

Reviews

Mike Johnson, *The Vertical Harp: Selected Poems of Li He*, Auckland: Titus Books, 2006, 69 pp., ISBN 978-1-877441-03-5 (pbk.).

Were there to be a poll of favourite translated versions of Chinese poems, it is my guess that Ezra Pound's would top the list. The reason, of course, would be that Pound's English versions work superbly as poems. The question for Sinologists has always been whether these poems also work as translations. Sophisticated examinations of some of Pound's versions against the original, such as those offered by Zhaoming Qian (*Orientalism and Modernism: the Legacy of China in Pound and Williams*), suggest an interpretation that bridges the approaches of scholars of Chinese classical poetry and readers of poetry more generally. It goes like this: when the original is inhabited deeply enough by the poet-translator, and when it has become the catalyst to an English version of exceptional quality, much that is true to the meaning of that original will emerge, or remain, regardless of whether the translator has entered the original poem through the work of others.

Mike Johnson calls the poems in his collection, *The Vertical Harp: selected poems of Li He*, 'secondary translations', and 're-creations from English sources' (9). These terms would seem to describe what Pound was famously doing in *Cathay*, and I approached Johnson's versions with the interpretation arrived at above in mind. In his forward, Johnson, who does not know Chinese, is upfront about what the reader should expect. Whereas translations of the mid-Tang poet Li He (790–816 CE), he tells us, have in the main been scholarly endeavours, his own selection aims at bringing 'Li He's poems to life in contemporary English' and is intended for 'the wider poetry reading public' (9).¹

Nevertheless, it is clear that Johnson's versions, like those of Pound, are the product of a long and thoughtful consideration of and collaboration with the scholarly sources available to him. Unlike Pound, he uses all the

¹ The best of these translations are neither as dry nor as tucked away as Johnson implies. A.C. Graham's *Poems of the Late T'ang*, which contains a small but solid selection of poems by Li He, is in the Penguin Classics series; it has been reprinted several times and has enjoyed a large non-specialist readership. Frodsham's *Goddesses, Ghosts and Demons: The Collected Poems of Li He (709–816)*, published by Anvil, is also aimed at a wider readership.

means he appropriately can, without loading down the poems, to provide his reader with a framework for them. A 'Translator's introduction' and notes that give the background to individual poems, as well as operating as guides to interpretation, are supplemented by the decision to expand some of the allusions in the original and integrate them into his versions. He provides a bibliography and is scrupulous in indicating his influences throughout.

We are made aware in the foreword of a second element, which might be summed up as the call of one poet to another. Johnson refers to 'the powerful spirit of Li He himself as evident in his words' in the work (10). The Auckland University Electronic Poetry Centre site begins its entry on Johnson, who has published four collections of his own poetry (as well as a novella and six novels), with the sentence: 'Mike Johnson is a New Zealand writer whose stories and poems are touched by the magical and the bizarre' – words which might describe the works of Li He himself. It goes on to say that Johnson 'first registered on the New Zealand literary scene as a poet with a minimalist Chinese style'. Both of these statements would seem to go some way towards supplying a motivation for his bold and unusual endeavour.²

A combination of poetic empathy and the hard yards that Johnson has put in result in poems and a portrait of Li He that accord well with traditional and recent perceptions, although not necessarily estimations, of the work of this *guicai*, 'demonic genius'. The clever decision to break his selection into five categories, poet of protest, of the palace, of the occult, of nature, of war, serves to bring out the dominant themes in Li He's oeuvre and, as the author notes, has the additional effect of suggesting a likely chronology for the poet's brief life (10). It also allows the corresponding facets of this poet's psychology and poetic personae, which have been the subject of much commentary, to emerge. These personae range from brilliant, embittered, young scholar (debarred, despite the patronage of leading scholar and poet, Han Yu, by a pretext – a taboo on homophones – from sitting the examinations which were his route to office), to practitioner of the palace style, nature poet, devotee of the shaman-inspired *Chu ci* [Songs of the South], student of the occult, and jaded realist in the war poems that conclude Johnson's selection.

Mike Johnson's grasp of Li He's imagined world and his reflection of the Tang poet's unique vision is confident and convincing. His English versions are distinguished by a similar high-voltage lyrical or, as the work demands, demonic, imagery. They are focused with the jolt of contemporary diction, which proves an effective tool for conveying the startling quality of the originals. One example: the eunuch general targeted in one of Li's 'Six Satires' is called a 'girly half-man' (19). In his foreword Johnson speaks of

² New Zealand Electronic Poetry Centre: <http://www.nzepc.auckland.ac.nz/seeingvoices/johnson.asp>.

the poems being ‘mostly mine and mostly his [Li He’s]’ (10). In terms of the creation of a compelling and singular voice he succeeds extremely well – more consistently overall, perhaps, than previous translators.

Although Johnson’s versions are not primarily aimed at the reader of Chinese classical poetry, if one wants to understand the way in which individual poems work as translations – as well as gain a clearer idea of Johnson’s stylistic strengths and emphases relative to other translators – it is to this reader that his poems must be consigned. In the introduction to his *Poems of the Late T’ang* (reprinted with additional preface, 1977) eminent classical scholar A.C. Graham cites the first four lines of Li He’s ‘on the frontier’ as an example of the elements (word order, a similar pattern of stresses, the concreteness of the imagery) of a classical Chinese poem likely to lure the English translator. For Graham’s:

A Tartar horn tugs at the North wind,
 Thistle Gate shines whiter than the stream.
 The sky swallows the road to Kokonor:
 On the Great Wall, a thousand miles of moonlight.

Johnson offers:

The clamour of barbarian horns lures the north wind
 moon-driven desert sand clangs silver as water

the sky devours the road to the emerald ocean
 along the Wall endless metal miles (61)

In place of a compression that catches the order, rhythm and look of the Chinese original, and proper nouns that insist on place, Johnson aims for a more sensuous, crowded lyrical effect and a more vague sense of actual place. Those preferences lie behind his separation (following Frodsham) of Qinghai, the translation for which in pre-modern times is Kokonor, into the two characters that comprise it: ‘emerald ocean’. The insertion of ‘clamour’ and ‘clangs’ and the substitution of the dense ‘moon-driven desert sand’ for ‘Thistle Gate’ (which editor of and commentator on Li He’s works, respected Qing scholar Wang Qi [1696–1774] tells us signifies a geographical area) are there for reasons of added concreteness and for the alliteration. (Alliteration is absent from the original but it enters the fifth line with the onomatopoeic doublet, *mengmeng*; the line is rendered by Johnson as ‘white dew drifts, banners drip’). By mentioning sound in *both* lines of his translation Johnson privileges the construction of his own metaphor – sand as metal – over the Chinese tendency to alternate an aural impression in one line of a couplet with visual description in the other.

Li He's sensuous quality as a poet is likely to be the catalyst to Johnson's frequent recourse to assonance and alliteration. He uses the devices throughout with a resourcefulness and variety that hark back to his own background as a poet. The poems introduce a wholly contemporary rhythm. When Johnson extends or repeats aspects of the original, his more leisurely versions may represent a conflation of different scholarly readings; or they may supply an extra step, usually aimed at the reader without Chinese background. But as often as not the reason seems to be metrical; for example, the rhythmical two-liner that initiates the poem, 'the far sky': 'Heaven's river turns, *one vast sidereal rotation/* whirling the stars around' (where the words in italics duplicate meaning) (44).

Johnson has taken seriously Li He's reputation as a poet renowned for his 'parts' or couplets rather than poetic structure overall – to the extent that he has generally opted for a two-line format, overflowing to three, and occasionally four, lines when the English demands. It should be said that his poems look impeccable on the page. His formal choices also help to contribute an impression of stylistic consistency, which, in turn, gives the reader the sense of engaging with an individual voice.

If there is a price to pay for the kind of consistency indicated above, it is to be located in a loss of generic identity. Genre is used by the Chinese poet to place a poem stylistically for the audience or reader. Within genre, the literati poet may play, with or without irony, with the themes and words of an earlier song or poem. An example is Li He's 'Tomb of Little Su'. The Tang poet's version addresses a sixth-century *yuefu* (ballad) and the story behind it. Opting for the short irregular lines associated with many *yuefu*, Li He reflects the theme of mutability in a series of startling compressed images. His lines retain the simplicity crucial to the ballad, well caught in Graham's opening lines: 'Dew on the secret orchid/ Like crying eyes'.

Johnson is well aware of the poem's pedigree. He follows Graham in attaching the original ballad (in the latter's translation) to the head of his poem and also in placing below it the words 'ascribed to the singing girl, Little Su, 500 AD' (34). This allows him to locate his poem while adopting a generalised title, 'tomb of a singing girl', in line with his strategy of 'stripp[ing] the poem of its historical cloak' (9). But Johnson's version shows what a delicate balancing act translation can be. His diction is in a different register from that of Li He. In his first two lines, 'covert, dew-crammed orchid/ tear-crazed eyes', the crowded juxtapositions of images and consonants capture the surprise but not the original's combination of startling image and limpid simplicity. In his final couplet, Li anchors his poem to a particular spot, the grave mound associated with a poignant narrative around which a legend or, as Johnson suggests, a ghost story, has grown up. Li concludes with wind-blown rain over Little Su's tomb. In Johnson's version, 'sleety winds shift', alliteration overloads the composure of the original

ending, taking it in a different direction and dissipating the poetic effect of beginning with dew and ending with rain.

The Vertical Harp, as material object, is exceptionally attractive. Pasted across an ox blood-red cover is a strip of elegant calligraphy – the text of the poem from which Johnson’s title is drawn. On the back is a short poem called ‘incarceration’, which I quote in full.

the moat, blood red, reflects
a palace in spectacular decay

wind-seducing leaves
mirror the gestures of palace-girls

how many spring darlings seen
from behind drawn curtains
hair whitening to dust?

ten thousand years of pale days
locked away (33)

The girls referred to here were those brought in to amuse the Emperor Xuan Zong (712-755 CE) when he stayed in the palace which served him for one night as travel lodge. For this privilege they were rewarded with incarceration for the rest of their lives. Johnson’s rendering of the clichés of palace poetry and his imaginative reconstruction of the themes of that genre are livelier and tonally better sustained than any I have read since Anne Birrell’s translations of the sixth century anthology, *Yutai xin yong* (New Songs from a Jade Terrace), that appeared in 1982. This poem is infused with an energy largely lacking in the original. Nonetheless, the first couplet provides an example of the pitfalls that threaten a translator.

It has been said that language brings its ghosts along with it. A culture brings in its wake a way of reading its particulars. In this case, to bring blood into a palace style poem is to overstep thematic parameters. Johnson’s translation appears to start with Frodsham’s preferred version, ‘vexed red’. ‘Red’ in this poetic context is overwhelmingly likely to be a red flower growing in the moat. (The commentaries, opting unanimously to read both of the characters concerned, *hong* and *fan*, as written with the grass radical – the earliest texts are written without – offer several floral options.³) As in other cultures, the image which most often stands behind a flower is that of a

³ Among these are polygonum, which has red flowers (although it has to be said that these appear in autumn, c.f. the ‘third month’ of Li He’s original title), and artemisia.

woman, a symbolism picked up on by Li He when he selects the word *yong*, ‘embraces’ or ‘encircles’, to describe the moat. As it stands, Johnson’s translation evokes some bloody event that is associated with dynastic decline. It therefore reads as if responsibility for the fate of the ‘spring darlings’ lies with that bloody history rather than with the harsh, if conventional, decree of the Emperor.

