



EDITORIAL

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Amidst the geopolitical tremors reshaping the world after the events of September 11, 2001, East Asia remains clouded by uncertainty. Despite pledged reforms by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, Japan struggles, its banks teetering on the brink of financial collapse. The Bush administration's hostility towards North Korea has derailed the so-called "Sunshine" policy of Kim Dae-Jung, heightening tensions in the Korean peninsula. In Southeast Asia, US engagement coincides with the potential for renewed political and economic instability.

Articles in this issue examine the implications of the September 11th attacks on US-China relations, the US-Korea Alliance, and the role of Islam in South East Asia. While recognizing the significance of these recent developments, we reaffirm the richness and breadth of scholarship on East Asia by highlighting articles representing a variety of fields and topics. We have also implemented several qualitative improvements in this issue, primarily in layout design and the new color inserts.

China

Though the events of September 11 may have eclipsed the difficulties facing the US and China earlier in 2001, it is far from evident whether that tragedy will mark a shift in US foreign policy towards the Middle Kingdom. Nonetheless, perhaps as Sigurd Ulland argues in "Ripe for Cooperation: The Sino-American Relationship Since September 11," the events present a possible window of opportunity to promote a more cooperative relationship in security affairs. Qiang Fang deals with a very different tragedy occurring in Shaanxi Province. In "The Case of the Virgin Prostitute: Chinese Media and Legal Reform," Fang examines the Chinese media's role in shaping the evolution of the legal system, though, as he argues, its powers are limited in light of the current political system. Similarly, Yin-ching Chen compares the civil legal systems in China and Taiwan and evaluates possibilities for future cooperation in purely civil matters in "Civil Law Development: China and Taiwan." While 1949 marked a sharp divergence in the evolution of the civil legal system between China and Taiwan, Chen argues that these differences are not so pointed as to prevent such cooperation in drafting a law dealing with cross-strait civil matters, though Taiwan's legal relationship with China makes this process extremely difficult. In a sharp departure from legal and political concerns, Kumar Narayanan examines the role of the ferocious Tibetan guardian deities on the complex parchment of Tibetan religious iconography. Narayanan argues that these guardians are agents of transformation while at the same time undergoing a transformation of their own from demonic to divine. Profound forces are at work in China's transformation, from religion to law, an emboldened domestic media to a military campaign in Afghanistan, and there are few who can predict what China will look like when they run their course.

Japan

The Japan section consists of two pieces – one on the recent economic crisis and the other dealing with technological change and innovation in the wireless telecommunications industry. Mark Poe, Kay Shimizu, and Jeannie Simpson examine the efforts to revise the faltering Japanese economy by scrutinizing the Japanese Commercial Code. Kenji Kushida discusses the development the telecom industry in Japan using three models of innovation. Both essays clearly depict a Japan undergoing rapid change in its economic, political, and societal arenas.

Korea

Over the past year, the Korean peninsula has confronted new challenges. Last year has been one of an adjustment to the hardened policy of the new American administration toward North Korea. This new policy is a marked departure from the previous administration: less than a year and a half after then Secretary of State Albright visited Pyongyang, President Bush, in his State of the Union speech, included North Korea in his now famous “axis of evil.” This policy has angered not only the North but also many in the South, who think confrontation and U.S. insensitivity may be fatal to the “sunshine” policy of reconciliation. Georgi Diankov, in a research paper written specifically for the Journal, “Ambivalences in the South Korean National Security,” explores the difficulties that exist in the alliance between South Korea and the U.S. He uses both theoretical reasoning and empirical evidence to analyze two categories of problems: structural and fundamental. The U.S. is a global superpower and it is natural that it has interests that do not entirely overlap with those of South Korea. However, Diankov argues, the U.S. has both a historical responsibility toward the peninsula and practical interest in choosing engagement and good will over confrontation and harsh rhetoric in its dealing with North Korea. In spite of the military logic that holds together the alliance between South Korea and the U.S., the paper argues that U.S. insensitivity and neglect for South Korean concerns may be ultimately enervating to the alliance and inimical to the long-term goal of peaceful re-unification.

Greater East Asia

Cultural, social, and institutional differences with the West have been common themes in recent events unfolding in Southeast Asia. Already in the news due to a stagnant economy and political instability, the region became a center of attention following the 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States and the subsequent anti-terrorism campaign. Despite predictions that segments of the large Muslim populations would react violently to Western efforts against fellow Muslims in Afghanistan, nations such as Indonesia and Malaysia have remained relatively calm. In an interview conducted by our staff, Mark Mancall, professor of history at Stanford, discusses how Islam in Southeast Asia differs from the form found in the Middle East. Mancall explains how a hybridized, highly Indianized Islam impacts the society and politics of Southeast Asian nations, and how the Muslim and various non-Muslim communities in the region interact with each other. Curtis Renoe’s “Institutionalized ‘Corruption’” focuses on Southeast Asia’s largest nation – Indonesia – and analyzes *Reformasi Hukum*, or reform of its legal system. Renoe argues that the endemic corruption in the system has some of its roots in “indigenous notions of polity and power;” therefore,

Reformasi Hukum cannot be achieved by simply applying “universal” reform principles. In “Burma, ASEAN, and Human Rights,” Mann Bunyanunda discusses the appalling human rights record in a nation starkly at odds with its developing neighbors. He concludes that the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) policy of “constructive engagement” – designed as an alternative to the common Western prescription of sanctions and isolation – has failed to bring about better humanitarian conditions in Burma, but that any improvement will require the continued involvement of Southeast Asian nations as well as the West.

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The Editors
