

In This Issue

THOMAS A. WILSON looks at the contested nature of the Confucian orthodoxy in China by “focusing on the uneasy convergence of the state cult of Kongzi [Confucius] . . . with the family cult of his flesh-and-blood descendants” from the fifteenth to the early seventeenth centuries. Rather than trace the development of orthodoxy through the canonization of a ‘sacred’ literature, he concentrates on unravelling the ritual formation of orthodoxy as manifested through rituals performed at the state Kong temples. These rituals varied between those enacted by representatives of the throne at the imperial Kong temples and those carried out by Confucius’s descendants at the Kong temple of Qufu, Shandong, Kongzi’s birthplace. These differences were articulated in debates between those who advocated the familization of the worship of Confucius and those who emphasized the reverence of the Dao of the master rather than the cult of the family. The author shows that the ritual centered on the Kong family and lineage was critical in legitimating imperial Confucian orthodoxy during the Ming dynasty.

Politics and sexuality were not separate domains but were inextricably tied together in the Raj that colonialism built in India and elsewhere in the British Empire. PHILIPPA LEVINE highlights this connection by focusing on a specific episode in the 1890s involving policy debates over measures aimed at minimizing military venereal disease and regulating prostitution. In “renarrativizing” that decade, her aim is to show how the issue of venereal disease in particular generated serious dissension in the ranks of policy-makers in India and England and attracted the attention of other interested parties, ranging from reformers in Britain to nationalists in India. At one level her story centers on tracing the link between ‘home’ and ‘empire,’ on establishing the effects of Indian policy on “domestic” politics at the highest echelon, even to the point of triggering a “constitutional crisis.” At another level her reenactment of this drama of ‘high politics’ is directed at uncovering the sexual politics of colonial rule. In the author’s words, “the sexual servicing of British troops by local women was politically central to the perceived stability and maintenance of British rule in India.” This homology between sexual and political dominance also serves to underscore the methodological importance of integrating gender history with political and imperial history and of narrating political history in terms of issues relating to sex, race, and gender.

R. WILLIAM LIDDLE offers a “political explanation” of the “Islamic turn” in contemporary Indonesian politics by analyzing the phenomenon of ICMI (Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim se-Indonesia), or the Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals. By approaching the ICMI as “largely a top-down rather than a bottom-up organization,” the author departs from the work of other scholars and observers who view the rise of this organization as indicative of the growing ‘Islamization’ of Indonesian politics. In his characterization, however, the ICMI is only nominally Islamic. In fact, he emphasizes that this organization is managed by leaders personally selected by President Suharto, partly funded by the state, and seemingly uncommitted to pursuing an Islamic agenda. Furthermore, Suharto’s manipulation of ICMI represents a continuation of a long-standing political strategy—dating back to the beginnings of the New Order in the mid-1960s—of opposing the “politicalization of

religion" while encouraging personal piety. Indeed, this organization was formed not so much to capitalize on the growing religious sentiments of the new, urban Islamic middle class but to enable the government's own party, Golkar, to win the 1997 elections and thereby secure Suharto reelection in 1998 for another five-year term.

STEPHEN F. DALE explores the art and life of Babur, the early sixteenth-century founder of the Timurid (Mughul) Empire of India, by reading his poetry autobiographically. Text and context for this portrait are drawn from Babur's remarkable prose memoir, the *Bâbur-nâma*, which includes some of his verses, and his *diwan* or volume of Turki poetry. From this extraordinary collection of writings, which include 118 *ghazals* or short poems and more than 200 *ruba'i* or quatrains, the author especially foregrounds Babur's "existential" poems "where the force of his life and personality broke through conventional norms." From these revealing literary fragments, the author sketches a picture of a man who became emperor; an emperor whose road to power led him through years of exile in Ferghana, Samarqand, and Kabul; and an unusual individual who presented himself through his poetic writings. The result is a valuable portrait of "vivid personality" as well as of the literary and cultural milieu in which he developed as a poet and which spanned premodern Central Asia, the Islamic world, and India.

DEE MACK WILLIAMS argues that the Han Chinese and Mongols have culturally distinct ways of conceptualizing the environment. Whereas the central government of China considers mobile Mongol herders and their arid steppeland environment to be obstacles in the path of national progress, scientific rationalism, and economic development, local residents perceive their environment, land use, and lifestyle rather differently. Based on fieldwork conducted in a remote township of Chifeng City Prefecture in eastern Inner Mongolia, the author documents the disruptive effects of a government-directed enclosure movement on national rangelands. His ethnographic information is especially rich in revealing the effects of barbed wire fences in reshaping the ecological environment and in redefining access to community resources. These changes in the structure of local space exacerbate problems of land degradation and intensify economic disparities among independent herding households, setting off a chain of transformation across both the physical and social landscape. Underlying this contemporary grassland drama is a long-standing discourse concerning the national frontier that affirms the fundamental assumptions about the superiority of Han civilization, the benevolence of the Chinese state, and the accomplishments of the Reform era.