I have indicated ways in which Johnson’s poems tend to diverge from the ambience, and on occasion the traditional readings, of Li He’s originals. Whereas qualifications of this kind crop up in relation to the translation of individual poems, they do little to disturb the overall achievement. The impression left by this spread of poems is of one poet engaging masterfully with another. These are ‘secondary translations’ that inhabit and re-create even the most difficult of Li He’s originals with imagination and flair. With the added pictorial inducements of its cover and the inclusion of several panels of calligraphy, *The Vertical Harp* is likely to attract not only readers who have never heard of Li He, but many who have.

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Kim Brandt, *Kingdom of Beauty: Mingei and the Politics of Folk Art in Imperial Japan*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007, 306 pp., ISBN 978-0-8223-4000-3 (pbk.).

The word *mingei* – ‘folk-craft’ – seems to have been coined during the mid-1920s. Rural handicraft products, ceramics, textiles, wooden furniture, and some painting, calligraphy and sculpture, generated great enthusiasm amongst Japanese middle-class intellectuals from this time. Though ceramic objects of this kind had been favoured by teamen since the seventeenth century, *mingei*’s ‘rediscovery’ and revival generated immense interest. Even today, together with *ukiyo-e* prints, *kabuki* or *kimono*, it constitutes an enduring motif of ‘authentic’ Japanese material culture.

Kim Brandt clearly defines conditional criteria for *mingei*. They were functional daily use objects for ordinary people; cheap, communally produced and hand-made from local materials; simple and anonymous, with designs conforming to traditional conventions (52). Though the select examples collected by teamen in an earlier era had become very expensive, in 1920s Korea *mingei* were cheap and accessible – one reason why they gained popular attention during the economically constrained period of Japanese expansion and war covered in this volume.

Brandt describes the shifting trajectories of *mingei*'s fortunes and the key role it played in the development of Japanese identity through the period from the 1920s to 1945. Her account opens with the discovery during the Japanese occupation of Korea of *mingei* wares, particularly Chosŏn period ceramic pieces, and their subsequent revival and lionization by Japanese critics, craftsmen, and *shumi* dilettante connoisseurs and intellectuals. How simple, unpretentious folk-craft claimed the attention of men motivated by a complex mix of opportunist, aesthetic, moral, social-constructivist or pseudo-scientific interest, and how utilitarian artefacts gained the cachet of significant aesthetic objects, is explained through a socio-cultural historical narrative. This allows Brandt to embrace a range of economic, social, political conditions into an explanation for the social construction of art status for these wares, and, more importantly within this text, to explain their reciprocal role in the construction of Japanese national identity and promotion of the expansionist policies of the Japanese state. This revival – or more correctly a construction of aesthetic status – bore the force of authority of the intellectual Yanagi Muneyoshi (Sōetsu), or craftsmen like Hamada Shōji or Kawai Kanjirō. Their elevation of *mingei* provided a means of demonstrating, with no apparent sense of irony, the benefits of occupation for Koreans themselves, as their new managers discovered, then re-presented their own 'authentic' cultural identity back to them.

The demonstration of the superiority of Japanese taste, or aesthetic capital, in the authentication of folk-crafts as objects of aesthetic attention in Korea readily translated back into the Japanese context. The 1930s saw a revival of interest in rural handicrafts as authentic material culture in Japan that led to the production of *shin mingei* (new *mingei*). This development, however, led to a blurring of the distinction between the qualities of rural craft production and those of mass manufacture, and from the production of locally distinctive products (*meibutsu*) and an increasing homogeneity, in which the distinctive character of *mingei* seemed to be compromised. Brandt's analysis of the shift from an aesthetic occupation with simple, humble wares to the promotion of *shin mingei* as a social reformist movement driven by, and contributing to, economic and political forces provides a balanced view of the dynamic of change in the production of material culture while coincidentally revealing its aesthetic fickleness.

In tracing the key role of *mingei* through Japan's wartime years, from the occupation of Korea through the invasions of Manchuria, North China and Taiwan to the conclusion of the Second World War, Brandt constructs the development of an apparently symbiotic relation between the fortunes of rural crafts and the construction of the state. While the state provided the material conditions necessary for the sustained production and marketing of *mingei* wares, the *mingei* reform movement provided a useful organizational infrastructure for promoting Japanese nationalist interests. Brandt's account

of the role of *mingei* through these years is a case study in the social relations of art. As such it focuses not so much on the works or products of *mingei* as on the institutional relations that developed through the interacting interests of the Mingei Association, the 'daily life culture' movement, the fascist state and the wartime production organization. Ironically the relations that relied so much on the promotion of *mingei* seemed eventually to deal a final blow to the very factors that had engendered its status in Korea, as the aesthetic sensibilities of the earlier *shumi* dilettante connoisseurs became subsumed under the controlling forces of the state.

Brandt subsequently describes the corresponding development of a 'renovationist' vision of a pan-East Asian material culture, drawing from the roots of *mingei* and enriched by Japanese wisdom, which would enhance the lives of both the producers and the consumers of newly designed quality goods. The assumption of a 'preservationist approach to cultural and ethnic difference' (175) provided a convenient rationale for the revision of local cultural institutions of craft production within the context of Japanese expansion and occupation. Brandt's explanation clearly illustrates the ways political agendas motivated, rationalized and justified the *mingei* reforms, and confused and compromised their earlier ideals.

Though the focus of this volume is on the fortunes of *mingei* between the 1920s and 1945, the story continues to the present day. As Brandt explains: 'The association of modern notions of Japaneseness with the objects and technologies of the pre-industrial farming household, and also with the modernist aesthetic sensibility demonstrated by their appreciation, remains highly plausible' (227). *Mingei* provide accessible evidence of some notion of a pre-modern aesthetic for outside observers that seems to retain traces of a 'true' material culture for Japan, that are apparently, and fortuitously, consistent with the preoccupations with medium and economy of means of western modernist design. Consequently its appeal to the souvenir market remains secure.

Woven into Brandt's account are three recurrent themes: of Japanese nationalism, of contradiction and irony, and of the aesthetic ideals of the key figures associated with the *mingei* reform movement. In Korea, *mingei* had become an emblem of the aesthetic and intellectual superiority of the Japanese state. In a pragmatic sense, nationalist rationales had established the conditions of Japanese occupation of Korea that had facilitated the Japanese 'discovery' of its rural handicraft culture. A justification of the Japanese role in 'saving' Korean material culture and developing institutional conditions for its preservation had been developed with no sense of irony. The vision of Yanagi and his associates found its notional justification in Okakura Kakuzō's early ideal of Japan as the melding crystallization of other moments of 'Asiatic' cultures: 'Japan is a museum of Asiatic civilization; and yet more than a museum, because the singular genius of the race leads it

to dwell in all phases of the ideals of the past, in the spirit of living Advaitism which welcomes the new without losing the old' (30).

The Japanese promotion of Korean crafts provided clear evidence, for Korean and Japanese alike, of the cultural necessity and benefits of the occupation. Any doubt of the Japanese intellectual and aesthetic superiority necessary to this rationalization was dispelled by Aoyama Jirō's dismissive appraisal: 'Korea is that which is admiring, weak, timid, fundamentally lazy, and likes someone extreme; in short, a girl' (33). Throughout the war years the folk art movement played a key role in shaping and representing a sense of national consciousness in Japan itself. It offered an emblem of stability during the extended period of upheaval, sound evidence of the security of tradition through a period of relentless modernisation that had been launched with the Meiji Restoration.

In hindsight, the pragmatic rationales for state support for *mingei* seem inconsistent with the naïve nostalgia evident in the attempts of the early reformers to reclaim the simplicity and humility of productive modes of the past. The state profited from *mingei* ideals of social and moral reform, but its support made their realization impossible within the contexts of mass production and consumption, uniformity and homogeneity. This kind of contradiction or tension resurfaces throughout the *mingei* story. It was evident in the ironic inconsistency between Yanagi Muneyoshi's role as champion of Chosŏn ceramics and the outsider status of colonial occupation. It was present in the uncomfortable alliance of Western and Oriental aesthetic ideals that informed the early reform project. Similar contradictions attach to the principles of the *mingei* reforms especially as they established a functional contribution to state agendas. Yanagi's socialist (he might have said communitarian) ideals and social reconstructivist agendas, so similar to the neo-Platonic ideals promoted by Herbert Read and his circle in Britain at this time, seemed legitimate to his supporters. In retrospect they appear naïve and untenable in light of the contexts of mass production, rising middle class consumerism, urbanisation and modernist uniformity. Despite the egalitarian or socialist ambitions of the *mingei* reformers, or the humble origins of *mingei*, by the 1930s its consumers had become the privileged minority of the new bourgeoisie rather than ordinary rural consumers, and its function decorative rather than utilitarian.

Though there seems little doubt of the sincerity Hamada, Kawai and their circle brought to their support of humble and anonymous rural production modes, these seem now to have little in common with the individually focused trajectories of their own creative projects. The retreat into modes of the past seems inconsistent with *mingei*'s own passage into the modern world. The locally distinctive, rural status of *meibutsu* seems quite inconsistent with a notion of national or even pan-Asian aesthetic character and the homogenization of *mingei* style.

The contradictions attendant on the early discovery and re-presentation of Korean craft objects suffused the later years of the *mingei* reforms. They became very apparent in the ‘renovationist’ ideals of a pan-East Asian culture in the tensions between traditionalism and modernism. The inconsistency between indigenous Asian habits and Western modernist models already endemic throughout China and Japan is illustrated here by the mismatch of an ‘authentically’ designed *mingei* chair and the conventional *zakishi* floor sitting practice. Inconsistencies did not always go unchallenged. The 1939 discovery of Okinawan culture as the ‘living vestiges of ancient Japanese civilization, where crafts are continuing in a pure tradition’ (209) seemed inconsistent with the recent (1879) acquisition of the Ryūkyū kingdom into the Meiji state, and its status as *gaichi*, or ‘external territory’ rather than *naichi*, or ‘internal territory’. Okinawans at least seemed acutely aware of the issue, and able to articulate the injustice in the ‘dialect controversy’ and the condemnation of Japanese attempts to ‘identify and preserve Okinawan difference as another attempt by condescending Japanese to deny Okinawans the rights and privileges of full identity as subjects of the Japanese empire’ (212 – 213).

