People of India project shows "how prerogatives of statehood lead even independent and democratically elected governments to rule their people by dividing and ordering them." He goes on to inquire how much the People of India project has affected the "perceptions, attitudes, and political strategies among common Indians" (e-mail, 31 July 2003). Jenkins responds to his query by writing that the People of India:

is not going to be a bestseller among the masses; nevertheless, bureaucrats, politicians, activists, journalists, missionaries, and academics have referred to it, and they shape public debates on caste and caste-based public policies (including reservations/affirmative action) that have an immediate impact on the opportunities and strategies of ordinary people.

(e-mail, 27 October 2003)

、 Jenkins comments on Krishna's piece:

If caste is indeed on the decline in political life, the reification of caste in contemporary official anthropology is even more troubling. Caste influence is decreasing in terms of political choices and political organization in the villages studied by Krishna. Nevertheless, as he points out, caste inequity persists in terms of land ownership, caste-dominated neighborhoods, and social identification.

(e-mail, 14 August 2003)

Bello and Atwill both look at nineteenth-century Yunnan Province, and in the words of Atwill, both show the "ineptitude of the Qing state in dealing with crises in the southwest" (e-mail, 11 August 2003). Atwill also wryly notes that "perhaps the Qing court could have benefited from Ludden's conclusion that 'Asia might be usefully imagined as a mobile, changing collection of spaces that never settle absolutely inside any fixed boundaries.'"

Bello sees operating in the two articles a kind of "spatialization of ethnicity" and suggests that further explorations of the concept might provide an agenda for future research. He writes:

One of the most interesting elements in Atwill's paper is a number of comments, which when taken together constitute part of what I have found in my own work to be a provincial discourse of ethnic administrative control. The term *yi* is a good example of this because in Yunnan it can refer to Tai and other tribals, while in Guangdong it generally refers to Euro-Americans. The import of such discourse is best demonstrated, however, by Atwill's discussion of the transformation of the word *jiao* from "religion" to "culture" in the Yunnan context. I have touched on similar

issues of provincial discourse in scattered points throughout my article, and it seems as though much more systematic work could be done on this. Many such terms link ethnicity to specific provinces, constituting a kind of administrative spatialization of ethnicity or vice versa. There are also some connections and contrasts here with Jenkins's account of state categorization of caste, perhaps the Indian version of the spatialization of ethnicity.

(e-mail, 30 July 2003)

Bello also notes the near invisibility of the Hui in the Yunnan opium trade. Atwill notes that

Qing documents on Yunnan are a fascinating example of imperial tunnel vision. My depiction of Yunnan in triadic terms (Han, Hui, and yi) is rarely noted in the memorials and reports to the throne by Qing officials posted to the province. As a result of the court's propensity to view the populace dualistically, it typically ignored the Hui's presence except in times of violence. But, the reverse is also true. Documents describing Hui-related events in Yunnan seldom indicate the large non-Han presence. The Qing officials are not alone in perpetuating this view. Despite the growing collection of more recent anthropological projects involving Yunnan ethnic groups, virtually all of them focus on a single ethnic group and typically only discuss their relations vis-à-vis the growing Han presence.

(e-mail, 26 October 2003)

The authors also see commonalities crossing geographical lines. Atwill sees some commonalities in his project with Krishna's project. He writes that Krishna's article "shared many of the same intellectual questions that fueled my own research on the Hui." He sees the commonalities in terms of

questioning the ways in which certain categories of identification have evolved, transformed, and transcended that of the dominant voices. As a historian of a group active far from the imperial center, I am often hampered by the limitations of my archival resources. As a result, I often attempt to visualize the linkages of the local society which are not documented in the original record but can be discerned from other kinds of sources. Indeed, it is precisely this type of thinking that led me to examine more closely the notion of *san jiao* (or three cultures) in the Yunnan context, a classification that unified large segments of Yunnan's diverse population in a form not visible in conventional categories of Chinese society.

In this manner, then, Krishna and I come to strikingly similar conclusions about the danger of accepting the center's characterizations of local organization. Krishna captures this nicely, quoting Yogendra Yadav (1996), in his observation that a "palace-eye view" hides the dynamic and broadening participation of groups, only visible by adopting a more local perspective.

(e-mail, 11 August 2003)

Jenkins also notes that Atwill's approach to categories has great utility for her own project. She comments that Atwill, in rethinking the categories of ethnicity, religion, and gender in early modern China, "shows that the categories are anything but precise—indeed, they are historically blended." She continues:

Atwill's discussion of whether the Hui are an ethnic group, a religious group or both brought to mind the intertwined nature of caste and religious identities in India. The "ethno-religious" category advocated by Dru Gladney (1991) and discussed by Atwill has parallels to the similar ambiguity surrounding lower-caste converts: Are

caste and religion inextricably linked, or is a low-caste convert from Hinduism still a member of a low caste?

(e-mail, 14 August 2003)

Atwill also sees resonances between Jenkins's work and his own. He suggests that the People of India projects have certain resonances with projects to categorize people in China:

What I found intriguing were the parallels between the People of India projects, as representative of the government's general efforts, and the Stalinist nationalities (*minzu*) classification of 1950s China. Both projects ostensibly sought to break down (or at least blur) the class/ethnic boundaries, while actually hardening those very distinctions. My critique of those who suggest ethnicity did not exist prior to the twentieth century echoes Jenkins's argument that the caste system was hardly created out of thin air. In the case of ethnicity in China, the ethnic project retained many vestiges of the systems, imperial or otherwise, that preceded it.

