

In This Issue

The premise of VICTOR H. MAIR's wide-ranging article is that written Chinese emerged not as transcribed speech, but rather as a special, radically shortened cipher with its own grammatical and expressive conventions. He calls this written form Literary Sinitic (LS) and finds the disparity between it and any form of spoken Chinese, which he refers to under the general heading of Vernacular Sinitic (VS), is of a wholly different nature than the contrast between written Latin and any modern written or spoken Romance language. Indeed, he argues, Literary Sinitic remained incapable of serving as a means of recording spoken Chinese or any other language. Thus, for Mair, the question becomes: How did vernacular written forms emerge in a milieu in which Literary Sinitic dominated intellectual life? He finds the earliest instances of written Vernacular Sinitic occur typically in Buddhist texts. He believes the Buddhist emphasis on the principle of teaching through the local dialect (*deśa-bhāṣā*) was a major impetus for the development of written vernacular, but concludes it is difficult to determine exactly which aspects of Buddhism had the greatest influence on the slow maturation of written Vernacular Sinitic. Mair's article broadens the consideration of written Chinese that Daniel Gardner (50.3 [August 1991]:574–603); Chad Hansen (52.2 [May 1993]:373–99), (52.4 [November 1993]:954–57); and Marshall Unger (52.4 [November 1993]:949–54) have explored in recent issues.

LAURA E. HEIN discusses the origins of Japanese postwar arguments for rapid economic growth. She believes these successful policies, now so studied and imitated, reflect more than choices between neoclassical or Marxist approaches to economic development, and, indeed, reflect deep political commitments of the postwar leadership in Japan. To make her point, Hein turns to the work of three economists—Arisawa Hiromi, Nakayama Ichirō, and Tsuru Shigeto—to show how certain of their concepts were incorporated into Japanese national economic policies even though none were members of the Liberal Democratic Party and they must be numbered among the government's critics. She finds that all three were committed to three key political principles: (1) the emperor would cease to be the fount of an expansionist, nationalist ideology; (2) Japan would have neither a large military nor a sizable defense sector in the economy; and (3) Japan would create economic democracy through establishing full employment and high wages to achieve a relatively even distribution of income. She argues that these concepts were appealing because they reversed the direction of policies that these men saw as having led Japan into the Pacific War, while building on potential strengths they saw in the Japanese system, including good economic planning by the government, excellent technological diffusion in society, and limited military capacity as enshrined in the 1947 constitution.

SUCHITRA SAMANTA explores the present-day practice of animal sacrifices to the goddess Kālī in Bengal. Based on field observations in temples and homes, she comments on the cultural meaning and symbolic logic of these sacrifices. Under discussion are three types of indigenous interpretation that have grown up around the sacrifices: ritual, mythic, and exegetical. In all three, Samanta finds the divinity (*śakti*) and liberation (*mōkṣa*) of the self are realized through the trope of ingestion

and transformation. She concludes this relationship differs from the Judeo-Christian concept of sacrifice as the abnegation and expiation of guilt and goes beyond the themes of substitution, commensality, and transformation that are most commonly used by anthropologists in interpreting such sacrifices.

In a strong rebuttal of the idea that Chinese culture is uniquely inhospitable to liberalism, BARRETT L. MCCORMICK and DAVID KELLY argue that a growing basis for liberalism exists in the People's Republic of China. They argue that the Chinese, like the Eastern Europeans, are rational actors who understand that liberalism has a practical value in that it can create a space in which "civil society" provides protection against unfettered authoritarianism. Thus, liberalism—meaning some kind of institutionalized political and social freedom—is linked with prosperity and stability and is seen as in both individual and collective best interests. Consequently, in spite of the legacies of imperial rule, the patriarchal Chinese family, as well as the authoritarian nature of the current Leninist party and state, McCormick and Kelly, who reject the premise that liberalism is relevant only to Western societies, find "liberalism retains a strong presence in China and by most estimates has gained currency in China throughout the 1980s and 1990s." They dismiss recurring official campaigns against liberalism as largely ineffective and believe that those Chinese who advocated "new authoritarianism" in the 1980s, along with those in the 1990s who favor "new conservatism," only reveal that the battle for liberalism is not yet decided.

In the first of a new series of "state-of-the-field" articles about Southeast Asia, HAL HILL documents the mechanics of rapid socioeconomic development in the six states that compose the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand). Hill concludes that Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand have exceptional records, while Indonesia's achievements are more modest; the Philippines are cast as the under-performing member within the group. Hill finds the outward-looking economic stance of the six states, which stops short of free trade, has been a vital factor and emphasizes the large but changing role that international trade and investment have played in the region's development over the past quarter century. In discussing the question of poverty, Hill concludes that in comparison with other regions, such as Latin America, the region's record on the incidence and reduction of poverty must be considered good. Overall, he does not find evidence that state intervention at the micro-level in the development process has been a major contributing factor, but does applaud ASEAN governments for their "resilience, flexibility, firmness, and pragmatism" in macroeconomic policy.

JOHN W. WITEK surveys the four books published in 1993 as part of *Asia in the Making of Europe*, Donald Lach's monumental survey of European conceptions about Asia. These four books make up the third volume of Lach's lifelong project; in this volume Lach worked with a co-author, Edwin J. Van Kley. Witek characterizes the material covered in this volume as largely descriptive. Lach and Van Kley emphasize how Europe's understanding of the major states, peoples, and places of Asia expanded rapidly during the seventeenth century. In a still-awaited fourth volume, Lach and Van Kley will delve into Europeans' diverse experiences and reflections from 1500 to 1800, interpreting the meanings of their cultural contacts with Asia and its peoples.