The *mingei* movement (*mingei undō*) benefited from contributions of a diverse range of figures. Brandt draws a cohesive narrative embracing the early discovery of Chosŏn ceramics by the schoolteacher Asakawa Noritaka, the enthusiastic endorsement of artist craftsmen like Hamada or Bernard Leach, and the reformist zeal of business men like Ōta Naoyuki or the physician Yoshida Shōya. The central presence is the proselytizing enthusiasm of the intellectual Yanagi Muneyoshi – indeed, Brandt draws the title of this book directly from Yanagi’s writings.⁴ The contradictions attending Yanagi’s aesthetic convictions, though not central to Brandt’s own narrative, do challenge the credibility of his much published polemic. As early as 1922 Yanagi had articulated – again with no apparent sense of irony – an analysis of a Korean aesthetic sensibility that reflected ‘the idea of an essential Korean sorrow brought about by a national history of unremitting disaster’ (31). Its essential characteristics of an absence of bright colour, instability of form, and thinly curved and fragile linear qualities generated a sense of ‘sorrow and loneliness’. The consistency of this character with sensibilities of teaism and *mono no aware* explain the immediate appeal of *mingei* to Japanese audiences, but the apparent sincerity seemed inevitably compromised. Even the earliest collectors were motivated by factors more prosaic than taste: *mingei* were simply more affordable than earlier Koryo

⁴ ‘The absence of painted pattern evokes the patterns of dreams; the looker becomes an artist; with the freedom of the brush he becomes free; he beholds the Kingdom of Beauty. They were Japanese eyes who first saw this province; my desire is that its beauty should delight the eyes of the world.’ Yanagi, 1954, ‘Hakeme’, *The Unknown Craftsman: A Japanese Insight Into Beauty*, Tokyo, Kodansha International, 1972, p. 176.

dynasty collectables. More problematically however, the essentialist sensibility of melancholy so congenial to Japanese audiences seemed incompatible with ideals of Western origin that had become confused with Eastern ideals during the frantic modernization that had followed the Meiji Restoration. Yanagi's taste extended well beyond *mingei* to embrace Christian mysticism, modern French painting, Renaissance art, and the work of Blake, Whitman, Emerson and Carlyle. Yanagi's taste seemed subject also to a lack of conviction. The sensibility of sorrow he articulated for Korean craft objects had, by the later 1930s, conveniently transformed into a celebration of their inherent sense of health (*kenkō*), power (*chikara*) and freedom (*jiyū*). And by 1940 his attitude to Okinawan craft sensibility had shifted conveniently from an emphasis on the uniqueness of Okinawan material culture to a celebration of its essential Japaneseness. In retrospect, Yanagi's enthusiasm seems confused and perhaps naïve. The view that taste can unite with economic and political forces to effect social, cultural and even moral improvement, however sincerely felt, was flawed, and inevitably contributed to the loss of *mingei* character rather than its preservation.

For all of its apparent weaknesses or contradictions, Yanagi's vision was infectious and enduring. His zeal contributed significantly to the success of museum and publication projects and to the survival of *mingei* through troubled times. His ideals had a profound impact on the attitudes and practice of craftsmen in Japan and internationally (Bernard Leach has contributed the introduction to the Yanagi compilation *The Unknown Craftsman*). Even the New Zealand crafts movement felt its impact, as was emphasized in the acknowledgement of the formative roles of Hamada, Kawai and Leach in the recent New Dowse Gallery's celebration of the work of Doreen Blumhardt. Kim Brandt's construction on the phrase 'Kingdom of Beauty' here takes a different, more prosaic focus than Yanagi's aesthetic ideal. Her preoccupation is with the role of the institutions of material culture as a force contributing to social, economic and political change. Though this focus excludes an in-depth evaluative analysis of *mingei* works that would elsewhere be welcome, it does illustrate the ideals, agendas and problems attending *mingei* fortunes through this period, and as such provides a valuable balance to the otherwise unchallenged enthusiasms of its key supporters.

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Chris Uhlenbeck and Margarita Winkel et al., *Japanese Erotic Fantasies: Sexual Imagery of the Edo Period*, Amsterdam: Hotei Publishing, 2005, 256 pp., ISBN: 90-74822-66-5 (hbk.).

Shunga, literally ‘spring pictures’, describes the erotic pictorial material that proliferated throughout the Tokugawa period (1603-1868 CE). It is something of an umbrella term, embracing a range of painted and printed materials including *makura-e* – ‘pillow pictures’, *warai-e* – ‘laughter pictures’ (i.e., ‘masturbation pictures’), *enpon* and *kōshokubon* – ‘amorous books’, *shunpon* – ‘spring books’, and also the risqué, but usually non-explicit *abuna-e* – ‘dangerous pictures’.

Shunga have experienced mixed fortunes in their Japanese contexts. They must have been popular in their day: huge numbers appear to have been produced throughout, and after, the Tokugawa period, and they occupied the minds of many of the greatest *ukiyo-e* artists. Even those that survive today constitute a substantial enough body of work to be considered a legitimate mainstream subject category for *ukiyo-e*. In the hands of master print designers like Utamaro their decorative elegance was quite consistent with that applied to portraits of the highest ranking courtesans, the media stars of their day. For others like Hokusai they provided a logical and legitimate link to the frank earthiness of pictorial themes of earlier more bucolic eras. For the media-hungry public of today *shunga* provide the immediate contextual precursors for the ever-popular adult *manga*, the erotic photography of artists like Nobuyoshi Araki, or the comic sculptural extravaganzas of Takashi Murakami. On the other hand *shunga* production was illegal throughout the same period, alternatively the subject of lax toleration, repressive censorship, or rigorously imposed self-regulation by publishers. They have been excluded from the art trade throughout the twentieth century, prohibited as imports into Japan, and carefully censored in reproductions even in the most scholarly of resources, as recently as the mid-1990s. This approbation has meant that many were published furtively, left unsigned, or signed in code or nom de plume, and undated. The consequences for scholarship have been significant: substantial bodies of work have been excluded from the broader oeuvre of key artists, and reconstructing their place within the broader patterns of production and consumption has often remained a matter for inconclusive conjecture.

For most of the twentieth century Western authors have been equally circumspect. Mention, and certainly reproduction, of *shunga* has been almost completely excluded from the main body of literature, reflecting a sustained prurience the equal of the Japanese. More recent authors have embraced it in their accounts, though with conditional success. Richard Lane’s key research was banned in Japan. The first comprehensive account focusing solely on *shunga*, Tom and Mary Evans’ euphemistically titled *Shunga: The Art of*

Love in Japan,⁵ couched its account within the context of the social history of Edo. The rationale of Timon Screech's later *Sex and the Floating World*,⁶ recognized the problems of legitimacy underpinning earlier romanticised explanations, and provided more pragmatically functional (albeit controversial) accounts of *shunga* as pornography. Writers like Marco Fagioli have recognized the status of *shunga-e* as a legitimate pictorial genre, describing its genesis in terms consistent with the orthodox genealogy of *ukiyo-e*.⁷ Most recent reappraisals of major artists like Kitagawa Utamaro and Katsushika Hokusai have embraced their *shunga-e* projects back into their broader oeuvres, and some subsequent publications have focused exclusively on *shunga-e* series by specific artists.⁸ These projects have established a foundation for contemporary *shunga* studies, but leave rich fields for further investigation, particularly in the area of the aesthetic sensibility of *shunga*.

Japanese Erotic Fantasies embraces some of the character of the earlier paradigms. Like the previous studies it establishes explanations in the sociocultural contexts of Edo experience, but it does so in a more purposefully targeted fashion than its predecessors, finding direct links between pictorial and literary contexts for example, and between the development of a male-heavy *chōnin* public and the rise of a brothel culture, or, as in Margarita Winkel's essay 'A Flier for the Aphrodisiacal Ointment *Chōmeigan*', establishing a straightforward commercial functional explanation for the works. Like Fagioli, it employs a genealogical structure for the presentation of its catalogue section, one based on the notion of stylistic progression consistent with the orthodox narratives of *ukiyo-e*.

This study does, however, seek to embrace new questions, to find richer explanations for the phenomena of *shunga*. Chris Uhlenbeck's opening notes establish an agenda that includes the repositioning of '*shunga* within the history of Japanese printmaking and book illustration', to acknowledge its status as an independent pictorial genre, to 'demonstrate that an aesthetic appreciation of the genre goes hand in hand with an analysis of form, function and meaning', and to challenge existing assumptions underpinning earlier explanations.⁹ Uhlenbeck's introductory essay introduces a functional role for *shunga*, within the broader roles of floating world literature and pictures, in informing *tsū* taste to create 'the allure and the mystic of the "insider/outsider"', divulging endless levels of insider knowledge to create a

⁵ Evans, T., and Evans, M., (1975) *Shunga: The Art of Love in Japan*, UK: Paddington Press.

⁶ Screech, T., (1999) *Sex and the Floating World*, London: Reaktion Books.

⁷ Fagioli, M., (1998) *Shunga: The Erotic Art of Japan*, New York: Universe Publishing.

⁸ Klomp makers, I., (2001) *Japanese Erotic Prints: Shunga by Harunobu and Koryūsai*, Leiden: Hotei Publishing.

⁹ Uhlenbeck, 'Preface', p. 6.

world punctuated by double entendre.¹⁰ He subsequently establishes formal protocols for *shunga* formats and a structural principle for unravelling the sometimes complex and subtle layers of meaning that informed the more sophisticated of its compositions.

Uhlenbeck's introductory essay is complemented by a range of other views that ensure a multi-faceted character for this publication. Ellis Tinios has contributed two essays, 'Encountering Japanese Erotic Books' and 'The Representation of Male-male sex in Japanese Erotic Books'. Cecilia Segawa Seigle has two papers, 'The Decorousness of the Yoshiwara – A Rejection of *Shunga*', and 'Expectations and Disappointments of Yoshiwara Visitors'. Margarita Winkel establishes the relation between 'Sex and the Floating World of Popular Literature' as well as examining 'A Flier for the Aphrodisiacal Ointment *Chōmeigan*'. Oikawa Shigeru describes the later world of '*Meiji Shunga: The Comic Genius of Kawanabe Kyōsai*'.

Aspects of each essay contribute facets of the explanations Uhlenbeck has invited in his preface. In establishing the formal protocols for the production and format of erotic books for example, Tinios describes something of the way in which contemporary audiences encountered these works. In unravelling the often humorous pseudonyms and other strategies for avoiding the wrath of the authorities, he illustrates something of the nature of insider knowledge audiences required to understand the works.

Seigle challenges conventional assumptions directly. She rejects the notion that *shunga-e* represent norms of sexual activity regarded as 'free and natural' at the time as being quite inconsistent with the reality of the highly regulated, harsh and joyless conditions of courtesans' sexual activity in the Yoshiwara. More importantly, in relation to the context of refined manners and protocols of the Yoshiwara, Seigle argues its courtesans would have found *shunga* crude, distasteful:

Yoshiwara mo/makura-zōshi wa/miru tokoro

Yoshiwara, too, is a place where they take a peek in *shunga* books.

Keisei no/makura-e ni kekku/hazukashimi

The (Yoshiwara) courtesan is pretty embarrassed by the *shunga* picture book.

