

## Editor's Note

As I write this introduction to the Fall 2019 issue of *TDSR*, now in its thirty-first year, plans are advancing for IASTE's 2020 conference, to be held next September at Nottingham Trent University in the U.K. IASTE has already received hundreds of abstracts for the event, and the blind peer-review process is currently underway.

We begin this time with an article by Jyoti Sharma examining the mansions constructed by Mughalized European mercenaries, called nabobs, in the culturally fluid context of the eighteenth-century Indian subcontinent. Like their patrons, these houses, called *kothis*, were cultural amalgams of their patrons' hybrid identities, and served as places of leisure in the absence of later structures of institutionalized sociability such as the colonial social club. In the centuries that followed, however, these structures were ridiculed for the very hybrid qualities that made them historically revealing. Thus, she ends by emphasizing that a better understanding of them has much to offer to narratives of colonial architecture, and that renewed efforts should be made to protect them as significant built heritage. This is followed by Cátia Ramos's investigation of the changing political symbolisms and popular perceptions of the Old Square in Guarda, Portugal. Soon after Portugal's political democratization began in the mid-1970s, the decision was made to reorganize the symbols and structures of authoritarianism installed in this historic space by the former dictatorship. But this effort has only been partly successful because, although technically proficient, the transformation has failed to be fully embraced by the local population. As Ramos writes, the work thus carries a warning about the danger of inadequate political debate and engagement in the process of urban transformation. Our third feature article, by Cecilia Chu and Calvin Liang, looks at the application of the Ebenezer Howard's garden city, in theory and practice, in Republican China in the years leading up to World War II. As in other foreign contexts, this involved adapting Howard's turn-of-the-century ideas about a utopian marriage of city and country in England to quite different social contexts and physical conditions. It thus offers

a view into Chinese visions of modernization at the time, as prompted by changes in transportation technology, urbanization, and rural economic stagnation. This article concludes by pointing out how certain ideas inherent in an originally "bourgeois" movement were carried through to the model villages of the early Communist era, and remain appealing to Chinese urbanists today.

In the Field Report section we present Yura Kim's examination of the "close residential relationship" as a key component of contemporary Japanese housing policy. Many of the residential suburbs built to house Japan's burgeoning urban population in the 1960 and 70s have since deteriorated and require redevelopment. Yet many of their long-time residents resist moving to other locations where they might be better supported in their old age. The report analyzes how the daily lives of residents of one such area have changed as a result of its ongoing redevelopment, and it documents how maintaining a close residential relationship between different generations has helped alleviate the transition away from the traditional extended Japanese household.

Finally, in our Commentary section, we present Ali Alraouf's critique of contemporary development proposals in Egypt, which received a Jeffrey Cook award at the 2018 IASTE conference. In revising the paper for publication, Alraouf targeted his critique toward what he terms the "phantasmagoric" aspects of recent urban proposals there, such as that for a "New Capital City." And he explains how a continuing stream of imagery fashioned on the global image of Dubai has been heralded by the new authoritarian regime of General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi to create a charismatic image and justify a continuing ambiguity about the future of the country and the legitimacy of questioning its fate. Alraouf argues that such a strategy of illusion over substance will ultimately prove hollow and self-defeating in the face of the country's real urban problems.

We hope this issue will be as informative and as well received by the IASTE community as our previous ones.

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