

## Abstracts

### The Divine Authorship of *Pei-yu chi* [Journey to the North]

GARY SEAMAN      Pages 483–497

*Pei-yu chi* [Journey to the North] is a late Ming novel, which since Ch'ing dynasty times has usually been published together with three other short novels, namely *Nan-yu chi* [Journey to the South], *Tung-yu chi* [Journey to the East], and *Hsi-yu chi* [Journey to the West], as a composite edition entitled *Ssu-yu chi* [The Four Journeys]. Authorship of *Pei-yu chi* is usually attributed to a certain Yü Hsiang-tou, but the work is popularly regarded as the mythic charter of divinity of the Emperor of the Dark Heavens (Hsüan-t'ien Shang-ti), apotheosis of the north. Arguments based on analogy with present-day religious practices on Taiwan, as well as the content and structure of *Pei-yu chi*, are used to support a theory that the text was originally composed as a religious tract (*shan-shu*) by Chinese spirit-medium cults.

### The Rights of Tenants in Mid-Qing Sichuan: A Study of Land-Related Lawsuits in the Baxian Archives

MADELEINE ZELIN      Pages 499–526

This article, based on newly opened archives, explores the rights of tenants in the neighborhood of Chongqing during the late-eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. Changes in tenancy arrangements are discussed within the context of Chongqing's role as the main transshipment center for rice and goods from Southwest China to the middle and lower Yangtze. By the 1820s there was a tendency toward the collection of fixed rents in kind. Rent deposits, a major source of liquid capital for landlords, became an almost universal feature of Baxian leases. High deposits encouraged subletting and multiple tenancy, but appear to have provided little security of tenure. The large collection of lawsuits in the Baxian Archives allows an examination of the treatment of tenants in the magistrates' court and of the rights of persons who had disposed of land by means of conditional sale (*dianmai*).

### Domesticating the Cosmos: History and Structure in a Folktale from India

STUART H. BLACKBURN      Pages 527–543

A folktale about two sisters who make a wager on the color of a white horse has been told in India for at least three thousand years; it is recorded in the oldest Vedic texts, and it is still sung today in a Tamil oral tradition. A survey of this historical depth shows that the major variants of the tale reflect developments in Hindu religious

thought. But more interesting is the relation between the embedded folktale and its frame text in classical mythology. In each case, the tale echoes the themes of the frame text but reorients them, bringing the cosmic concerns of gods and demons within the compass of human kinship, within the home, even the bedroom. These observations lead to a discussion of general relations between folklore and classical traditions in India.

### On the Political Construction of Tradition: *Gotong Royong* in Indonesia

JOHN R. BOWEN

Pages 545–561

The idea of “mutual assistance” (*gotong royong*) in Indonesia has been the basis for political discourse concerning the nature of authority, the characteristics of village society, and the legitimacy of demands for labor by the state. This article traces the way in which both changing political ideologies and state-village relations have been mediated by the term *gotong royong*, and suggests that its multiple meanings have been central to its semantic, political, and economic roles. Local interpretations of national doctrine and reactions to state policy are examined in two cases: East Java and Gayo (Aceh). The wide variety of local strategies is perceived as depending on preexisting political traditions and power relations vis-à-vis the state.