Kono hon wa/yashiki ome da to/kashihonya

These kind of books are mainly for the *yashiki* men, says the rental book man.¹¹

¹⁰ Uhlenbeck, 'Erotic Fantasies of Japan: The World of *Shunga*', pp. 11 - 25

¹¹ Hanasaki Kazuo (1976), *Edo Yoshiwara zue* in Seigle, pp. 41, 42

Yoshiwara women preferred to be identified with qualities of decorum and propriety and self-effacing modesty, and respected and cultivated amongst themselves and their clients a climate of *tsū* (sophisticated urbanity) rather than *yabo* (vulgarity). Seigle challenges also the assumption that *shunga* performed an educational function, finding this quite inconsistent with the hierarchical training structures for the transfer of knowledge by example and word of mouth within the close confines of the brothel quarters.

Seigle does allow that Yoshiwara provided a setting or ‘stage’ for many *shunga* representations, describing something of the experiences of visiting and engaging in the activities of the Yoshiwara that were reproduced in *shunga*. Again though, *shunga* themselves seem to have found little place or role in these interactions. Yoshiwara liaisons were the subject of complex and lengthy sequences of protocols, and dependent on the exchange of considerable amounts of money. If the cheap woodblock printed *shunga* represented these activities it was presumably for the benefit of male audiences who could never hope to access these pleasures in reality

Like Seigle, Margarita Winkel challenges the notion that *shunga* reflect Edo norms of sexual licentiousness or male-oriented hedonism that have informed earlier accounts (a view consistent with the emphasis on ‘fantasy’ in this book’s title). In examining the publication media contexts of *gesaku* (popular books) and *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints, she introduces explanations of the ways contemporary audiences would engage with *shunga*. Winkel also establishes a role for *shunga* and *sharebon* in providing ‘insider’ knowledge of the manners of the brothel quarter *tsū* for the less generously informed and practiced visitor to the pleasure quarters.

In analyzing the formal structure, language and arrangement of *enpon* and developing explanations of *kyōban* mock classical style, with its focus on wordplay and homophonic invention, Winkel introduces readers to something of the aesthetic experience of engagement in these fields of art and literature. In particular she focuses on the sensibility of play that informs the composition and interpretation of *mitate-e*. *Mitate-e* offered elegant modern ‘parodies’ or pictorial substitutes for classic themes and subjects, often informed with complex and subtly operating encodings. They were entertaining, delightful, and often iconoclastic in nature. Later, popular narratives like the *Suikoden* or *Kanadehon Chūshingura* provided pretexts for erotic serial novels in which the erotic content parodied the serious, often Confucian-inspired moral tone of the original.

Though it functions independently, this book was produced to coincide with the exhibition *Desire of Spring: Erotic Fantasies of Edo Japan*.¹² It contains illustrations of all of the works from the exhibition – 273 plates for the 160 Catalogue entries, and a further 29 images to support the introductory

¹² Kunsthal, Rotterdam, 22 January to 17 April 2005

essays. Every work has been reproduced clearly and in colour, essential for conveying the richness of the ornately patterned surfaces of the *nishiki-e* ‘brocade’ prints, but rewarding also for revealing the subtle relation of linear modulations of monochrome *sumizuri-e* prints with the warm ivory surfaces of their papers. Though some, especially supplementary images or alternative printings, have been reproduced on a small scale, many are printed on a scale closer to their original dimensions.

The whole gamut of Edo *shunga* formats is represented here. The scope embraces *ehon* printed book illustrations and single sheet prints, rarer scroll paintings, *hashira-e* pillar prints and drawings, and even a range of printed ‘toy’ pictures with moving parts, foldaway flaps or sliding compartments, each of which activates an explicit sexual engagement. Pictorial subjects are equally varied, including brothel scenes and domestic, peasant and folklore subjects and allusions to classical and historical themes, bestial pictures and violent attacks, voyeur compositions, narratives, ‘educational’ diagrams (it is unlikely any were actually expected to teach anyone anything), or advertisements for sexual aids and aphrodisiac potions. Though some are sober images, many are lightly suffused with a sense of playfulness, characterized by puns, visual jokes, or scatological humour, and the anatomical contortions of many defy simple biological potential.

This sense of play informs even the titles of prints and print series. Some, like Terasawa Matsugu’s *Baibobo sensei injohō – Mr Pussy-buyers Erotic Treasures*, or Kitagawa Utamaro’s (*Michiyuki*) *koi no futazo – (On the Road): Love Songs for the Thick-necked Shamisen*, plumb the coarser layers of Edo cultural consciousness. Others, like Isoda Koryusai’s *Fūryū juniki no eiga – Prosperous Flowers of the Fashionable Twelve Seasons*, or *Enshoku hōya hō – Sensual Colours. A Phoenix Released in the Field*, employ much subtler levels of wordplay. *Hana*, a word used for ‘flower’, refers more precisely to the stamen and pistils, the reproductive apparatus of flowers; the image of the phoenix released in the field is one of procreative renewal and the spreading of seed. In others the play requires reference to a broader body of literary knowledge. In devising the title *Onna dairaku takarabako – The Great Pleasure For Ladies on Opening the Treasure Box*, Tsukioka Settei was creating a *shunga* parody on the moral educational text, *Onna daigaku takarabako – The Great School For Ladies: A Treasure Box*.

The entries include conventional identifications of authorship, dates, format and media, and scale, together with series and print titles in Japanese and English. Accompanying captions expand on descriptions of technical and formal dimensions of the works, explaining issues of design and spatial disposition, pictorial devices like cropping, magnification, repetition or reversal, and especially of the rhythmic and decorative sensibilities that inform the sense of erotic intensity or vitality that suffuses many of these works. They explain allusions to classical themes like the ‘Six Chrystal

Rivers’, or recurrent motifs like the months or seasons, flowers, shells or emblems that contribute to the often intricately coded meanings of the pictures. For some, textual content has been translated to illustrate its contribution to the overall meanings of the work, though unfortunately for many more this essential component has been omitted.

As Chris Uhlenbeck acknowledges in his introductory essay, ‘Erotic Fantasies of Japan: The World of *Shunga*’, it is through the subtle interactions of these details that the richer meanings of the more satisfying *shunga-e* are revealed.¹³ Plate 18 shows a *mitate*, or parody, print by Suzuki Harunobu in which, as a pair caress each other gently in front of an open door, a hand-towel on a stand flutters in the breeze from the garden beyond. The title focuses on the hand towel: *Tenuguikake no kihan – Returning Sail at the Towel Rack*. The title of the series to which the image belongs is *Fūryū zashiki hakkei – Eight Fashionable Parlour Views* (c. 1768), a parody on the classic series, *Ōmi hakkei – Eight Views of Ōmi*. The title of this print is a pun on that of one of the images of the original series, that of ‘returning sails off a distant shore’. The allusion is enhanced both by the rolling waves in the screen painting at left, the ‘floating’ stepping stones in the garden, and the windblown hand towel to the right. The references are repeated explicitly in the poem in the floating cloud above the couple:

That boat over there with sails
swelling to the front
Is it coming to the harbour?
Ah yes it is coming in.¹⁴

Whatever the implications of the poem’s original contexts (returning lovers perhaps) the references here – ‘sails swelling to the front’, ‘Ah yes it is coming in’ – are rather more prosaic, explicit expressions of the couple’s burgeoning passion, echoed in the image of the nervous flutter of the towel, confirmed in the close-up intimate exchange in the mirror, and extended in the much more explicit couplings of the subsequent prints in the series.

The omission of this translated material for other prints reproduced here compromises the reader’s understandings of their subtleties of meaning. Plates 22 C (1) and (2) for example illustrate versions of the final plate in Suzuki Harunobu’s 1768-70 series *Fūryū enshoku Maneemon (The Fashionable Lusty Maneemon)*. Here the text is central to establishing the narrative context for the pictorial event, but essential for realizing the relation

¹³ ‘Layers of Meaning: Content and Function of *Shunga*’, p. 20.

¹⁴ Hayakawa Monta, *The Shunga of Suzuki Harunobu: Mitate-e and Sexuality in Edo*, trans. Patricia J. Fister, Nichibunken Monograph series 4, Kyoto: Nichibunken, 2001, p. 100.

of Maneemon's breaking of wind and the verbal aside he makes both to the scent of the surrounding cherry blossom and the subtler allusion made through this crude joke to the eleventh century verse by the Heian poet Ise no Taifu:

<i>Inishie no</i>	Anciently they bloomed
<i>Nara no Miyake no</i>	in the Hara capital –
<i>Yaezakura</i>	these eightfold cherries
<i>kyoo kokonoe ni</i>	now displaying their colours
<i>nioinuru kana</i>	in the nine-fold palace courts. ¹⁵

As Inge Klompmakers explains, the joke hinges on the inclusion of the word *nioinuru*:

Nioinuru is translated here as ‘displaying their colours’. ‘Splendour’ is one of the meanings of *nioi*, which fits best in this poem, as *sakura* have no fragrance of their own. The second meaning of *nioi* brings us to the pun of the breaking wind in this picture: *nioi* can also mean ‘smell’.¹⁶

There is little enchantment in most of these scenes. To call the participants ‘lovers’ would be disingenuous – ‘protagonists’ might be more apt. Qualities of affection, intimacy, sometimes even passion, are notable more for their absence. On the contrary, the overriding sensibility that permeates these illustrations is one of disengagement. The rich sense of vitality that informs most of the compositions, generated from complex interactions of linear rhythm, asymmetrical spatial dispositions or richly contrasting pattern and colour, is counterbalanced by the profound awkwardness of bodies twisted apart in such a way as to focus the viewers’ attentions solely on the interactions of genitalia; limbs are drawn back in abnormal, flexi-jointed agonies to facilitate these views. More importantly, in the majority, there is simply no communion between the participants. Male participants (most of the images represent heterosexual relations) seem preoccupied with supporting themselves precariously, apparently preoccupied only with their own gratification. Females are characterized by a sense of passive self-absorption, their upper torsos bending away from the engagement, their arms and hands fiddling/dangling uselessly in space, faces regularly looking away from the central action, sometimes towards some external detail, more often, eyes closed, in introversion. For the scenes that

¹⁵ Ise no Taifu (alt. Ise no Tayuu, fl. 1008 - 60) from *Hyakkunin isshu* (One Hundred Poems by One Poet Each), cited and translated in Klompmakers, 2001, p. 76.

¹⁶ Klompmakers, p. 76.

are set within the stage of the Yoshiwara environment, their attitudes are a confirmation of brothel injunctions to non-commitment to sexual engagement. Earlier here, in her essay ‘The Decorousness of the Yoshiwara: A Rejection of *Shunga*’, Cecilia Segawa Siegle describes the proscription of personal relationships, or even of sexual gratification, for the women of the brothel quarters.¹⁷ But beyond this, the prevailing aesthetic sensibility here is one of detachment. In a sense this detachment seems consistent with the urbanity of the floating world, its dependence more on complex systems of manners and protocols than on deeper personal engagement. It is difficult, however, to divorce it from the qualities that encouraged European commentaries to describe the floating world in terms of its decadence, as Arthur Davison Ficke was to condemn the Yoshiwara representations of Utamaro:

Thou whom such matchless beauty filled
Of visions frail and lone,
For thee all passion now is stilled;
Thy heart, denied the life it willed,

Desireth rather none.

