

In This Issue

“Cultural Ideologies of Language in Precolonial India: A Symposium” leads off this issue. As RICH FREEMAN’s introduction to the symposium states, all three articles in this collection are aimed at locating “the particular histories of a language or set of language interactions in order to illuminate both their relationship to specific sociohistorical situations and trends, and to a wider set of theoretical issues concerning the relation of language and literacy to cultural processes more generally.”

SHELDON POLLOCK surveys the transregional nature and scope of Sanskrit in the Indian subcontinent, its particular interaction with the regional language of Kannada, and its global spread in order to establish the existence of a Sanskrit “cosmopolis” across South and Southeast Asia. RICH FREEMAN assesses the emergence of Malayalam as a hybrid literary form in terms of its complex relationship with the regional hegemony of Tamil on the one hand and the transregional influence of Sanskrit on the other hand. SUMATHI RAMASWAMY focuses on texts written in praise of Tamil to highlight its status as the language of power and prestige and its construction as the “Other” to the Sanskrit tradition, as well as to reflect on ideologies of language before and after the coming of the nation.

ALEXANDER LABAN HINTON examines the cultural origins of the Cambodian genocide (1975–79), a period when over one and a half million of Cambodia’s eight million inhabitants died of starvation, disease, overwork, or outright execution. During this time, the Khmer Rouge reorganized Cambodian society along strict communist lines that glorified peasant life. The author draws on practice theory and cultural models research to argue that Khmer Rouge ideology was partly based on preexisting cultural models of face and honor, which were salient to many Cambodian perpetrators. Thus, Hinton portrays genocide as a complex phenomenon generated by a number of historical, sociopolitical, and cultural factors.

PING-TI HO takes issue with Evelyn S. Rawski’s presidential address on “Reenvisioning the Qing” (*JAS*, 54, 4, 1996), which used Ho’s article on “The Significance of the Ch’ing Period in Chinese History” (*JAS*, 26, 2, 1967) as a point of departure to propose a new emphasis on the importance of China’s “cultural links with non-Han peoples of Inner Asia” and to reject the “sinicization thesis.” Ho contends that Rawski has distorted his “macrohistorical perspective” in which multiethnic empire-building and systematic sinicization were the two mainstays of the whole Ch’ing policy structure; they were complementary to each other and not conflicting factors. He argues that sinicization is an unending process that far transcends the narrow confines of interethnic relations and embraces the evolution of the whole Chinese civilization. A rejection of the sinicization theme, in his view, is almost tantamount to rejecting Chinese history and civilization.

BONNIE B. C. OH reviews the growing literature on the Korean War by evaluating three recent books on that subject: an American military officer’s account, a Korean-born journalist’s recollections, and a bibliographic work.