

In This Issue

Underlying ROBERT J. SMITH's presidential address is his recognition that Ruth Benedict's overemphasis on culture as an explanatory variable has produced a reaction denying the relevance of culture to the political economy of Japan. In recent years the concept has been dismissed in favor of institutions and history. Smith notes that there is ample evidence to sustain the argument that cultural factors have long played an important role in Japan's development and continue to today.

Smith's argument is supported by PATRICIA G. STEINHOFF, who looks at the inner workings of *Sekigunha* (Red Army), a Japanese radical student group of the late 1960s, to see if its social organization was as revolutionary as its ideology. She finds that as *Sekigunha* went underground to avoid the police, it developed a characteristically Japanese managerial style. This case study of a small social movement offers new perspectives on Japanese culture and the process of reproducing culture in any society.

HY VAN LUONG attempts to assess the impact of socialism on kinship systems, gender relations, and household formation in northern Vietnam. He proposes that two potentially opposing models (one male-oriented and the other non-male-oriented) constitute the structural parameters of Vietnamese kinship system and of the household formations and gender relations embedded in it. Changes in ideology and the relations of production have not altered these parameters; instead, their relative strength has been shifted, with the non-male-oriented model becoming dominant.

In the first of three articles on India, RICHARD W. LARIVIERE looks at the way the arrival of the British stultified the traditional Indian legal system. Misunderstanding the nature of *dharmasāstra* texts, British courts relied on traditional *paṇḍitas* to interpret them, until it was discovered in 1864 that the *paṇḍitas* were "manipulating" the texts. Nevertheless, these texts are still cited and interpreted today to support preconceived conclusions required by judicial precedent.

In her examination of the Rajasthani oral version of the tale of Gopi Chand—a king previously born a yogi and destined to return to that detached condition—ANN GRODZINS GOLD offers fresh, folk perspectives on the classical indological problem of renunciation as a cultural ideal. In the story's semiotic construction she finds contrasting, external signs of royal and yogic identity that embody the king's inner confusion. The tale becomes meaningful for local and distant audiences as the reluctant renouncer's emotional experiences in parting from loved ones evoke an awareness of shared human mortality.

AKHIL GUPTA reviews five major books published on the Indian political economy during the past decade, critically evaluating their insights in four areas: theories of the state; the relation between state, regime, and party; policy formulation; and the implementation of state policies. He concludes that the scholars should pay greater attention to questions of gender, the subaltern, political discourse, and the lower levels of the political system.