And thee allure no verdant blooms
That with fresh joy suspire;
But blossoms, touched with coming gloom,
And wariness, and spent desire,
Draw to their spirit nigher.

Wherefore is nothing in thigh sight
Propitious save it be
Brushed with the wings of hovering night,
Worn with the shadow of delight,
Sad with satiety.¹⁸

The historically phased arrangement of images presented here reflects this shift from the elegant delicacy of engagement and composition represented in Harunobu and Kiyonaga, through a growing sense of jaded

¹⁷ ‘For courtesans a “sexuality that was carefree and natural” had little to do with reality. Trained not to express themselves honestly, they were not only forbidden to fall in love, but they were also ruled never to reach orgasm. The latter was a prerequisite so as to avoid physical exhaustion of the prostitutes who has to receive any number of men throughout the day, and night. But obviously another reason was to prevent them from forming physical or emotional attachments to a specific client.’ p. 35.

¹⁸ Arthur Davison Ficke, (1915), *Chats on Japanese Prints*, London: T. Fisher Unwin Ltd., p. 281.

urbanity, into the final mannerist stylistic excess of the Utagawa School print designers. In presenting the works in this way it goes some way to explaining the preoccupation of earlier European writers with the rapid decline of the *ukiyo-e* project into decadence. The writers here are less prone to making the moral judgments on either the art or the social mores of the era however. Their approach is pragmatic, clear and explanatory, and they go some way towards opening out the world of *shunga-e* for a broad audience in a generous, beautifully presented volume.

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Mazhar Hussain and Robert Wilkinson, eds., *The Pursuit of Comparative Aesthetics: An Interface Between the East and West*, Aldershot, England and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006, ix + 264 pp., ISBN: 0 7546 5345 5 (hbk.).

Art is at the centre of the study of aesthetics, and aesthetic discourse may be measured by the effectiveness with which it explains art's character. Cross-cultural or comparative aesthetics, given the nature of the art objects under scrutiny – objects from differing cultures – is, naturally, of particular value in helping us to understand why people make the kinds of art objects they do and what meanings those objects have. Recently, the richness and worth of studies in comparative aesthetics was evidenced in the collection of papers published under the title 'Global Theories of the Arts and Aesthetics', in the 2007 winter volume of *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*.

Judged on their effectiveness in explaining the nature of art, the essays included in *The Pursuit of Comparative Aesthetics* are, by contrast, uneven. The first eight essays presented in this volume centre on the well-known names in the philosophy of art and aesthetics – Aristotle, Plato, Kant, Schopenhauer, Abhinavagupta, Laozi, Zhuangzi, Confucius. Occasionally useful, they tend to retrace well-trodden ground. The most fluid is Karl-Heinz Pohl's 'Chinese Aesthetics and Kant', which provides, in fact, ideal background reading for Peter Leech's essay later in the volume. Wang Keping describes the growth of aesthetics in China in the twentieth century, where the uniqueness of Chinese art has been explained through the uniqueness of aesthetic thinking by philosophers such as Li Zehou. He also includes, though oddly does not give a useful description of, a charming table comparing conventional forms of aesthetic expression in ancient Greece, China, and the modern West, based on the thinking of Fang Dongmei. Overwhelmingly, though, the subject of the first eight essays is literary aesthetics, which has attracted the lion's share of publishers' attention, in

contrast to visual aesthetics, the concern of the remaining five essays. The real interest of the book, in fact, lies in these, which set out to offer material of genuine originality (two have been available for a number of years). Those by Mara Miller, Yuriko Saito and Leech stand out as a particularly satisfying form of aesthetic discourse, securing and substantiating ideas through instances of cultural products and phenomena, where, one senses, the instances are known intimately to the authors, and the aesthetic sensibilities underlying the ideas are clearly second nature. The cultural comparisons highlight matters of interest that throw into relief characteristics of each of the aesthetic understandings of the cultures under scrutiny.

Unfortunately, familiarity with the objects under discussion and the cultural sensibilities underlying them appears absent from Allan Casebier's paper 'Japanese Aesthetics with some Western Analogues', which exhibits errors both of fact and theoretical substance. *Miyabi* is not 'closely allied' with *shibui* (229). The Nishihonganji is mistakenly referred to as a 'shrine' (229). Casebier has plainly not seen inside the teahouses he seeks to describe, which are never of 'bare wood' (229). He claims '*wabi* involves clarity of image' (229), when, in fact, *wabi* objects are most often characterised by qualities of nebulosity, indistinctness and darkness. A tea master would *never* display a plain twig as a flower arrangement. His conclusion, that 'with only the exception of *yugen*, regardless of the aesthetic term involved, the same core set of features are conditions governing application of the Japanese aesthetic terms' (231) is manifestly incorrect – and odd, as the *wabi* aesthetic that interests him derived directly from *yugen*, and shares much with it. One source of Casebier's difficulties lies in his relying wholly on secondary sources, readily identifiable as the standard texts in the area. By contrast, the strength and originality of Saito and Miller's scholarship derive from their easy commerce with both Western and East Asian philosophy, art history, and languages, as much as from their long personal involvement with the subtleties of the cultures about which they write. In the last twenty years, Miller and Saito have contributed significant amounts to the discipline of comparative aesthetics.

'Scenic National Landscapes', however, is not representative of Saito's best thinking. She reflects on the role certain scenic landscapes and their representations in Japan and the United States have played in forming national identities. The Japanese, conveniently, selected three famous 'scenic places', each bays, and Saito notes that, at each, the boundary between land and sea is indeterminate – obscured by islands (Matsushima), a sandbar (Amanohashidate), or a large *torii* gate (Miyajima). The blurring of boundaries Saito recognises as a characteristic of Japanese aesthetic taste generally, as evidenced, for example, in the free flow of space between the inside and outside of a traditional house, and the appeal of the scenic sights is explained through this preference.

In early times American landscapes failed in comparison with their European equivalents through lack of cultural associations: to the colonists they seemed figuratively, and often literally, empty. This perception was turned into a positive in the nineteenth century in the celebration of the wilderness, crystallised in the National Parks system. Both the Japanese and Americans, in art and popular culture, celebrated these sights as distinctively different from the landscapes of their cultural mentors, China and Europe, as part of a project to define their national identities.

Miller's paper is focused on paintings of agricultural subjects in East Asia, England and the United States, which naturally evidence different concerns and ideals. For instance, the painting of Chinese agricultural landscapes developed from the literati ideal of escape from official life, borrowing from Daoist aspirations; in the United States farmers employed painters to depict the objects of their pride. But Miller recognises that the similarities between different cultures' representations are more significant, as representations of ethical and social ideals. These ideals, she concludes, that once inspired, today are unknown to American youths who run amok, and whose image stock comes from films and video games, not agricultural cultivation and caring for animals.

Pohl outlines a parallel tension in Kant's and Chinese aesthetic philosophies between emphases on naturalness or nature, and regularity, or human devised rules and methods, and offers an explanation of how both the Chinese and Kant sought to reconcile them. Like issues are of concern to Leech, where the apparently inconsistent theoretical strains are expressed in terms of 'freedom' and 'formula' and identified with what Kant termed free beauty and dependent beauty. Leech provides a philosophical ground for inter-cultural theoretical allegiances in instances as historically diverse as Leon Battista Alberti's *concinnitas*, Ad Reinhardt's art principles, Okakura Kakuzō's conception of the philosophy of the Way of Tea, and Kuki Shūzō's *iki*. He demonstrates a remarkable alignment between (often ignored) lines of aesthetic theory in the West and Japan – so often in the past captured by the bland gestures of Japonisme – which conceive a 'structured location for the imagination' (241) in aesthetic activity. Some of the parallels are startling *and* instructive: instance Kuki's proposition that 'the meaning of the free art which creates form as design only exists in geometric patterns', and Reinhardt's principle of abstract painting as 'the strictest formula for the freest artistic freedom' (243).

For students, the editors' 'Introduction' provides a simple history of the study of comparative aesthetics. But overall the contributors are let down by an appalling lack of editing: there is no consistency for ordering names, in use of diacritic marks, italics, or transliteration systems (even *within* individual essays). In some papers key words and names are given in their original language, in others not. The index is very unreliable. These simple

and frustrating inconsistencies, in addition to the unevenness of the contributions, are enough to dissuade me from recommending it to students. For those teaching in the field of South and East Asian aesthetics and art theory, useful texts remain thin on the ground.

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David Tod Roy, trans., *The Plum in the Golden Vase or Chin P'ing Mei: Volume Three: The Aphrodisiac*, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006, lxvii + 722 pp., ISBN-10: 0-691-12534-1 (hbk.).

‘The *Jin Ping Mei* 金瓶梅 is a veritable *Shiji* 史記 [Records of the Grand Historian; by Sima Qian 司馬遷, b. 145 BCE]’, claims the seventeenth-century critic Zhang Zhupo 張竹坡 (1670-1689?) in Item 34 of his ‘How to Read the *Jin Ping Mei*’, also translated by David Roy, ‘but the *Shiji*, though it contains both individual biographies [*duzhuan* 獨傳] and collective biographies [*hezhan* 合傳], treats each biography separately. The hundred chapters of the *Jin Ping Mei*, on the other hand, constitute a single biography [*zhan* 傳] in which hundreds of characters are treated. Though the presentation is discontinuous [*duanduan xuxu* 斷斷續續], each character has a biography of his own’.¹⁹ Such, then, is the dense tapestry of the narrative threads of the novel that, again according to Zhang Zhupo (Item 57), the author would need to have been an avatar of a disciple of the Buddha himself.

This being the case, what hope is there for the unfortunate translator? The recent publication of the third of five projected volumes of David Roy’s translation of the *cihua* 詞話 version²⁰ of this anonymous and notoriously pornographic Ming (1368-1644 CE) dynasty novel about the merchant

¹⁹ In David L. Rolston, ed., *How to Read the Chinese Novel* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990), 221; Chinese characters added, romanisation altered.

²⁰ Patrick D. Hanan’s two early articles on the tangled textual history of the novel (‘The Text of the Chin P’ing Mei’, *Asia Major*, N.S. 9 (1962): 1-57 and ‘Sources of the Chin P’ing Mei’, *Asia Major*, N.S. 10 (1963): 23-67) remain important in this respect. He distinguishes three recensions of the text: the *cihua* editions (designated A by Hanan), the fuller and probably earlier version of the novel; the *xiuxiang* or illustrated versions first published sometime during the reign of the Chongzhen emperor (1628-43) (B, in Hanan’s terms); and the critical edition of the novel produced by Zhang Zhupo in the mid-1690s (C texts). For a recent treatment of the literary aspects of this issue, see Xiaofei Tian, ‘A Preliminary Comparison of Two Recensions of *Jinpingmei*’, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 62.2 (2002): 347-88.

