

## Abstracts

### **Bondservants in the T'ai-hu Basin During the Late Ming: A Case of Mistaken Identities**

JOSEPH P. McDERMOTT      Pages 675–701

This paper attempts to redefine the nature and conditions of bondservants in the late Ming, particularly in the highly productive T'ai-hu basin. It proposes that the *great economic and social differences among bondservants obliges us to treat bondservitude as a legal status, not as a class.* It discusses the many causes of bondservitude and its highly varied conditions. Agricultural bondservants accounted for no more than one-fifth of the rural population and usually had to pay rent and perform specific manual duties for their master. Bondservant managers are seen to have acquired far more wealth and power than their legal status would suggest and, along with other "brazen servants," participated in the bondservant uprisings in the T'ai-hu basin during the late Ming and early Ch'ing.

### **Class Formation and Ideological Practice: A Case from Sri Lanka**

JAMES BROW      Pages 703–718

An adequate understanding of the complex connections between changes in the social relations of production and changes in the bases of group formation demands an historical approach in which consciousness and its ideological products are viewed dynamically, not as the mechanically determined superstructural reflections of material relations but as an active and constituent components of everyday social life. The concepts required for such an analysis are developed here, drawing on the seminal work of both Marx and Weber, as well as on more recent scholarship, and are applied to recent changes in agrarian relations and ideological practice in Anuradhapura District, Sri Lanka.

### **New Data on Land Ownership Patterns in Ming-Ch'ing China —A Research Note**

KANG CHAO      Pages 719–734

The author analyzes some of the empirical data contained in the local archives of farmland in three provinces from Ming-Ch'ing times: these data have heretofore not been used by scholars. The new data show the wide dispersion of land ownership, the absence of big landlords, the high degree of land fragmentation, the slow speed of land accumulation in land-owning families, the low turnover rate of land transactions, the substantial bargaining power of tenants, the high frequency of rental defaults by tenants, the remarkable stability of land value between 1500 and 1760, and the

steadily rising trend of land value thereafter. All these findings appear to be inconsistent with the traditional views based on nonempirical historical materials. In view of the new evidence, the land problems in Chinese history will have to be reexamined.

### A Sampling of Japanese Economic Issues—A Review Article

LEON HOLLERMAN

Pages 735–743

Among the various issues surrounding Japan's economy, three types are prominent in recent literature: issues concerning the magnitude and measurement of Japan's economic growth; issues concerning Japan's economic structure, behavior, and performance; and issues concerning the nature of Japan's relations with the United States. In the second and third categories, many of the issues, directly or indirectly, have to do with the liberalization of the Japanese economy—in either its internal or external sectors. With regard to policy issues, adversary positions are typically adopted. However, they also emerge in discussions of nonpolicy issues, such as those regarding quantification and measurement. The disagreements among the experts provide a useful point of departure for further research and analysis.