

Guest Editor's Prologue

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During mid-March of 1971, the Brigham Young University student academics office, in cooperation with the Asian Studies faculty, carried out an ambitious and comprehensive program called East-West Week. Under the leadership of Reed Wilcox, vice-president of academics, and William McCurdy, a senior in Asian Studies, the program included an impressive array of speakers, panels, displays, and cultural events dealing with Asia. In an effort to provide invigorating experiences for the students as well as for the Utah public at large, activities were focused around two general themes: Asia and the United States and Asia and the Church (that is, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints).

East-West Week was warmly and widely received, and its proceedings of such timely interest to the LDS scholarly community that the Editor of *BYU Studies* decided to devote a special issue to selected features of the program. The results of that decision are published herein.

THE UNITED STATES AND ASIA

Richard M. Nixon's momentous announcement in July that he intends to initiate a new era of rapprochement between the United States and the People's Republic of China by making a personal visit to Chinese leaders in Peking has triggered almost cataclysmic reverberations throughout the world. By that act, the thrust of American policy in East Asia has suddenly become the improvement of relations with communist China. Also by that act, a host of new equations in American foreign policy have emerged. These involve realignments, risks, and new problems in United States relations with Japan, the

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two Koreas, the two Vietnams, south and southeast Asia, Mongolia, the Soviet Union, and, perhaps most critically, the Republic of China in Taiwan.

Four months before the onset of this sudden turn of events—in guest appearances at BYU's East-West Week—several leading Asian specialists reaffirmed their positions on U.S. policy vis-a-vis Vietnam, Korea, and the People's Republic of China.

Roger Hilsman, a Columbia University political scientist, who has served as U.S. Undersecretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, and John K. Fairbank of Harvard, one of America's foremost experts on modern Chinese history, were two of these guests. Each in his own way underscored the need for a detente in Sino-American relations. Each concluded that it was in the best interests of the United States for the mainland government to be encouraged to participate in the UN, but that such a policy must be combined with a cognate attitude of firmness. Taking critical, independent positions toward the question of the relationship of the Taiwan and mainland regimes, each reiterated a "two-Chinas" policy (a position they have separately advocated for many years, but one which was regarded by some last March as very "liberal").

According to Hilsman, the United States has handled its foreign relations with Europe and the Soviet Union rather well, but in its attempts to deter and isolate the People's Republic of China its policies have failed. The key to a viable foreign policy in Asia rests upon recognition of the forces and values which have gone into the making of the virulent emerging nationalisms of that part of the world.

Fairbank places great stress on the importance of seeing the People's Republic in historical perspective. It is not simply a communist state, but a *Chinese* communist nation. Revolutionary change in China must be viewed from the vantage point of traditional Chinese experience. No effectual American policy can be established without cognizance of the historical roots of Chinese pride, that country's village-culture background, her stay-at-home Confucian philosophy, and her traditional ruling class.

Both Fairbank and Hilsman picture Mao Tse-tung as a symbol of the process of change in China. He is an example of how the Chinese revolution has deviated from the Leninist

norm. But even after his death, it can be expected that the People's Republic will be cautious if not hostile toward the West and the Soviet Union.

Chong-Sik Lee's perceptive study deals with North Korea's precarious juxtaposition between Moscow and Peking and the recurring frustrations of the Democratic People's Republic in trying to steer a course between adhering to the international tenets of Marxism-Leninism and being responsive to peculiar Korean needs. He reaffirms the fundamental importance of national self-interest in any assessment of Asian international affairs. Especially significant is his discussion of the "Cult of Personality" associated with Kim Il-song and the question of why North Korea has shown such "hawkish behavior" in recent times.

The erudite and almost poetic study of "Buddhist Images," by Richard Edwards, of the University of Michigan, is a fresh approach to Buddhist art which should enthrall all students of Asian culture. It deals with principal symbols through which the Buddha ideal is made present. Focusing on imagery in northwest India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, areas which have been most intriguing to Westerners because of apparent connections with Greek and Roman styles of Mediterranean art, Edwards argues that these intrinsically aesthetic expressions are from the heart of India and the Asian world. Native, Asian elements have gone into the creation of the great images of Shotorak and Bamiyan; non-Mediterranean aspects are discernible in Gandharan art.

In so saying, Edwards strikes a theme basic to all the Asia specialists at East-West Week—Westerners have been too prone to see Asia only from the vantage point of their own background, not from the background of the Asian peoples themselves.

THE CHURCH AND ASIA

At the outset of one of John Fairbank's Provo lectures, he emphasized the importance of Christian missions in modern Asian affairs. Recognizing that Brigham Young University is relatively unique among American institutions of higher learning, in that a disproportionately large number of its students have served as Mormon missionaries in the countries of Asia, he remarked: "This is a group of people who have a special

background, a special competence to look at this problem of American relations with other peoples”

Because the missionary work of the LDS Church is substantial in Asian lands, and because there are now more than 30,000 Mormons of oriental ancestry there, the BYU community has intrinsic ties in Asia. Consequently, there was generous interest in East-West Week events dealing with Asia and the Church.

The first was an address by Elder Howard W. Hunter, member of the Council of the Twelve of the Church, who is also a member of the BYU Board of Trustees. His message was that, while major Christian churches are facing a substantial decline in membership in Asia, the Mormon faith is growing counter to that trend. He attributed this to the lay missionary program of the Church and to a keen Mormon interest in the cultures of the peoples in those countries where missionaries have labored or where servicemen have served. The interest of the Church in the education of its world-wide membership has also been vital, since Church growth is highest in those areas where schools have been established.

At the symposium on “Problems and Opportunities of Missionary Work in Asia,” moderated by R. Lanier Britsch and consisting of four well-known Mormon mission presidents who have worked among the Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, and Filipinos, the discussion centered on proselyting methods, goals, and results; the communication of Mormon values in Asian societies; and special problems arising from racial and cultural difference. Three basic themes or conclusions emerged: (1) The LDS Church has begun to break from its Western stance into a newly attained international, world-wide movement; (2) recent wars and revolutions in Asia have provided new opportunities for the Church; and (3) despite the nonprofessionalism of the Mormon missionaries, since World War II their work has expanded at an impressive rate.

The LDS Church is a relative newcomer in Asia but records of its activities have been scrupulously maintained in the Church Historian’s Office in Salt Lake City. Robert H. Slover’s preliminary survey of these resources, appearing in this issue of *BYU Studies*, is the first published inventory of Mormon missionary materials relating to Asia.