

## Editor's Note

In the November 1978 issue of the *JAS*, I pointed out that the *Journal* was interested in publishing not only research articles but a variety of other genres of material as well: research notes, review articles, opinion essays, and so on. The three review essays in this issue of the *Journal* do their work well, discussing new books and exercising critical judgments. They also demonstrate that the distinctions between types of *Journal* material—between review articles, opinion essays, and state-of-the-field articles, for example—are not as sharp as their separate headings imply.

This issue opens with a state-of-the-field article on the study of early Chinese history, by Professor Cho-yun Hsu of the University of Pittsburgh. This article, originally commissioned by the China and Inner Asia Council of the Association for Asian Studies, may be read alongside Professor K. C. Chang's earlier state-of-the-field essay on Chinese archaeology (*JAS*, August 1977).

Both Professor Wang's review article on books dealing with Chinese literary theory and Professor Totman's essay on studies of medieval Japanese institutional history raise important questions about how scholars approach their subjects. Both are critical of what they perceive to be a certain shortness of vision in much of the recent work in the fields they analyze; yet both find strong points in the studies they consider, and Professor Totman offers some suggestions of his own on how to overcome the problems of narrowness and conceptual fuzziness in the work he examines. Both essays raise issues of methodology that readers from other fields are likely to find provocative.

Professor McDonald's brief review essay on the work of Immanuel Wallerstein introduces to the pages of the *JAS* an approach to the history of the modern world which, while not focused on Asia, certainly includes Asia in its domain. McDonald outlines Wallerstein's hypotheses and goes on to suggest how the Wallerstein approach might inform the thinking of China scholars, especially social and economic historians.

The abstracts which follow the table of contents summarize the three remaining articles in this issue. Professor Kemper's essay on astrology and caste in Sri Lanka, and Professor Harrell's piece on the notion of "soul" (*ling-hun*) in Chinese folk religion were not written to accompany one another, and each stands on its own; yet each touches on basic definitions of the person in a major popular religious tradition. Professor Pollack's article on Japanese "wild poetry" addresses an intriguing aspect of Japanese cultural and literary history, and is enriched by the author's extremely readable translations of some surprising and often hilarious poetry.

Forthcoming issues of the *JAS* will include an article and accompanying comment on the state and the Buddhist monastic order in Burma and Japan; an article and comment on the Occupation of Japan after 1945; an article on the disturbing question of whether *dharma* can destroy itself; and a pair of articles, probably with accompanying comment, on the phenomenon loosely labeled "fascism" in pre-war China and Japan.