(e-mail, 11 August 2003)

Krishna points out that Atwill's attention to the details of Muslim identity formation has a particular resonance in today's world. He writes:

Because local elements form such a large part of group identity and because Muslimness is itself redefined by the local element with which it interacts in any given context, it is both highly reductionist (and not very useful) to consider Muslims everywhere—in Indonesia *and* in Turkey, for example—as being somehow equivalent or interchangeable in terms of worldview. Yet, that is exactly what a generation of scholars, following Samuel Huntington (1996), has attempted to do: re-draw the world map in terms of such sweeping broad-brush categories. I consider that Atwill's piece will provide a useful corrective to such an essentializing view—of Muslims particularly, and especially in the last few months. That, to me, is the most important message of this piece.

(e-mail, 31 July 2003)

Jenkins appreciates the ways in which Bello's work shows how the Qing state attempted to record and control the unruly inhabitants of Yunnan. She writes:

Bello describes the state authorities' references to "wild tribals," or *yeyi*, from the fringes and the "tribal frontier" (*fan jie*) and the difficulty of state control over opium cultivation there. This resonated both with Ludden's insights into unmappable peoples and my own article on a project that attempts to document and study the so-called scheduled, or officially listed, tribes in India. Such surveillance and record keeping on populations, also discussed by Bello, was not unique to India.

(e-mail, 14 August 2003)

Krishna, too, is interested in the attempts by local administrators to assert control in Yunnan. He writes:

Accommodations reached by the expansionary imperial state with native chieftains in Yunnan Province helped assert formal imperial control over these territories, while at the same time limiting the effective control that imperial officials could exercise in practice. Different incentives faced by local officials and those at the capital further exacerbated the divergence between imperial pronouncements and local administrative practices. In the end, the story is not just about China or opium. There is a cautionary tale here, as far as I could make out: imperial overreach comes rife

with compromises that tend to subvert this project and divert it from its original ends.

(e-mail, 31 July 2003)

Ludden sees some common themes in the four articles:

All four articles have in common a concern for modern state-development programs that bubble across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Asia's two largest states. More abstractly, we could say that they all consider margins of state disciplining of knowledge, society, and political economy and look at these margins from the vantage point of what state authorities do and do not see in order to suggest that what they do not see may be as important as what they do see.

The China articles are concerned both with physical and administrative frontiers on geographical margins that appear in maps as being inside Qing territory but are at best only partly there in a patchwork-quilt kind of way; thus, many of the localities in Yunnan represent internal margins of Qing territory which, although inside its boundaries, escape its control. Controlling places out of control is a compelling modern project that the Qing became increasingly involved in and which provides a link between imperial, Republican, and later governments in China.

[Bello, upon reading this, comments: "The heirs of an imperial space also inherit its instabilities: this could form part of the basis for a transhistorical, ethno-spatially comparative approach to India and/or China" (e-mail, 28 October 2003).]

Representing the state as being in total control of all of the knowledge needed to understand society became a major modality of imperial authority in British India, and poking holes in that pretense has been a postcolonial preoccupation for some time. Krishna and Jenkins both do it, and each considers that areas out of comprehension by official authorities are either covered over or ignored.

What is out there in the outside beyond state comprehension is not very clear in either article, and what the margins might mean for everyday conditions remains tantalizingly vague. So, in all of these articles, we see glimmers of knowledge working at the margins of territorial authority; in the India case, inside the state pretensions that do not seem the least bit troubled by all that the state does not know; and in the China case, inside territories the state strives diligently and violently to control but with limited success. This comparison in the ways that what Jim Scott (1998) calls "seeing like a state" works in practice would seem to represent change in the nature of the state across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries more than differences between India and China.

(Ludden, e-mail, 4 June 2003)

Atwill takes Ludden's point about the importance of transregional studies and elaborates on it:

Ludden's comments should serve as yet another call to scholars such as Bello and myself who are well imbedded in the frontier world of China to speak to an audience outside our one area. Yet until Asianists begin to realize the value of transareal narratives, such studies will continue to be marginalized in the larger discourse. As Willem van Schendel (2002) recently pointed out, if we do not begin to think beyond the boundaries of area studies, we run the risk of missing important trends, flows, and exchanges, thus creating self-imposed blinders which have all of the markings of becoming a sort of early twenty-first-century Orientalism.

(e-mail, 11 August 2003)

Ludden writes of the articles by Atwill and Bello that

these articles both dovetail nicely with my concern for areas outside the reach of territorial authority or, in the case of Yunnan, partly in and partly out, which is the case for much of northeastern South Asia as well through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The vast interior mountain-valley-river-forest region that includes Yunnan could be conceptualized by both authors usefully as not lying essentially inside China at all but partly inside China and partly in wider geographies that the trade routes, religious routes, ethnic relations, linguistic evidence, and so on—not to mention opium itself and all of the smuggling—link to Central, South, West, and Southeast Asia. This is a wonderful area for doing connective work across “other geographies” than national states provide. The *Journal of Asian Studies* and the Association for Asian Studies are perfect venues for soliciting collaborators who could make this happen.

(e-mail, 4 June 2003)

The challenge issued by Ludden is an important one; the journal welcomes submissions (or groups of submissions) which would take up his challenge.

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