Ximen Qing and his wives and paramours, written sometime between 1582-96 and first published around 1617, marking as it does his passing of the mid-point of his labours upon this ‘interminable task’, the earlier volumes having appeared in 1993 and 2002, occasions some brief reflection upon the nature of his project.

Two previous attempts have been made to render the novel into English, both first published in 1939: that by Bernard Miall, of the German translation by Franz Kuhn (with an ‘Introduction’ by Arthur Waley) and that of Clement Egerton, working with the Chinese novelist Lao She 老舍 (1899-1966). Both translations are of the ‘inferior’²¹ 100-chapter *xiuxiang* 繡像 version – understandably so, given that the fuller 120-chapter *cihua* version was only rediscovered during the early 1930s. Further, both translations are severely truncated in one way or another, the first of these giving only 47 chapters, and the second having both rendered all the most pornographic sections of the novel into Latin – these passages having been put into English when the translation was re-issued in 1972 – and excluding much of the poetry and song that forms such a distinctive feature of the novel.

For his part, and taking his lead explicitly from the David Hawkes/John Minford translation of the *Honglou meng* 紅樓夢 [Dream of the Red Chamber/Story of the Stone], David Roy’s approach has been to attempt to translate ‘everything’.

To what effect? On the one hand, we have here the product of quite extraordinary industriousness and scholarly effort. The 20 chapters of this volume of his translation (41-60), for instance, come accompanied by the 55-page long ‘Cast of Characters’ found also in the previous two volumes, 130-odd pages of footnotes, a ‘Bibliography to Volume 3’ and an index. Every poem, song, and saying is tracked back to its source, every allusion and pun explained. But, on the other, it was the readability of the novel that so immediately struck contemporary readers; having been given a copy of the first half of the novel in 1596, the eminent literary figure Yuan Hongdao 袁宏道 (1568-1610), the first person to record his thoughts about the novel, in a

²¹ Xiaofei Tian, in the article cited in the footnote above, makes a convincing case for rejecting this characterisation of this recension of the novel: ‘To summarize’, she concludes, ‘the *xiuxiang* recension is a carefully constructed, well-orchestrated, ideologically and aesthetically consistent text. Its wide circulation, with Zhang Zhupo’s commentary, during the Qing dynasty was probably because an increasingly sophisticated fiction-reading public preferred its tighter organization, its subtler characterization, and the greater ethical complexity that followed from its more serious engagement with Buddhist values. If the *cihua* recension repeatedly instructs the reader to restrain his desires in order to better fit into the social world, then the *xiuxiang* recension uses the numbing multiplication of transgressions to gradually undermine this very social world by exposing the emptiness beneath its sensual surfaces’ (387).

letter to the painter and calligrapher Dong Qichang 董其昌 (1555-1636), for instance, retreated to his sickbed for three days in order to finish it, despite the fact that he was serving as Magistrate of Suzhou at the time. In these terms, how well does Roy's translation work? Here, for instance, is a passage, taken almost at random and accompanied by a woodblock illustration from the *xiuxiang* version that offers an amusing undercutting of the traditional and rarefied aesthetics of the Chinese garden:

Ying Bojue, who tried to prevent the party from breaking up, saw that Han Jinquan had taken advantage of the distraction [of Ximen Qing's departure to attend to his sick Sixth Lady] to disappear and set out to look for her with:

Skulking step and lurking gait.

Lo and behold, he found her squatting under the Taihu rockery, in the process of taking a piss:

Revealing a single strand of red thread,

That emitted a myriad glistening pearls.

From his vantage point on the other side of the fence, Ying Bojue proceeded to stick a blade of grass through a hole, with which he tickled the mouth of her vagina. Han Jinquan was not even able to finish what she was about but jumped up in surprise, getting the waist of her drawers all wet in the process.

“You indecent short-life!” cursed Han Jinquan. “How diabolically unprincipled can you get?”

Her face turned completely crimson as:

Half smiling and half cursing,

she rejoined the company. Ying Bojue told everyone what had happened, and they all had another laugh over it.

(336; romanisation altered)

Whereas I would certainly agree with an analysis of the novel that suggests that its pornographic passages are deliberately intended to be numbingly deflationary in effect, I'm not at all sure that a reading of such wordy prose would give rise to much tumescence in the first place. By contrast, the corresponding passage from the *xiuxiang* recension of the novel and in the Egerton translation seems at once to be both more effective writing and better translation:

Ximen Qing changed his clothes and went for a stroll. Bojue was still calling for more refreshment. Suddenly he noticed that Golden Bracelet had disappeared. He looked about and found that she had gone round

the artificial mound and was relieving herself behind the arbour of roses. He picked up a branch from a flowing shrub and quietly went over to her. Squatting down behind her, he touched the heart of her flower. Golden Bracelet was startled, jumped up before she had finished what she was about, and wet her drawers. At that moment Zhang Zhijie crept up behind Bojue and pushed him so violently that he fell forward and caught all the piss in his face. He sprang to his feet, laughingly cursed Zhang Zhijie, and ran after him to beat him. Ximen Qing stood beside a pine-tree and roared with laughter. Even Golden Bracelet laughed and skipped with delight. “Beggar Ying,” she said, “now you’ve got what you deserved”. They went back to the table.²²

Not exactly riveting reading either, but at least this passage has a fluency that seems more in keeping with the slap-stick humour of the original.

To my mind then, by virtue of both Roy’s decision to translate the *cihua* version of the novel, and his manner of doing so, we have here an invaluable insight into the material and popular literary world of the late-Ming that will serve as a wonderful resource for students of the various aspects of this fascinating and rapidly changing period of late imperial Chinese history for many years to come; sadly, however, we do not yet have a version of the novel that will take its rightful place, along with the Hawkes/Minford translation, within that small pantheon of Chinese literature in English translation.

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Judith T. Zeitlin, *The Phantom Heroine: Ghosts and Gender in Seventeenth-Century Chinese Literature*, Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2007, xiii + 296 pp., ISBN: 978-0-8248-3091-5 (hbk.).

To students of classical Chinese tales of the strange and supernatural, Judith Zeitlin is certainly not a new name. In 1993, she published a book-length study entitled *Historian of the Strange: Pu Songling and the Chinese Classical Tale*, which helped establish Zeitlin as a leading Western scholar on Pu Songling. Since then she has successfully expanded her research area beyond the classical tale into Ming-Qing *nanxi* 南戲 [southern drama, also known as *chuanqi* 傳奇], music and performance, rituals and religions, gender studies and ghostlore, as shown in a series of significant publications

²² *The Golden Lotus* (1939; rpt. Singapore: Graham Brash, 1980), 3: 7.

she has made on these issues in recent years. *The Phantom Heroine: Ghosts and Gender in Seventeenth-Century Chinese Literature* (hereafter *The Phantom Heroine*) represents her most recent attempts to integrate her years of multi-disciplinary studies of Ming-Qing literary and cultural history to explore the aesthetical, psychological, sociological and anthropological values behind the female phantom phenomena as revealed in seventeenth-century Chinese ghost literature and culture.

The Phantom Heroine consists of four chapters (13-180) in addition to an introduction (1-12) and a coda (181-197). The introduction starts with an insightful analysis of the 1987 hit Hong Kong horror film *Qiannü youhun* 倩女幽魂 [A Chinese Ghost Story] to explore ‘the legacy of the stories, poems, and plays’ which ‘still exerts a strong grip on the contemporary imagination’ (1). Through a contrast of the screen image of the phantom heroine in the film with the ghost girl in its source tale, and through an autobiographical account by Shen Fu 沈復 (1763-1825) in the *Fusheng liuji* 浮生六記 [Six Chapters of a Floating Life] of his encounter with his late wife’s ghost, Zeitlin observes that ghost women in Chinese literary tradition tend to be portrayed as timid, lonely, and lovely, thus often arousing sympathy and admiration from living men, and that the role of erotic ghosts is mostly assigned to female figures. This kind of romantic union between the living and the dead differs greatly from Western popular culture of vampires who can be of either gender. A major focus of this book is thus ‘this gender asymmetry and its complex roots and significance in Chinese literary history’ (2).

The complex roots of Chinese ghost culture lies first and foremost in Chinese conceptions of *gui* 鬼 [ghost]. So what is *gui*? How is it defined in Chinese writing? Zeitlin draws widely on traditional Chinese sources ranging from pre-Qin 秦 (220-206 BCE) classics, the *Er ya* 爾雅 [Approaching Elegance], the *Liji* 禮記 [Ritual Canon], the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 [Zuo’s Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals], and the *Liezi* 列子 [Writings of Master Lie Yukou] for accounts of *gui*, which she defines accordingly as ‘what goes away [from the living] and *does not* come back [as a vengeful spirit]’ (4) if it is well tended and has a proper place to go.

Chinese ghost literature came about as part of the *zhiguai* tradition dating from the Warring States Period (481-221 BCE) and continued to be written and read throughout China’s imperial history until the early twentieth century, but why does this book concentrate on the dynastic transitional period from Ming to Qing ‘from roughly 1580 to 1700’ (6)? Zeitlin argues convincingly that the late Ming and early Qing dynasties ‘should be regarded as the high point of the literary ghost literature’ (6) because of an unprecedented large-scale production, publication and circulation of ghost literature of high quality and sophistication as represented by two southern

dramas, Tang Xianzu's 湯顯祖 (1550-1616) *Mudan ting* 牡丹亭 [Peony Pavilion], Hong Sheng's 洪昇 (1645-1704) *Changshen dian* 長生殿 [Palace of Lasting Life], and two collections of classical tales, Mei Dingzuo's 梅鼎祚 (1549-1615) *Caigui ji* 才鬼記 [Records of Talented Ghosts] and Pu Songling's 蒲松齡 (1640-1715) *Liaozhai zhiyi* 聊齋志異 [Liaozhai's Records of the Strange]. She chooses this period of time also because late Ming and early Qing China witnessed 'the widespread idealization of *qing* – love, sentiment, desire – a passion capable of surmounting the gulf between life and death, and 'the violent collapse of the Ming dynasty in 1644 and the Manchu conquest that led to the founding of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911)' (6-7), which are well documented in the ghost literature of the time.

Chinese ghost culture and literature has long been an object of study by anthropologists, folklorists, and scholars of Chinese literature and religion, but most of their researches are confined to the ghost story in oral circulation or in writing. The most remarkable feature of this book is its pioneering effort to break through the generic isolation to investigate the interrelationships between narrative, drama and poetry in their representation of the ghost, and 'to explore the complex meanings, both literal *and* figurative, of these representations' (10). Accordingly, Zeitlin divides the body text of this book into four chapters with each chapter dealing with one aspect of Chinese ghost culture and literature.

