

In This Issue

DAVID WYATT's presidential address takes us back to 1894, exactly a century ago, to events that ended with the humiliation and division of the principality of Nan. Nan was subordinate to but independent of the Thai state in Bangkok; it encompassed parts of what is today northern Thailand and southern Laos on either side of the Mekong River. Wyatt imaginatively uses a variety of sources, each fragmentary and limited, to present a sophisticated view of the region's history. This short essay presents a rare combination of subtle but sure readings of texts, bold interpretations, and fine writing.

In his article about Central Asia in the first millennium B.C., NICOLA DI COSMO challenges the established characterizations of the region's peoples as greedy (according to traditional Chinese historians) or needy (according to modern social scientists). He instead proposes that their economy paralleled that of Scythian Central Asia where scholars have long recognized the existence of a stable symbiotic relationship between agricultural production and steppe pastoral nomadism. Di Cosmo presents a variety of evidence—including historical texts, archaeological findings, and modern field studies of nomads—all suggesting that sufficient agricultural production existed within ancient Central Asia to support the population's needs. He proposes that the aggressive activities of the Xiongnu nomadic confederation beginning in the third century B.C. should be understood as a defensive response to Chinese expansion into the Central Asians' grazing and agricultural lands. He argues that during the reign of Han Wudi (141–87 B.C), the Chinese altered this policy by withdrawing from permanent occupation of Central Asian lands, and adopted a more successful pattern of short-term military campaigns aimed at weakening the Xiongnu confederation.

DAVID GILMARTIN analyzes a conflict within the British colonial administration of India. It pitted those British responsible for the development of irrigation works in the Punjab against other officials responsible for the regular administration of the same territory. The British engineers, who are represented by the "Imperial Science" in Gilmartin's title, proposed a modern hydro-irrigation system based on the conception of dominating and controlling nature. The British administrators, who represent Gilmartin's "Scientific Empire," opposed these technocratic schemes based on their carefully collected, organized, and analyzed data about the local society. The administrators, unlike the technocrats, saw domination and control of the Indian population as their main goal. Gilmartin concludes that these differences were not settled in the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries, even though the technocratic arguments became increasingly powerful. Instead, he believes that postcolonial India has inherited these two "discourses" as part of its heritage from the British raj.

ANTONIA FINNANE examines Chinese nationalism during the 1930s through a discussion of *Idle Talk on Yangzhou* (*Xianhua Yangzhou*), published in 1934 by the nationalist literary critic Yi Junzuo, and the subsequent storm of controversy that led his publisher to pull the book from circulation. Finnane shows how Yi Junzuo's writing borrows certain Western patterns of orientализing, modernizing, and gender-typing that parallel the response of his contemporary South Asia counterparts in appropriating Western approaches for their own efforts to promote

nationalism in India. She feels that approaches used by scholars of South Asia to explain the rise of nationalism under British colonial rule can be constructively used in analyzing China and thus develops comparative themes voiced in the symposium "Dimensions of Ethnic and Cultural Nationalism in Asia" (*JAS* 53.1 [February 1994]:3–123). Her conclusions suggest a greater similarity in political and social movements in twentieth-century South Asia and East Asia than is generally assumed.

NANETTE GOTTLIEB offers an interpretation of post-World War II script reform in Japan, linking this specialized topic to the general direction of Japanese politics over the past fifty years. She argues that only the defeat of the wartime ultranationalist state opened an opportunity for both moderate and more radical Japanese-language reformers, under the slogan of democracy, to push for significant changes in written Japanese. Conservative forces appeared to accept the reforms, but have, in fact, worked both to alter the trajectory of the reform process and eventually to arrest any further changes without totally overturning the reforms themselves. Gottlieb sees this issue of script reform as mirroring the general directions taken by the Liberal Democratic Party in dealing with the reforms introduced by the American Occupation.