

## Abstracts

### ***Presidential Address: Language and Area Studies—In Search of a Meaningful Relationship***

ELEANOR HARZ JORDEN      Pages 11–20

The current focus of attention on the “tongue-tied American” suggests that the field of foreign language pedagogy is in need of thorough scrutiny. Although pedagogical linguistics is a highly specialized field, all too frequently foreign language teaching is delegated to untrained native speakers of the target language or to specialists in other disciplines—particularly literature and theoretical linguistics—who “also teach language” without any relevant training or experience. In order to develop a meaningful relationship between language and area studies, there is a desperate need for trained pedagogical linguists who will coordinate their efforts with discipline specialists to offer programs of language study that are substantively, linguistically, and pedagogically sound and that simultaneously satisfy the increasing diversity of student interests.

### **The Goddess Śītalā and Epidemic Smallpox in Bengal**

RALPH W. NICHOLAS      Pages 21–44

Śītalā, Goddess of Smallpox, is the preeminent tutelary deity of villages in southwestern Bengal, and a goddess of the same name has a prominent role in Hindu pantheons throughout northern India. Her rise to importance is closely related to the history of smallpox, which was not recognized, in Ayurvedic medical texts, as a serious or fatal disease before the seventh century A.D. There is no evidence of the Goddess of Smallpox before the tenth to twelfth centuries, and she appears to have attained her present special significance as goddess of the village in southwestern Bengal abruptly in the eighteenth century. Earlier Indian approaches to smallpox treatment were naturalistic; when Śītalā was added to the etiology of the disease, her worship was not seen as a replacement for the biologically based therapy, but as something different and complementary. The appearance of smallpox as an epidemic calamity, rather than as an ordinary disease, during a period of more general distress in rural Bengal, marked its goddess as a figure especially suitable for community worship.

### **The Hsiung-nu Imperial Confederacy: Organization and Foreign Policy**

THOMAS J. BARFIELD      Pages 45–61

Nomadic states in Inner Asia were generated by external relations with state societies. Because the Hsiung-nu state could not have supported itself by exploiting

the relatively undifferentiated and extensive pastoral economy, the state hierarchy was financed by exploiting the resources available from outside of the steppe. The nomads on the steppe were organized into a powerful military force that was used to systematically exploit the Chinese economy. The Hsiung-nu raided the frontier directly and then used the disruptions they caused as a tool to extort trade and subsidies from the Han court, thus maintaining a monopoly on this flow of Han goods to the steppe, which gave it great economic power and stability. The imperial level of Hsiung-nu government was therefore primarily concerned with conducting foreign affairs, organizing military campaigns, and maintaining unity on the steppe, while it ceded power in domestic affairs to indigenous tribal leaders. This created an imperial confederacy that acted as an autocratically ruled state in its dealings with China but that remained federally structured internally. This form of organization proved remarkably stable and provided the model for later empires established by nomads on the steppe.

### **Perspectives on Sociopolitical Transformation in Cambodia/Kampuchea— A Review Article**

MAY EBIHARA                      Pages 63–71

Our understanding of Cambodia/Kampuchea's immediate past is gradually being enlarged by recent works dealing with pre-1975 Cambodian society, the development and policies of the Communist Khmer Rouge, and local life during the beginning of the Vietnamese occupation. Research using a broad range of primary source material, including a growing number of interviews with refugees, provides a more detailed picture than previously available of the two successive Kampuchean regimes. There remains, however, a persistent problem in many writings: political/ideological biases that can lead to different perspectives on the Khmer Rouge and on Kampuchea under the Vietnamese.

### **Afghanistan: The Great Game Revisited—A Review Article**

AKBAR S. AHMED                      Pages 73–80

The four books reviewed are different in discipline and approach and written for widely different audiences. They are, however, linked in their articulation as a contemporary response to the larger political situation in and around Afghanistan. Certain fundamental issues are raised that relate to the Russian invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, for instance, will the Russians continue their advance to the warm waters of the Indian Ocean (as suggested by the proponents of the Great Game thesis)? An understanding of the current situation in Afghanistan will provide clues to the possible future outcome of the Russian invasion. On that outcome depends the present balance of world power. If the Russians reach the warm waters of the Gulf, they are ideally poised to threaten South Asia and the Middle East. An understanding of the situation in Afghanistan is thus of primary importance.

**New Evidence on the Early Chinese Conception of Afterlife—  
A Review Article**

YING-SHIH YÜ      Pages 81–85

In reviewing Michael Loewe's *Ways to Paradise: The Chinese Quest for Immortality*, the author presents, on the basis of recent archeological discoveries at Ma-wang-tui, Ch'angsha, Hunan, and other places, the indigenous Chinese views of afterlife, contrary to the dominant modern theory that there was no "other world" in Chinese thought before the advent of Buddhism. Newly found silk paintings and wooden documents of the early Former Han period show beyond doubt that the Chinese had long developed their own beliefs in a "Heaven" and an "Underworld" after death. The author also discusses the evolution of the early Chinese conception of souls, such as *hun* and *p'o*. The symbolic meanings of silk paintings and other burial-related objects are examined from the anthropological point of view.