

appreciation from Sridharan. These choices had, however, been facilitated by the existence of an authoritarian military state that possessed exceptional policy flexibility, given its ability to suppress the popular sectors and to privilege selective private sector firms as national champions through rewards and punishments. Besides, the state was helped by its military and political ties with the United States, which provided access to a vast market for an export-led strategy. Brazil falls in between the Korean success story and the Indian case study of failure, for it was able to promote a large domestic production base even if it was not internationally competitive. While Brazil's military regime was driven by an antidependency ideology and was insulated from the popular sectors, its policy flexibility was constrained by an entrenched private sector and the dominating presence of foreign firms.

Sridharan's analysis is shrewd and penetrating but also balanced and nuanced. Besides, it makes a theoretical advance in the state capacity literature in which it is situated. However, it would seem that, for a study that privileges path dependence, it has not been sufficiently grounded in history. It is understandable that, because the electronics industry is itself a recent development and the study is focused on the 1969–94 period, Sridharan's analysis of Indian policy should concentrate on political and economic events since the late 1960s and make Mrs. Gandhi bear a considerable responsibility for it. But the policy evolution over that period in respect of the larger industrial regime and the electronics sector was itself powerfully constrained by earlier pathmaking decisions. His assumption, though not explicitly stated, of an initial ISI strategy being innocent as it were of ideology and geopolitics is a mistaken one. Both the socialist and autarkic mold of ISI was given and legitimated by Nehru with the Second Five Year Plan in the mid-1950s, for reasons of ideology and geopolitics, and it continued to constrain subsequent policy and the associated politics, even after the liberalization shift in the wake of the economic crisis in the early 1990s. However, Sridharan's neglect of this aspect is a minor lapse in what is certainly a very valuable contribution to comparative political economy.

BALDEV RAJ NAYAR  
*McGill University*

*Shamanism, History, and the State.* Edited by NICHOLAS THOMAS and CAROLINE HUMPHREY. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996. \$49.50 (cloth); \$18.95 (paper).

In *Le Totémisme Aujourd'hui*, Claude Lévi-Strauss demonstrated the great variance in the practices given the name "totemism" and their basis in various correlative classification systems, thus undermining the idea of totemism as a social institution. Since then, few scholars (outside China) have used the term "totemism" except with extreme caution. Shamanism, even more than totemism, is an anthropological concept which has gripped the popular imagination and has long been ready for reexamination. Following Mircea Eliade's pioneering studies, shamanism has generally been discussed as though it were an archetypal social institution rather than a historical phenomenon. Thus, the title of this book, *Shamanism, History, and the State*, suggests that it will challenge accepted orthodoxies. It does so by a series of case studies which trace the tensions between ecstatic or inspirational religious practices and centralized authority in particular political and historical situations.

The book is based on a conference held at Cambridge in 1986. It is very well edited: conference volumes are usually uneven in terms of both scholarship and style, but this one is impressively consistent. The volume is divided into two parts; the first, called "Shamanisms," includes articles on societies without strongly centralized political authority: Eastern Oceania, Amazonia, and Siberia in recent historical periods. These are cultures where use of the term "shamanism" is conventional among anthropologists and it is used by all of the authors with little attempt at definition. The second part, "Shamanism and the State," ranges from South India in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, to modern Madagascar, to Imperial Rome, to Northern Asia during the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911). These are societies with more complex systems of political authority and only Caroline Humphrey, who is concerned with Northern Asia, uses the term "shamanism."

A common theme throughout the book is that the relationship between political authority and ecstatic or inspirational religion varies widely and each case can only be understood in the wider historical, political, and ideological context. Nevertheless, the potential for inspirational religious practices to appeal to individuals without the mediation of the state is generally assumed. Nicholas Thomas ("Marginal Powers: Shamanism and Hierarchy in Eastern Oceania") discusses the relationships between shamans and chiefs in terms of ritual and religious efficacy in different parts of Polynesia and argues that they are alternate rather than antagonistic powers. Stephen Hugh-Jones ("Shamans, Prophets, Priests and Pastors") surveys the relationship between "vertical shamanism" and "horizontal shamanism" in Northwest Amazonia over the last century, arguing that dual forms are more common than usually acknowledged. "Vertical shamanism," in which esoteric knowledge is transmitted, is more readily associated with secular authority than "horizontal shamanism" which is associated with trance and possession. His discussion of early millennial cults, which is one of the most fascinating sections of the book, is nicely complemented by Peter Gow ("River People: Shamanism and History in Western Amazonia") who argues that ayahuasca shamanism, in which illness is cured by hallucinogens, is not a primitive religious form belonging to forest peoples, but a response to a specific colonial history which has been evolving in urban centers over three hundred years.