Chapter 1 ('The Ghost's Body') is primarily concerned with corporeal issues such as love and death, sexuality, fertility, with a focus on the medical and sexual construction of the ghost body in terms of visual, tactile and fertile qualities, which figure prominently in the ghost romance. This chapter is further divided into four sections centering on the gender asymmetry, ghostly fertility, resurrection through *qing*, and the ghost's corpse. In Chapter 2 ('The Ghost's Voice'), Zeitlin sets for herself two tasks, that is, to probe 'the subjective experience of death' (11) and to test 'the cultural notion of literary immortality' (11) through an exploration of the acoustic or auditory features of the ghost, which, albeit hardly seen in Six Dynasties accounts of the strange, start to manifest themselves to the reader of Tang tales of the marvellous and make more frequent appearances in Ming-Qing ghost literature, particularly the lyric poetry as inserted in the ghost narrative. In contrast to the previous chapter where the author bases her study of the ghost's body mainly on ghost narratives in prose form, this chapter builds up its arguments primarily on poems about or by the ghost.

In Chapter 3 ('Ghosts and Historical Time'), the author shifts the focus of her research from the ghost romance to the historical ghost tale, a specific type of ghost story 'about a traumatic historical event rather than a problem of individual mortality' (88), and from the physical (visual-acoustic qualities) and psychological (subjective experience and expression of death) features of

the ghost to the presentation and representation of time in the ghost story about history. In her discussion of the past reanimated in the historical ghost story ‘through the perception of a living observer’ (88), Zeitlin makes a metaphorical reference to the death of an individual in relation to the demise of a dynasty. She notes that the historical ghost story shows no difference from a historical novel or play ‘in attempting to reenact the past in the present’, but the former ‘never sets out to erase the difference between past and present through a vivid mimesis of bygone historical events, nor will it ever let go of the pastness of the past’ (88). ‘The [historical ghost] narrative’, she argues, ‘thus does not recreate the past in the present but dramatize the present’s encounter with the past’, which is ‘always represented in some form as a loss to be mourned and lamented’ (88). This is especially true in ghost tales ‘that reflect upon violent events of the recent past’ (88), as shown in the legend of Lin Sinian 林四娘, the most famous early Qing ghost story about the fall of the Ming which circulated widely in multiple versions in seventeenth century China, and the story ‘Gongsun Jiuniang’ 公孫九娘 from *Liaozhai’s Records of the Strange*.

Chapter 4 (‘Ghosts and Theatricality’) aims to understand ‘the dramatization of the ghost romance’ (13) in the southern drama through a semiotic analysis of the theatrical role of *hundān* 魂旦 (female lead’s soul) as depicted in a play text and performed on stage. This chapter begins with an analysis of the aesthetic category of *qi* 奇 (amazing; novel; marvellous) and the theatrical application of this category in the composition of southern drama, followed by a discussion of three different yet interrelated concepts of theatricality in drama of text and performance. This chapter is then subdivided into two parts, with the first one revolving around the presentation and performance in traditional Chinese theatre of *huandan*, a subcategory of the role type known as *dan* 旦 (female lead), which Zeitlin defines as ‘any soul that is detached from a body’ (135). In the second part, Zeitlin takes up two sets of late Ming ghost plays to demonstrate the art of the representation and performance of the ghost on stage.

As shown above, Zeitlin has each of the four chapters devoted to one major theme in Chinese ghost culture and literature, but she never treats these four themes in isolation. Rather, she always regards them as a united whole, as is best manifested in a most thorough and thought-provoking reading of the historical drama, *Palace of Lasting Life*, in the last part of this book (‘Coda: *Palace of Lasting Life*’). As one of the most influential historical drama, *Palace of Lasting Life* features all the major themes explored previously in this book ranging from the death of a woman because of *qing*, her rise from the dead and eventual attainment of immortality through *qing*, the lamenting of the past by the present, the theatrical representation of body and soul and the spatial transference onstage from this world to the

otherworld. Through her perceptive textual and theatrical analysis of this drama, Zeitlin provides the most penetrating and conceptual frame for the Chinese ghost culture and literature as a whole.

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Russel H. K. Heng, ed., *Media Fortune, Changing Times: ASEAN States in Transition*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2002, xviii + 252 pp., ISBN 981-230-155-0 (pbk.).

Media Fortune, Changing Times: ASEAN States in Transition is a collection of essays on the changing political, economic, and cultural locations of media in eight of the ten ASEAN members. The book's contributions, although different in their focus, all touch upon an important common theme: the re-assessment of market influences and the role of the state in ASEAN media. Market liberalisation and democratisation are both recognised as important and related trends in the development of ASEAN media, but their impact in changing both culture and politics is tempered by a multiplicity of factors which go beyond the control still exerted by the state. While acknowledging the impact of global and transnational dynamics in media development, the case studies presented by each author emphasise the specificity of the national context. From the influences of national economic forces and new social classes to the spread of new media and the individual journalist's own choices, the essays explore the ASEAN media's possibilities and limitations.

Possibly to balance the book's very limited number of internal cross-country references, the opening chapter begins with a literature review. Even though the author (who is also the editor of the collection) only covers post-1980s English-language academic publications, summarising the many and diverse topics with which scholars dealt in this area, this is certainly no easy task. Heng successfully manages to offer a clear and comprehensive selection by focusing on four main issues (increased forces of democratisation, revision of old economic strategies, socio-cultural changes, and the challenge of information technology). In his review, he also notes how scholars have emphasised the importance of the media consumer's changing role. In *Media Fortunes*, however, the question of audiences (media consumption, assessment, decoding, participation, etc.) is very rarely addressed.

The following chapters consist of a combination of, first, useful albeit relatively brief country profiles, second, in-depth historical overviews, third, more in-depth analysis of media dynamics, and, fourth, thesis-driven discussions on media transitions or media events. In the first category one finds the profiles of the post-socialist media in Cambodia (Samnang) and the

impact of economic transition on media in Laos (Duangsavanh), and Tien's study on the media in Vietnam. To the second category belongs Than's study on media in Myanmar (undoubtedly one of the best-researched essays in the collection). The third category includes an examination of Indonesian journalists' working conditions compared with the level of democratization reached by Indonesian society (Heryanto and Adi), an analysis of Indonesian television's new broadcasting order in relation to both weak political institutions and public activism (Sanyoto), and a study on the Reformasi movement in Malaysia (Nain).

From an academic point of view, the most stimulating essays are two thesis-driven contributions: George's discussion on Singapore's media and Jackson's focus on media representations of gender and sexual minorities in Thailand. Although empirically grounded, these two chapters are the only quasi-theoretical reflections on ASEAN media and both explore alternative critical frameworks beyond the macro socio-economic and political perspectives, still mostly privileged in the other chapters. The essays advance some interesting hypotheses about the key and often under-estimated role of the individual journalist (George) and the increased power of civil society in Thailand (Jackson).

Because of the wide scope of its analysis and the diversity of the contributions (which come from academics, activists, and journalists), the book can be a very useful reader for both scholars and students in the field of media and Southeast-Asian studies. Additionally the declared disengagement from theory ('Readers will not find any attempt by the writers to engage in some of the major theoretical debates that have emerged in the literature on the media in Southeast Asia' [xv]) and a preference for historically-grounded empirical work seem to suggest that the book wishes to target a broader, non-specialised audience. However, I am not convinced that the sought-after empirical focus justifies a total absence of references to Asian theories of communication and issues related to public journalism in the Asian context. Equally problematic is the lack of comparative perspectives, both within ASEAN media practices and to other Asian countries' media, (i.e., China) that are undergoing similar transitions.

Despite some shortcomings, *Media Fortunes* offers a great deal of valuable information and intellectually-stimulating analyses. The book's main question ('given the density of transitional forces, how state-media relations have been configured?' [xviii]) is addressed in each chapter with clarity and considerable thematic cohesiveness.

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Barbara Hendrischke, *The Scripture on Great Peace: The Taiping jing and the Beginnings of Daoism*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006, x + 410 pp., ISBN-13: 978-0-520-24788-8; ISBN-10: 0-520-24788-4 (pbk.).

In this *tour de force* in philological Sinology, Barbara Hendrischke demonstrates an impressive command of not only *The Scripture on Great Peace*, or *Taiping jing* (henceforth abbreviated TPJ), but also intimate familiarity with a wide array of related textual sources from China's early medieval period. That said, this is not an easy book to read—it is not written for undergraduates or interested non-specialists, but for Sinologists, Chinese historians or scholars of Daoism. Those outside these fields are likely to find this weighty monograph arduous reading. Nevertheless, for those willing to wade into its scholastic depths, this book provides access to something of a textual 'missing link' into the formative period of religious Daoism.

The study is divided into three main parts: Hendrischke's introduction, a heavily annotated translation with introductory comments of sections 41–66 of the TPJ (minus the no longer extant section 49), and a useful appendix on the composition of the TPJ. In her introduction, Hendrischke states,

Since the views of the TPJ were later incorporated into the Daoist tradition, it is tempting to call the religious views expressed in the text "Daoist." It would be more precise, however, to see the text as a link between what has been termed early China's "common religion" and the later Daoist tradition (3).

Hendrischke's illumination of the TPJ as a link between these two traditions constitutes the most noteworthy aspect of this study.

As the name of the TPJ implies, the central focus of the text is 'great peace'. According to the authors of the TPJ, this peace will be achieved once humankind has become one with heaven. In order to do this society has to abolish all habits that are against nature. Since heaven's goal is to create, nurture and maintain life, all blockages and ruptures to this process must be stopped. The authors of the TPJ maintain the apocalyptic notion that if society does not alter its actions against heaven, the world itself will end.

Although the *textus receptus* of the TPJ dates to the sixth century CE, Hendrischke suggests based on internal evidence that the TPJ may date back to the Later Han Dynasty (39). In a fascinating section on the language and style of the text, Hendrischke maintains that much of the TPJ appears as transcriptions of dialogues between a religious teacher (referred to as the 'Celestial Master') and his students. In this regard the language is decidedly colloquial and resembles early Chinese Buddhist scriptures. One such feature

of this language that diverged from formal Han writings is the frequent use of polysyllabic words. Another prominent feature of the TPJ is its 'raw, unedited format' suggestive of transcription (44). This style offers us 'a unique glimpse into the way ideas were expressed in late antiquity and how they were promoted by and among men outside the established intellectual circles' (47).

One of the more doctrinally interesting sections, Section 41, contains both an outspoken attack on female infanticide and 'premodern China's only attempt to allocate to women the full measure of human responsibility' (69). As Hendrichske points out, the Celestial Master provides cosmic rather than moral reasons for these views. Since 'women correspond to earth', female infanticide generates great hostility in the earth and leads to natural disasters (73). The killing of girls is also denounced because it upsets the ideal ratio of two women for every one man. The TPJ explains that because the cipher for Yang is one, and the cipher for Yin is two, Yang (heaven) is singular and Yin (earth) is a pair. Therefore, 'two women must jointly serve one man' (72). According to the Celestial Master, female infanticide would decrease if women were allowed to work. Through their labours, women would be considered more valuable and able to look after their ageing parents. Hendrichske claims that this allocation of filial responsibility upon women places them morally on equal terms with men.

