I hope everyone enjoyed a peaceful and joyous holiday season. “What Should We Know About Asia?” is particularly meaningful for two reasons. The special section topic, while always an appropriate question, has never been the specific focus of an EAA special section, and, even though unplanned when the decision was made to address this particular theme, the winter 2018 special section title was the perfect place to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the National Consortium for Teaching about Asia (NCTA). For those not familiar with NCTA it is the most effective, long-term US collaborative effort to improve elementary and secondary school teacher and student knowledge of East Asia ever created. Anyone who teaches Asia should immensely benefit from reading the contributions of outstanding professors and teachers who’ve been involved in NCTA programs. All NCTA-related contributors deserve accolades.

However, without the efforts of Lynn Parisi, Director of the Program for Teaching East Asia (University of Colorado Boulder) this issue’s special focus on NCTA would not have occurred. Lynn, who is also a National Co-Director of NCTA, conceptualized the idea of a substantive anniversary tribute appearing in this issue, and worked extensively with our office in planning the NCTA segment at every stage, including reviewing many manuscripts. The TEA provided support for AAS to help to defray the costs of this expanded issue. One could not ask for a better collaborator than Lynn. At least seven features and seven teaching resources in this issue are the work of authors who’ve been involved in NCTA.

The first four features in the special section focus upon more general but critical topics. The Freeman Foundation has been a major force in education about East Asia and the interview with President Graeme Freeman provides readers with both a retrospective look at the foundation’s activities and gives a sense of current and future high priorities. Kristin Stapleton’s “Fiction: A Passport to the Asian Past” is an engaging, compelling, and practical case for always integrating literature into history courses. Jeffrey Richey in “My Students and Asia: Then and Now” reflects upon how at his institution, Berea College, the demographics, interests, and outlooks of students interested in Asia have changed in his approximately two-decade career. Jeffrey welcomes comments and responses. Kyle Greenwalt, Jennifer Pippin, and Ethan Segal in “Collaboration and Plenty: Supporting Teachers’ Learning (and Unlearning) about East Asia” describe their high-quality approach to Asia professional development that builds and celebrates teacher virtues.

The focus of the next four features is more country- and globally-specific. Maura Cunningham and Jeffrey Wasserstrom’s “China and a New Era: The Latest Twist in an Enduring Pattern?” uses China as an illustrative case study that teaching history is messy but more genuine if instructors focus not just upon beginnings and ends of historical periods, but upon their continuities as well. Paul Dunscamb in “The Reign of Emperor Akihito, 1989–2019: A History in Five Key Words” gives readers a vivid sense of the considerable turmoil and disasters, but also the resiliency that marked the Heisei era. Shelton Woods’s “Việt Nam in the Twenty-first Century: The Unbreakable Bamboo” is an ideal general introduction to Việt Nam with an emphasis upon economic, educational, social, and international events since the end of the American war. Andrew McGreevy’s feature
article “Will China Lead the World by Land and Sea?” is a basic introductory primer on China’s potentially highly significant Belt and Road Initiative. Survey world history and literature instructors should not miss Yue Zhang’s “Bringing Traditional Chinese Culture to Life” that appears in the online supplements for this issue.

Seven outstanding NCTA master teachers contribute a wide variety of teaching resource essays (TREs); examples of topics include critical thinking and Japanese history, China in Africa (online), contemporary controversies in maritime East Asia, and teaching East Asia with GIS. This issue and online supplement also include an outstanding “Digital Asia” column, an interview with the 2018 Franklin R. Buchanan prizewinner with an accompanying review of the prizewinning book, a TRE on teaching the 1947 Partition of British India, and a film review of Above the Drowning Sea.

The spring 2019 special section is “Schools in Asia.” The fall 2019 special section is “Entrepreneurship in Asia,” and the deadline for initial receipt of manuscripts is April 20th, 2019. The winter 2019 special section is “Asian Literature in the Humanities and the Social Sciences,” and the deadline for initial receipt of manuscripts is August 1st, 2019. Nonthematic manuscripts are also considered for each issue. Please visit the EAA website at www.asian-studies.org/eaa for author guidelines before submitting a manuscript.

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