The division of the book into two parts suggests a conflict between state formation and shamanism. Indeed, this is a theoretical assumption explicitly stated by Roberte N. Hamayon ("Shamanism in Siberia: From Partnership in Supernature to Counterpower in Society") in one of the few articles with a clear theoretical definition of shamanism as a social institution. Most of the articles in the second part of the book are not concerned with shamanism per se. Nevertheless, they use the question of tension between inspirational religion and centralized authority as a means of reexamining conventional assumptions about the nature of political authority in various regions and historical periods. Susan Bayly ("Saints Cults and Warrior Kingdoms in South India") examines the tensions between images of kingship and inspirational religion in the competing kingdoms of South India before colonial rule. Maurice Block ("The Slaves, the King, and Mary in the Slums of Antananarivo") discusses the possession cults in Madagascar in terms of indigenous concepts of descent and the state. Tamsyn Barton ("Astrology and the State in Imperial Rome") is not concerned with inspirational religion, but with the complex relationships between the astrologer with his personal access to higher knowledge and state diviners. Mary Beard ("The Roman and the Foreign: The Cult of the 'Great Mother' in Imperial Rome") uses the cult of Magna Mater to demonstrate ideological ambiguity in the relationship between Rome and its "empire." Caroline Humphrey ("Shamanic

Practices and the State in Northern Asia: Views from the Center and Periphery”) is concerned with the changing role of shamanism as an element of Manchu self-definition during the Qing Dynasty.

All of the articles in this book are of interest. My only caveat is that no alternative or minimal definition for the term “shamanism” is maintained. This is perhaps inevitable with a collection of articles such as this. However, the editors state that their purpose is to “deconstruct the archetype” and “loosen the paradigm,” and though the paradigm is indeed loosened, the ultimate effect of the individual case studies is to render the term “shamanism” meaningless. For example, in early Chinese Studies, scholars have debated whether the term *wu* should be translated as “shaman.” This debate depends upon a minimal definition of a “shaman” as someone who uses trance and makes spirit journeys. Within the broad range of definitions used herein, *wu* can certainly be translated as “shaman,” but it does not tell us anything at all about them. There remains the need for a term which refers, at least minimally, to a religious practitioner who uses trance and makes spirit journeys, if only to demonstrate, as this book so clearly implies, that such practices do not have any particular social or ideological implications and must be understood within a wider historical context.

SARAH ALLAN  
*Dartmouth College*

## CHINA

*Bubonic Plague in Nineteenth-Century China.* By CAROL BENEDICT. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1996. xx, 256 pp. \$39.50.

Carol Benedict has written a book on plague in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century China that should interest a broad audience—those interested in the history of medicine, modern world history, and late imperial and modern Chinese history. Benedict’s conclusion offers an apt introduction to the scope and significance of her scholarship. As she demonstrates, “[t]he social history of disease is not only a significant subject in its own right but can also reveal important aspects of Chinese economic, political, social, and cultural life in the last century of Qing rule” (p. 171).

In Benedict’s hands, the story of plague in China becomes a new chapter in the history of state-societal interactions in the late Qing period. The civic activism that dominated public health in China during the second half of the nineteenth century made a transition to a centralized public-health bureaucracy in the early twentieth century. This transition marked a shift in power from the merchant-elites who controlled charitable institutions to the government organizations of state medicine. Reformers in the Chinese government borrowed western models to create a new centralized public-health bureaucracy. At first, they used models of state medicine from Europe to prevent further foreign intervention into China’s internal affairs. Later, however, these models enabled the Chinese state to expand its power over local society. Benedict’s focus on the fight against plague epidemics in China at the turn of the century reveals new dimensions of the social, political, and economic transformations of the late Qing dynasty.