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Asia Pacific: Perspectives

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Asia Pacific: Perspectives is a peer-reviewed journal published at least once a year, usually in April/May. It welcomes submissions from all fields of the social sciences and the humanities with relevance to the Asia Pacific region.* In keeping with the Jesuit traditions of the University of San Francisco, *Asia Pacific: Perspectives* commits itself to the highest standards of learning and scholarship.

Our task is to inform public opinion by a broad hospitality to divergent views and ideas that promote cross-cultural understanding, tolerance, and the dissemination of knowledge unreservedly. Papers adopting a comparative, interdisciplinary approach will be especially welcome. **Graduate students are strongly encouraged to submit their work for consideration.**

* 'Asia Pacific region' as used here includes East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Oceania, and the Russian Far East.

Editor's Introduction

by John Nelson, Ph.D.

This special issue represents some of the best and most incisive scholarship on contemporary Asia from individuals who have taken the Masters in Asia Pacific Studies program at the University of San Francisco. Some of the authors have gone on to additional graduate studies, some are still in the process of completing the two-year degree, and still others are gainfully employed in fields related to their interest and growing expertise in Asia.

United States and European policymakers have long held both a fascination for and a fear of Asia. As long as Asian nations and peoples passively accept their goals and agendas, all is right with the world; but when a nation becomes economically or militarily powerful, or summons the resolve to resist those objectives, a comedy of errors on the part of U.S. and European leaders repeats itself time and again.

The first two papers deal with countries in Asia that on more than one occasion during the 19th, 20th, and now 21st centuries have ruffled the feathers of U.S. foreign policymakers. **Francis Shortengen's** discussion and analysis of the recent bid by the China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) to take over the California-based Unocal Corporation raises significant issues related to both existing U.S. policy and laws towards foreign companies as well as nationalistic fears about an increasingly powerful and influential China. **Susan Parini's** paper on the growing economy and maturing society of Vietnam likewise evidences both the consequences and benefits of the failure of U.S. military and diplomatic policies during the Vietnam War.

Since wars reflect a breakdown of diplomacy, it is no surprise that history is full of European and U.S. interventions in Asian societies. **Brad Washington's** discussion continues the theme of reconstruction and reconciliation but locates it within inter-Korean politics. Despite the military preparations and posturing of North Korean leaders, Washington believes the future of the Korean peninsula will be determined through economic benefits and not brute force.

One need only look at China (and to some degree, Vietnam) as a sign of what is possible when a former communist regime turns its energies to developing a market economy. China's hosting of the 2008 Olympic Summer Games will shine a spotlight on that nation's gains as well as the social costs of those economic advances. **Charles Costello's** paper takes us into and through the streets of Beijing as it undergoes a historical transformation and prepares for an extended run on the international stage.

China's growing economy has driven its push to host the Olympic Games, but driving the economy has been both party officials and hundreds of thousands of students who were educated overseas and then returned to positions of authority in China's corporate and bureaucratic worlds. **Dannie LI Yanhua's** discussion of shifting governmental policies--which first grudgingly accepted and then fully embraced overseas study--brings to light the role of these pioneers in fostering social and political change within late 20th and early 21st century China.

Finally, in a volume of papers heavy on political policy and economics, it's important to include an extended look at popular culture. One of the most fascinating phenomena of the last twenty years has surely been the internationalization (and concurrent domestication) of the genre of music known as hip-hop. Nowhere is this more pronounced than in contemporary Japan, where the music, fashion, and media industries have profited handsomely from a Japanese infatuation with the "otherness" of U.S. urban black culture and music. **Cary Broder**--once a D.J. in the Manhattan hip-hop music scene--writes convincingly about the interplay between hip-hop and Japanese cultural identity.

We hope this collection of papers will stimulate further scholarship on the topics discussed as well as demonstrate the sophistication and quality of the work of individuals coming through the Masters in Asia Pacific Studies program at the University of San Francisco.