

I hope every *EAA* reader is off to a good start in 2022. The theme of this issue is part one of the special section series “Asia in World History: Comparisons, Connections, and Conflicts” and authors of thematic articles and essays address a variety of topics that chronologically range from pre-history until the end of the fifteenth century CE.

Matthew Herbst in “Hagia Sophia: Bridge Across Time” through both engaging prose and illustrative imagery uses a world architectural masterpiece as a case study of the successive impact of empires and belief systems on a city still considered a global cultural crossroads. Matthew Des Lauriers in “The Longest Journey: The Peopling of the Americas” takes readers back many thousand years in focusing upon the Bering Land Bridge Theory that now probably proves that at least most ancestors of people considered Asian today were, in fact, the first Americans.

Jonathan Markley’s “China versus the Barbarians: The First Century of Han-Xiongnu Relations” introduces students and teachers to a series of interactions ignored in many world history courses, the first significant interactions between a Steppe power and an agricultural civilization. In the author’s words: “Before the Huns, before the Mongols, there were the Xiongnu.” Heather Clydesdale in “Objects of Fascination: Encountering Six Dynasties China through Material Culture” uses images, structures, and artifacts from the past to concretely demonstrate the widespread intercultural interactions that occurred in China’s Six Dynasties period (220-589 CE). This manuscript promises to be a superb student reading as evidenced by the praise of two accomplished master teachers with extensive East Asian expertise.

Todd Munson in “Beyond the Sinosphere in Early Japan: Nara and the Silk Roads” continues to use artifacts and other examples of material culture in telling the story of how the land and maritime Silk Roads was not just limited to China and Korea. Most educated laypeople aren’t aware of South Asia’s impact upon Japan, and will learn how “Middle Eastern” cultures like Iran also left footprints. Ronald Green in “Kūkai in China, What He Studied and Brought Back to Japan,” tells the story of one of Japan’s most treasured cultural icons, the Buddhist monk, calligrapher, and poet Kūkai, who in a short time in China managed to significantly expand Japanese Buddhism and is the subject of contemporary media attention today.

Readers are also encouraged to read the non-thematic article, Jackson Brook’s “The Act of Constructing Memory at Cambodia’s Bophana Center” and view a series of short video interviews (with English language subtitles) with a wide range of people who lived through the Pol Pot years. This is an excellent primary resource to augment and lend rich texture to other existing short film such as *My Cambodia* (<https://tinyurl.com/2p8wdpnx>). Now more than ever, young people need to be aware of the horror that ideological extremists can foment.

The Resources section, the Facts About Asia column, and the online supplement section include several other thematic-related essays and reviews. Readers are especially encouraged to visit the online supplements and first read Rhoads Murphey’s seminal introduction “The Shape of the World: Eurasia,” which first



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appeared in the 1997 edited volume by Ainslee T. Embree and Carol Gluck titled *Asia in Western and World History* and then return to the digital or print journal and read the reactions of an outstanding secondary school world history teacher and two professors with extensive experience at the college level on Murphey's essay.

The issue also includes a special segment on the 2021 Franklin R. Buchanan Prizewinner *What Does it Mean to Be an American?* including an interview with Rylan Sekiguchi who headed the project and essays by two accomplished high school teachers on this multi-purpose digital curriculum package. *EAA* readers should also read the online supplement review of Michael Seth's *North Korea: A History*. Michael is one of the most productive contributors to *EAA* throughout the years in a number of capacities, and a historian of Korea that writes consistently excellent prose for students and teachers.

The spring 2022 special section is the second part of the series: "Asia in World History: Comparisons, Connections, and Conflicts" and the deadline has passed for submissions. The fall 2022 special section is "Teaching Asia in Middle Schools" and the deadline for receipt of manuscripts is May 6, 2022. For information on two additional planned *EAA* issues, as well as author guidelines, please visit the *EAA* website: <https://www.asianstudies.org/publications/ea/>. Nonthematic manuscripts are also considered for each issue.

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