

## In This Issue

MELANIE MANION presents a test of two interpretations of how policymaking occurs in the People's Republic of China. One school—here labeled “individual interests”—argues that since 1949 the communist system has reinforced rather than replaced informal personal relations as a means to attain goals. The other school—called “authoritative decisions” for short—concludes that policy implementation derives from the special capacity of communist systems to ensure compliance. Manion tests both by investigating retirement policies in China from 1978 to 1988. Based on social survey results, she concludes that each explanation has its validity. She found that retirements did occur as policymakers intended; yet, she also shows that retirees were able to deviate from official directives to change the terms under which they retire. In generalizing her findings, Manion suggests that Chinese policymakers work with poor information and so, when they set policy goals, must abdicate control over costs to middle-level officials. They, in turn, strike the necessary policy implementation bargains with the hope that the policymakers will accept the price.

RICHARD VON GLAHN challenges the prevailing interpretation that during the late Ming dynasty (1550–1644) a nascent urban consciousness uniting the proto-bourgeois and the working class emerged in cities of the Jiangnan region. Instead, he argues that urban popular protest produced a fragmentation of city dwellers into competing elements. The plebeians succeeded in abolishing their labor service duties in the cities, but von Glahn argues they continued to be excluded from power. On the other hand, the urban elite assumed new tax obligations while increasing their political dominance. Thus, he concludes that the late Ming saw a strengthening of the alliance between the dynastic state and the propertied, patrician elements of Chinese society.

CYNTHIA TALBOT discusses Hindu temple donations and endowments in Andhra Pradesh during the thirteenth century. Based on epigraphic research, she finds two distinct patterns: first, a few highly patronized temple complexes in the northern coastal region; second, a network of small temples in the interior, each with a few donations. She explains that in the thirteenth century, with an improvement in irrigation technology, the hinterland experienced a growth in wealth that is reflected in the donations recorded through temple inscriptions. She concludes this inland style of donation illustrates how local landowners, who were usually the temple's sole patron, used their donations to strengthen political alliances among social groups within their newly prospering territories. The multipatron large coastal temples served to incorporate representatives of varied communities from a much wider area and reinforced older patterns in the Andhra Pradesh central place hierarchy.

In our concluding article, MICHAEL BILLIG discusses a marriage squeeze in present-day Rajasthan that undermines the social power of women. He sees the prevailing status hypergamy there producing a situation in which females are disadvantaged in the marriage market. This occurs despite the fact that women have a modest demographic advantage because there are more men based on age alone. Billig argues that when desired traits in the marriage market are hierarchically distributed, the

potential for a marriage squeeze inevitably arises. In this instance, Billig links status hypergamy and the highly stratified character of Rajasthan society to argue that the norms they produced serve to reinforce male power in the society. He concludes that status hypergamy is a part of the anti-female power complex in Rajasthan that includes purdah, female infanticide, and differential care or neglect.

Readers may be interested to know that the Chinese characters contained in the glossary (pp. 303–4) for Richard von Glahn's article on municipal labor service reform in the late Ming period were produced by David Goodrich at Birdtrack Press in New Haven, Connecticut. Because of the technical problems of satisfactorily reproducing the widely divergent orthographies of Asian languages, *JAS*'s editorial policy remains one of transcribing all languages in accord with the accepted standards of romanization or transliteration. We are pleased to have established a better quality of reproduction for the strictly limited use of characters in our pages.