

In This Issue

It is the custom of the *Journal* to open its November issue with the text of the presidential speech delivered at the most recent annual meeting of the AAS. Past President RHOADS MURPHEY offers here the following postscript to his speech:

Although the AAS has thrived in numbers of members, organizational efficiency, and general well-being, it has done less well as a mutually enriching Association of Asianists. Most members of the profession, or of the Association (in too many cases the two are not the same), continue to function as relatively narrow specialists concerned with a single region or sub-region, time period, and disciplinary sub-set. Most do not stray far from their specialities, and few function as comparativists or as genuine Asianists. Yet the Association offers the opportunity, through its meetings, publications, and interactions, for each of us to enlarge our horizons, and by so doing to become better specialists as well as better Asianists: "Who knows only one culture understands none." The breadth of learning which such a course implies imposes a daunting task, but that should be seen as a labor of love, and we may take inspiration from the work of outstanding Asianists and comparativists such as Joseph Levenson and Joseph Fletcher. Let us use the Association to learn from one another.

Perhaps in accord with Rhoads Murphey's exhortation, the remaining articles in the *Journal* are truly varied. CAO THỊ NHU-QUỲNH and JOHN C. SCHAFER trace the transition in Vietnam from verse narrative to novel by comparing two exemplary works—the nineteenth-century *Lục Vân Tiên* and the twentieth-century *Tố Tâm*. Noting that *Tố Tâm* marked a profound rupture in Vietnamese literary and cultural life, they argue that it was not a purely literary phenomenon but occurred as a result of political, social, and linguistic changes.

PRASENJIT DUARA presents the Chinese myth of Guandi as it was "superscribed" by different groups, including the imperial state, over a period of more than a thousand years. Superscription refers to the way groups "write" their version of a myth or symbol over extant versions but do not eliminate the other versions. For this reason, even the powerful Qing state could never fully dominate the myth of Guandi; in fact, the myth's significance emerged from its role in creating a cultural arena in which worldviews could be contested and negotiated.

Feminism in China arose as part of the reform movement of the 1890s. It remained largely tied to nationalist concerns until the early twentieth century, when anarchists began to conceive of women's liberation in the context of social revolution. PETER ZARROW looks at the way the anarchists enlarged the sphere of feminist discourse in China. He focuses on the anarchist He Zhen, who pointed out that women would not achieve equality with men until they became economically self-sufficient under a communist system of production.

GAIL MINAULT contributes a review article presenting several Indian books in the field of women's studies. She notes that in India this field is marked by a high degree of feminist activism in legal, political, and educational areas, among others. Indian feminist scholarship works in tandem with the women's movement by providing data that can be the basis for social change.

In another review article ROGER BOWEN analyzes four recent English-language studies of peasant rebellion in Japan. He examines the authors' tendency to rely on

one-dimensional characterizations of peasants' motivation for rebelling and discusses the pitfalls of generalizing about peasant behavior by using anecdotal, ideological, or regionally based information. He ends by suggesting how scholarly treatment of Japanese peasants might develop in the future.