

## In This Issue

Arguing that it is impossible to assess validly a thinker's greatness without studying the work of his or her predecessors and contemporaries, LYNN A. STRUVE reexamines the thought and scholarship of the prominent Chinese intellectual and political activist Huang Zongxi. Within this broader context Huang can be seen as someone who brought to fruition various approaches to scholarship that had been gestating since the late sixteenth century. Struve suggests that his role was more of a culminator than an instigator of ideas and more of an advocate of viewpoints that did not long survive the late Ming than a "pioneering ancestor" of scholarly trends in the Qing.

MASON C. HOADLEY employs the concepts of ethnic boundaries and the facility for movement across them to consider relations between Javanese, *peranakan*, and Chinese elites in Cirebon, West Java, between roughly 1680 and 1731. He delineates three periods: unimpaired movement from the Chinese group via the *peranakans* to the Javanese (and presumably vice versa) up to 1710; attempts by the Dutch to reclassify all *peranakans* as Chinese from 1710 to 1720; and the creation of a *peranakan* social category from 1720 to 1731, as a countermove by the Cirebon princes. He notes that with the resulting reclassification, ethnic boundaries inadvertently became petrified.

PAUL A. COHEN applies a historical perspective to the post-Mao reforms in China, which have until now been largely the domain of social scientists. He takes as his themes two processes that have been at work at least since the late Qing and continue to be of great importance in the 1980s—state building and authoritarian reform. His analysis suggests that even though in some respects the older processes have taken new shapes in the recent period, in others they have shown remarkable continuities with the past.

The article by LANCE BRENNAN explores relief operations in three districts of Bengal during the famine of 1943. The famines themselves arose out of a complex interaction of economic and political crises, sometimes complicated by local natural disasters. But Brennan argues that the huge death toll also reflected the government's inability to devise a relief system that integrated food and relief expenditures in the rural areas in order to assist the people who were most at risk.