

LETTER

FROM THE EDITOR

“One of the handicaps of the twentieth century,” Ruth Benedict wrote, “is that we still have the vaguest and most biased notions, not only of what makes Japan a nation of Japanese, but of what makes the United States a nation of Americans, France a nation of Frenchmen, and Russia a nation of Russians.” Within the field of International Studies, these questions become only more complex as one follows the paths of conflict, development, inter-dependence and diplomacy between not only nation states, but also disparate groups within the geographical and legal bounds of a ‘country.’ Therefore, we must remember that every situation has multiple interpretations, and each interpretation has even more perspectives. It is our goal to present not one universal story, but an assorted understanding of a changing world order.

We therefore find it quite fitting to begin this journey right here in Asia, not only discussing the praise-worthy attributes of the region, but also questioning the motivations and the contradictions that we can easily find in our own backyard. Our inaugural theme, “Asia: Backwards and Forwards,” is one that seems predictable and expected, yet our articles clearly illustrate a plethora of perspectives that emerge in our quest for comprehending this conundrum known as Asia.

In this issue, we include articles that discuss issues ranging from China’s interest in Africa’s oil to corporate governance in Japan. Andrew Calhoun discusses the stress incurred by Mongolian students studying in Korea as being culturally contextualized and significant. He, in a sense, is attempting to illustrate that there is a growing number of international students in Korea who are experiencing a similar situation to that of Koreans studying in America. Seung-eun Lee provides an interesting historical perspective on the formation of Confucius Institutes and a geocultural interpretation of their dissemination abroad. She argues a sort of cultural negotiation and diplomacy occurring in contemporary China, placing these institutes at the heart of a Chinese ‘smart power’ policy. Yusuke Imanishi provides a glimpse into his graduate work and the mountain of field research he has done in Japan by discussing the shift between a dialect in the southern part of Japan

and Standard Japanese. His technical examination of the overt object shift in the syntax of these two variants of Japanese illustrates, as he argues, that perhaps a universal pattern may exist but that the connection between these points may be more difficult to uncover. In addition, I also include an analysis of two musical production companies in Japan and Korea that have in the past ten years engaged in a number of business deals, linking both together in what seems to be a rather beneficial partnership. However, I examine the unconventional nature of this partnership in that what seems to be the rationale behind such an investment may not truly be the motivation and what lies at the foundation is a way to diversify local markets as opposed to global markets.

This issue also includes a number of well-argued and intriguing essays and reviews that offer new perspectives on both emerging and familiar issues. What we have accumulated in this issue is an eclectic roundtable of issues and topics that we hope can provide focus as well as breadth. It will continue to be the intention of *Papers, Essays and Reviews* to provide readers and scholars with some of the more envelope-pushing and diversified perspectives from graduate students around the world. As the first Editor in Chief I envision this journal as simply not yet another journal of international studies. Rather, this journal is a springboard for a population of graduate students to showcase their unique perspectives on some of the most pressing and underexplored issues around the world. I thank all the contributors for their hard work and dedication, Dean Chung Min Lee for his continued support, Professor Mathias Maass for his invaluable guidance, and of course, the team at *Papers, Essays and Reviews* who have spent countless hours to produce the best journal possible. This journal, from cover to cover, is the product of teamwork and passion, and will continue to be so for issues to come. We look forward to future issues when we can push this proverbial envelope even further.

Here's to a great start!

Timothy Gitzen

Editor in Chief

Papers, Essays and Reviews

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