clearly, if not ineluctably, to the cultural revolution.” Mao regarded collectivization as the final step in the consolidation of his regime, and therefore the time to launch the first of two economic leaps forward. When the second of these leaps “ended with a whimper in 1960” it had already caused one of the major internal disputes among the top leaders. Another source of disputation was provided by the way the Stalin issue was handled at the CPSU’s 20th Congress which led Mao to seek to correct the relationship between the CCP and the people as a whole in China. His effort to rectify the CCP in 1957 was opposed by Liu and others, and the irresolution of this issue continued to plague China’s leaders into the ’60’s. Other faults in the Soviet system led to further Chinese disenchantment and altogether these culminated in the Cultural Revolution, which “was, above all, Mao’s attempt to map out a different path for China.” In a nutshell this is the thesis of the entire Max Farquhar study.

The present volume, however, is but the first of a projected three-volume study. It concentrates on the years 1956 and 1957. The second volume will cover the Great Leap Forward, the “three bitter years” and the Sino-Soviet dispute. The third will “attempt to show how all these developments finally led to the unleashing of the cultural revolution.” If the first volume is an accurate measure, the entire study when completed will be an invaluable major addition to scholarly literature on the People’s Republic of China.

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Just when an art form reaches a dead end, someone occasionally comes along and carries it in new directions. For years village studies have been a staple of South Asian research. The questions, tables, and results have become so standardized that an unexceptional graduate student in anthropology or a temporarily employed worker for the Indian census can turn out a reasonable product.

Tom Kessinger’s book breaks the old research stereotype in so many places that I doubt we will ever be content with it again. The main departure is his dramatic expansion of the time span of the study, permitting continuous observation of the village for 120 years. In the past we have had to depend primarily on resurveys at intervals of varying length, sometimes undertaken by the original researcher and sometimes by someone else. These studies have suffered from the fact that they were done by different people with different abilities and interests or, when they were done by the same person, from the fact that people – even anthropologists – change.

Kessinger is able to observe Vilyatpur directly for over a century because he uses census, taxation, ownership, agricultural and pilgrimage records, supplemented by own survey of the village. He can trace out what has happened to land ownership, family types, the occupational structure, and migrancy.
patterns. The result is history as it ought to be done: an account of the lives of ordinary people involved in a changing culture.

Vilyatpur is a Punjabi village located in an extremely rich and well-watered doab between the Sutlej and Beas rivers. Vilyatpur was settled by the Sahota clan of Jats, and by 1848, when the British settlement officer arrived, the village had acquired laborer, artisan, and service castes and the Sahota families had split into three lineages. Some families performed jajmani service for the land-owning Sahotas in return for grain, but tenancy and independently contracted craft work were also important. Land could change hands, temporarily by rental, permanently by sale, but the Sahotas rebuffed the attempts by others in the village, or outsiders, to obtain village lands. The British attempted to maintain this dominance by recording land rights and making disputes over land subject to resolution in the courts, but Kessinger argues that this undermined the customary system by transferring the locus of authority from the internal proprietary group to external agencies.

The heart of the book consists of chapters on demographic change, agriculture, the economy, and family and kinship. The exposition rests on 37 clear, illuminating tables. The focus is on the family as a unit of ownership, management, production, and consumption, and as the fundamental social entity.

Even before 1900, men from Vilyatpur had migrated in large numbers to extraordinary places – by 1903 there were thirty-five working in Australia. Migration was closely related to the demography of particular families. From 1855–1968 population in Vilyatpur rose by 111 percent, but these gains came from relatively few families and it was mostly these families that had to adjust by sending members outside Vilyatpur. Those who left the village generally retained their family loyalties, and their remittances were a factor determining their family’s economic and social status. In the last few decades, as the village has become more closely integrated with the outside world economically, the measures of success of the village – land and status – have been increasingly supplanted by external standards of achievement.

Kessinger finds that Vilyatpur’s farmers were very aggressive in seeking out new seeds and implements. Despite the thinness of colonial agricultural programs, superior wheat and cotton varieties were quickly adopted. After 1947, pumps, newer seeds, fertilizers, threshers, carts, and sugarcane presses have rapidly become more common.

Kessinger argues that each property group took in land when more family manpower was available and leased it out when family labor was inadequate. Families preferred food crops such as wheat for which there is a market. Excess production was converted into cash, stored in an “iron box” and disbursed only reluctantly. Modern innovations, such as fertilizers and pumps, force changes in the nature of decision-making, since they require that the “iron box” system yield to a calculation of costs and earnings.

Kessinger has assembled complete biographies of the families in Vilyatpur. He finds that changes have taken place in family structure, but that these cannot be reduced to a simple assertion such as “the joint family is (is not) declining.” Because the average adult life span has increased, fewer families come into existence through succession and more sons break away to form independent units. Migrants usually retain close ties to their families, but they clearly violate the old partilocal norm. Kessinger concludes: “(The joint family) has