

## In This Issue

In the opening article, VICTOR NEE and SU SIJIN examine the institutional transformation of Chinese agriculture in recent years to determine whether rural reforms have promoted an increase in per capita income. Relying both on secondary literature and on a new body of data, derived from extensive surveys conducted in Fujian villages, they conclude that conditions are indeed favorable for economic growth and that access to urban markets is a decisive determinant.

The remaining articles look at recent events in Sri Lanka. STANLEY J. TAMBIAH, who returned from Sri Lanka only days before writing his contribution, introduces the other three writers, tying together their themes and bringing them up to date.

PATRICK PEEBLES attempts to clarify the issues underlying the current crisis in Sri Lanka. After tracing the history of interethnic relations in the region, he focuses on the Accelerated Mahaweli Programme, designed to promote development in the Dry Zone between the Sinhalese and Tamil majority areas. Because of such colonization plans, he argues, government policies have transformed the ethnic composition of certain areas and exacerbated the ethnic conflict.

AMITA SHASTRI asks why an “advanced” ethnic group from a “backward” region would support a separatist movement apparently offering poorer material prospects than the group has previously enjoyed. She argues that support for the Tamil Eelam movement is intimately connected both to the development of the region and to the discrimination that the regional minority population has experienced: Tamils feel alienated because state policies have led to a decline in their position; they are motivated to achieve a separate state because they perceive an opportunity for regional development.

BRYAN PFAFFENBERGER deepens the context of present-day problems in Sri Lanka by analyzing a temple-entry conflict that occurred in 1968. Despite arguments that many South Asian problems—such as violence against untouchables, conservative religious reform, and ethnic separatism—spring from a persistence of precolonial social forms, identities, and sentiments, he provides evidence that the causes of these problems are decidedly modern. Social tensions have appeared within a caste system grotesquely deformed by a colonial plantation economy and within a religious tradition textualized to withstand a tide of Christian conversions. The clamor for ethnic separatism has risen in part at least from a politics of expediency and avoidance that has tried to unify the community by diverting attention to outside its boundaries.