

# From the Editor

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In the previous issue of AAQ, we highlighted scholarly work on East Asia, one of the most rapidly aging regions in the world and home to a diverse array of cultures. Unfortunately, many of the articles that I had hoped to include were still being prepared, including what I felt was an very exciting group of articles from scholars in Japan, organized around the theme of aging and materiality. When AAQ recieved a unique submission looking at intergenerational communication in Mongolia and America, I decided to extend the special issue on Aging in East Asia to Part II. The result is the current issue, featuring articles that together highlight the importance of the anthropological lens for understanding macro-level social transformations as well as more intimate processes of managing age-related life transitions.

Choi, Giles and Hajek's examination of intergenerational perceptions of communication not only makes an important contribution to social science studies of Mongolia in general, but stands out for its use of statistical methods, which provide compelling data linking cultural attitudes and communicative strategies. These quantitative measures allow the authors to present cross-cultural comparisons with an American sample, further setting their findings into relief. Using the CPAM model of the intergenerational encounter, the authors elaborate on the changing values and relationships in contemporary Mongolia that no doubt resonates with the situations in other Asian countries where communication between the young, middle-aged and old has profound implications for social integration, care, and continuity. While AAQ has not published many quantitative studies, Choi, Giles and Hajek's work is a strong example of the utility of these methods for helping us to question the salience of cultural norms across cohorts and their influence on behaviors.

The following three articles (Suzuki, Taniguchi, and Fujiwara) were adapted from papers originally delivered at the Society for East Asian Anthropology conference "Material Asia: Objects, Technologies and Rethinking Success" in August, 2011. It was a pleasure to have AAQ submissions from this exceptional group of Japanese scholars, and I sincerely appreciate the earnest efforts made to develop their work for our journal.

Each article in this group not only show how various objects, materials, and technologies affect older adults' self-identity, sense of meaning, and agency, but they also illustrate the ways in which materials extend persons into the social and natural world, creating new possibilities for intergenerational relationships, configurations of labor, and political authority. Older adults not only remain productive members of their communities, but they are energetic innovators, self-promoters, and keen business-people. Suzuki's ethnographic work on decorative leaf industry in the town of Kamikatsu and Taniguchi's study of decorative traditional textiles both show how older adults' have been able to leverage practical knowledge, experience, and labor in ways that have expanded their skills, created opportunities for new forms of intergenerational communication, and brought about changes not only in wealth, but also in local infrastructure and the social capital of the community. Fujiwara goes even further in deconstructing the border between persons and materiality, drawing on older adults' beliefs and practices focused on statues of Jizō. Fujiwara suggests that worshippers' dependence on Jizō, materialized in the practice of vows and the circulation of the statue's many heads, produces a new understanding of "successful aging," in which authenticity is not tied to a singular notion of an integral identity, but rather, it is ambiguous, transient, and distributed across bodies and locations. Not only have these articles covered a broad range of material engagements, but they have also provided some wonderful photographs to accompany them.

To be sure, we have not seen the last of aging in East Asia in AAQ, as many regions and topic still remain unaddressed in these last two issues. I continue to look forward to more fine submissions for future issues of AAQ, including commentaries, photo essays, reviews, and research reports. My sincere thanks to all of the contributors, reviewers, and AAGE for making this issue possible.

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Editor