

A Note from the Editors

We are very pleased to present the Fall 2009 Issue of *ASIANetwork Exchange* with its special focus on India. For all teachers and scholars of Asia, India has increasingly become a country whose impact on the rest of the continent—and indeed, on the rest of the world—cannot be ignored. Even those readers whose focus might be on East Asia or Southeast Asia have likely found that India enters the picture, in fields ranging from the history of religion to comparative economic development. With our entire readership in mind, therefore, we are highlighting a number of articles in this issue that offer new insights on this important country in the heart of South Asia.

It has often been the case that articles published in fall issues of the *Exchange* have been edited versions of papers presented at the annual conference of ASIANetwork held the previous spring. This past March, we heard from a number of conference attendees—and we experienced ourselves—that the overall scholarly content of the panels and discussions had taken a leap forward. A number of participants commented that the conference was extremely stimulating in simultaneously addressing the needs we face as teachers of Asia in our liberal arts settings and in allowing for high-level, yet collegial scholarly exchange of ideas and information. We are especially happy, therefore, that several of the articles we present in this issue reflect these high qualities of this 2009 conference.

Our lead article is Professor Catherine Asher's (University of Minnesota) transcript of her keynote address at the conference, which illustrates the role of politics in religious practice in India as she explores the nature of shared and contested Hindu and Muslim sites, including the Taj Mahal itself. Professor Catherine Benton (Lake Forest College) also contributes to our "Research of Note" with her study of the tradition followed by Muslim women in India of wearing a veil—a practice at the center of controversy in much of the West. Tinaz Pavri (Spelman) shifts the focus to important questions

of India's contemporary political economy. Mary Hanneman (University of Washington-Tacoma) provides a study of comparative intellectual history in her article on the "fathers of fascism" in India and Japan, V.D. Savarkar and Kita Ikki. Brian Hatcher (Illinois Wesleyan University) rounds out the India focus with his critical reflections on teaching his new course, "Imagining Modern India."

Chinese environmental, economic, and anthropological issues are conjoined by Mark Dailey (Green Mountain College) in his insightful study of forestry practices in contemporary Fujian Province. Adam Cathcart (Pacific Lutheran University) contributes to "Teaching about Asia" with his discussion of how and why he incorporates North Korea into his course on Modern Japan. Finally, David Tyer from Adam Matthew Digital shares with readers an overview of a new "Media Resource," the electronic publication of new primary documents from the British National Archives, including diplomatic correspondence from the early years of the PRC. We hope readers will find all the articles enlightening and useful.

Announcement – Guest Editor, Spring 2009 Issue of *ASIANetwork Exchange*

We are delighted to announce the selection of the Guest Editor for next spring's issue of the *Exchange*: Jennifer Prough, Assistant Professor of Humanities and East Asian Studies at Valparaiso University. Professor Prough's proposal, "Popular Culture of Japan," was chosen from among the truly excellent applications for Guest Editor that we received this year. We look forward to working with Professor Prough and her contributors, and we encourage readers to consider submitting new proposals for the position of Guest Editor for future spring issues. The guidelines for proposals can be found on the ASIANetwork web-site at asianetwork.org/exchange.html.

Tom Lutze and Irv Epstein
Co-Editors