A number of themes that are perennial to 'religious Daoism' appear in the sections of the TPJ translation by Hendrichske. The most significant for later mystical speculation are the ideas that to follow the *dao* one should guard the 'one' (156), and return to the 'root' (225). Longevity is another recurrent theme (for examples, see pages 157, and 173–179). Of particular interest in this regard is Section 63, wherein the Celestial Master decrees that his disciplines should take responsibility for the long lives of their parents, thereby connecting the practice of filial piety to longevity. We also find in this section a hint of Daoist alchemy in the statement that 'Up in heaven there are as many drugs for becoming transcendent and avoiding death as there is grain in a large granary' (291). Alongside these familiar Daoist themes, the TPJ also proposes other interesting beliefs such as that one should not dig too many wells, or build too many canals, houses or burial mounds because these actions harm the earth and lead to natural disasters.

In summation, Barbara Hendrichske's study is a substantial and valuable contribution to scholarship on both the TPJ and the beginnings of religious Daoism. Its largest drawback, however, is its lack of user friendliness. Particularly irksome are the footnotes, which are written in exceptionally small font, and often exceed the page volume of the section translated. A more accessible format might have been to organise the study around the various topics such as female infanticide, longevity, filial piety, environmental concern, etc., rather than offering selected translations with

such heavy annotation. This minor fault aside, *The Scripture on Great Peace* will doubtlessly endure for future generations of scholars as the definitive English language study on the TPJ.

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Bryna Goodman & Wendy Larson, eds., *Gender in Motion: Divisions of Labor and Cultural Change in Late Imperial and Modern China*, Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto, Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 2005, 343 pp., ISBN 0-7425-3825-7 (pbk.).

Bryna Goodman and Wendy Larson's *Gender in Motion* is another landmark volume in a spate of edited studies that have appeared since the early 1990s on women and gender issues in China. The editors have assembled thirteen chapters on topics ranging from the Qing era (1644-1911) to the period immediately after it, and extending to socialist and post-Mao China, by a group of distinguished scholars. The volume is divided into three sections: 'Part I: Patterns of Mobility', with chapters by Matthew H. Sommer, Susan Mann, Luo Suwen and Ellen R. Judd; 'Part II: Spatial Transformations', featuring chapters by Joan Judge, Caroline Vance Yeh, Madeline Yue Dong, Wang Zheng and Wendy Larson; 'Part III: Boundaries' featuring studies by Kenneth Pomeranz, Bryna Goodman, Tze-lan Deborah Sang and Gail Hershatter. There is a detailed index and an introduction by the editors.

This volume confirms once again the dynamic nature of gender studies in the China field and its importance for a range of contiguous areas, especially the shifting nature of Chinese-style modernity, notions of public and private domains, kinship and hierarchy, work and employment. The authors collectively show a particular interest in how traditional Confucian gender norms were practised, theorised, and sometimes, violated. As with a number of earlier volumes on Chinese gender, this anthology treats the late imperial, the revolutionary, the socialist, and the post-Mao era in China as one continuous phase of historical time, with a focus on the transmission and adaptation of gender norms and practices over the centuries. This allows for a nuanced and in depth study of historical change in slow motion. As Gail Hershatter says of the women who told her their life stories in the mid 1990s, 'Many of the elements in these tales would be recognisable to the grandmothers of these storytellers' (325-6).

A number of the chapters relate path breaking findings in Chinese social history. Matthew H. Sommer is best known for his important book on homosexuality in Qing China. Here he draws on legal cases from the Beijing Historical Archives and reports of the Republican government to provide

another fascinating and original study, this time on the operations of polyandry (one wife, multiple husbands). He documents the prevalence of a custom known as *zhaofu yangfu* ‘getting a husband to support a husband’ and convincingly argues this was a practice of the poor in many regions of China, in spite of its clear violation of the principle of wifely chastity. The intention of the wife in allowing another man sexual access to her person was to provide for her otherwise destitute husband. In the cases examined by Sommer, the husband connives at the practice and is its chief beneficiary. In some cases, the male in question moves into the marital home in return for financial reward and the wife is shared by both men. This practice was not just the consequence of rural poverty but also of a marked dearth of marriageable women.

Kenneth Pomeranz’s article on ‘Women’s Work and the Economics of Respectability’ is an important contribution to the ongoing debate about the gender division of labour and its impact on economic development, proto-industrialization, and living standards in the late imperial period. In discussing the contrasting positions of Mark Elvin and Li Bozhong on the impact of women’s labour in the textile industry, Pomeranz tends towards the more optimistic projections of Li Bozhong, which argue for high earning power for women in the Jiangnan region and relative prosperity. However, there is no reason to believe that increased female earning power translated to a higher status for women or enhanced female autonomy.

In her study of the travel diaries of elite women, Susan Mann describes the challenge travel posed to notions of female virtue built around the idea of *jing* or ‘stillness’ and confinement within the home. While successful elite men were required to travel, their wives were required to stay at home. Exceptions were made for pilgrimage to holy sites, or, as in the example described at length here, when a wife accompanied her husband’s body to his home town for burial. The constrained tenor of these travel diaries contrast strongly with the records of women adventurers of Victorian England, who left their native land for foreign climes to seek freedom and independence.

Luo Suwen traces journeys of a different kind – the long and arduous progress of women actors onto the public stage in the early twentieth century. Women had traditionally been excluded from Beijing Opera, with all female roles played by male actors trained in female roles from a young age. As Luo points out, the entry of women to the operatic troupe and their public display on stage was understood as an all out assault on the traditional notion of women as belonging to *nei*, the inner domain. Yet only the most poor or deprived women would choose to enter this stigmatised profession. The opening of the treaty ports and western-style commercialisation were important factors in stimulating the violation of the old taboo against female performers. Luo Suwen additionally argues, ‘The strange symbiosis between

audiences' revulsion at seeing women on stage and their lust for the spectacle of female entertainers created a unique opportunity for change' (91).

In her interesting study of Chinese women students in Japan in the early twentieth century, Joan Judge relates the stories of how young elite Chinese women made the transition from the inner domain of the household to the less segregated and more international ambience of downtown Tokyo. One would expect this radical break with past educational practices to have led to revolutionary outcomes. Nonetheless, Chinese women in Japan continued to see their roles as 'nurturers and educators' in distinctly gendered terms. Judge concludes that 'The sphere of *nei* which the students continued to inhabit was less a well-defined physical location than it was a state of mind, an essential component of their gendered habitus' (137). Tze-lan Deborah Sang's study of the novels of Wang Dulu (1909-1977) of the 1930s and 1940s, also concentrates on the limitations of gender shifts during this period. Wang Dulu is the author of the 1941 novel which director Ang Lee used as the basis for the film, 'Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon'. In this novel, Wang portrays his female protagonist as 'an invincible fighter', a model long known in Chinese fiction. However, his novel lingers on the dangers inherent in this 'transgressive' behaviour and the relative impossibility of breaking with the Confucian patriarchy.

The Shanghai prostitutes examined by Catherine Vance Yeh were participants in significant social transformations. In twentieth century Shanghai, the courtesan as public celebrity overturned the conventions of the famous courtesans of Jiangnan during the late imperial period. No longer were the courtesans subservient to the scholar-official class of literati but instead chose as lovers 'new wealth' from amongst the commercial and entrepreneurial classes. Yeh further argues that this new type of courtesan was also responsible for the emergence of a 'private' sexual culture of the urban classes and in important ways foreshadowed the development of private romantic love as the model for the nuclear family.

Madeline Yue Dong's study of two well known twentieth century women, one a suffragette and the other a prostitute, both complements and contrasts with Yeh's study. Xiaofengxian, the consort of Cai E, a participant in the 1911 revolution who led an uprising against Yuan Shikai, fits the pattern of the loyal courtesan who is willing to sacrifice her life for her beloved. The key difference here between the Shanghai courtesans of the 1920s and Xiaofengxian is a generational one. Cai E died in 1916 and was a member of the last generation of the scholar-officials. While Xiaofengxian was adulated as a 'loyal courtesan', her compatriot Shen Peizhen, the suffragette, was pilloried for allegedly improper sexual conduct. Dong's study is highly suggestive of the role of the commercial press in transmitting traditional gender notions in the early twentieth century. Bryna Goodman's study of the new class of female secretaries in the 1920s also demonstrates

considerable slippage between the old and the new. In line with May Fourth ideas, 'vocational' women should be able to attain financial independence from men and hence self reliance, integrity and a modern sense of personhood (or *renge*). Some controversial suicides highlighted the ambiguities inherent in the new role of 'vocational' woman. The modern secretary with 'autonomous' personhood could easily turn into the tragic compromised figure of the secretary-concubine of the employer.

Wang Zheng's study takes the reader into the little investigated role of women in the organisation of residential areas in Maoist China. The resident committees, popularly termed the 'granny committees', were a significant element in communist control of urban populations in the early decades of socialist rule. These residential committees were generally the sphere of women who had not found salaried work in the socialist workplace or *danwei*. The movement of 'housewives' from the home to the street committee led many women from the inner or *nei* domain to the *wai* or outside world. However, the *nei-wai* dichotomy continued to demonstrate its tenacious hold on the Chinese imagination as the feminised street committees, originally designated as *wai*, became a newly constructed domain of the *nei*.

In her study of literature and film of the Maoist and post-Maoist era, Wendy Larson traces shifting notions of the value of work in China, from the fervour of the Cultural Revolutionary period to the disillusionment of the 1990s. She notes significant ruptures during this period. The Maoist emphasis on non-gender specific labour has been overturned in the post-Mao period. One of her most important findings is that notions of the self bound up in the slogan 'serve the people' through labour have shifted to a new location of the self in personal and social domains.

Two studies deal with rural women in the contemporary period. Ellen R. Judd builds on her earlier work concerning rural women in north China to demonstrate the agency of rural women in the 1980s and 1990s in building up affinal networks of benefit to themselves and their families. She finds significant shifts in the traditional paradigm of exogamous patrilocality in marriage (women marrying out of their village into the husband's household). Gail Hershatter's study of the life stories of elderly women in Shaanxi province allows for the recuperation of what the revolution actually meant to rural women. She argues that her cohort of women understood their life histories and defined their personal virtue in line with traditional self-characterizations as 'pitiful, capable and harmonious' (310).

Gender in Motion is a very satisfying volume with each study based on substantial research on primary sources or ethnographic material and presenting fresh and original findings. Each contribution is carefully contextualised within the relevant scholarly disciplines and debates relating to the topic. Containing many path breaking essays, this volume will be an indispensable source for scholars with a specialist interest in Chinese social

and cultural history, gender studies and anthropology. Teachers with a professional interest in China will readily draw material from this volume to attract senior undergraduate and postgraduate students.

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Lin Chun, *The Transformation of Chinese Socialism*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006, xi + 370 pp., ISBN: 0822337983 (pbk.).

In an age dominated by the worldview of capitalist globalism, it takes courage and stamina to continue arguing for the relevance of socialism as both a theory and social practice. Yet Lin Chun's book is exceptional not merely because it defies the post-Cold War trend of dismissing socialism/communism as a failed shortcut or long detour to capitalism. It is significant, more importantly, because of its penetrating and compelling exposition of why Chinese socialism has survived the post-communist world. Emerging from her in-depth analysis is also a clear and straightforward message: the continued marginalisation of socialism in China's political discourse, economic agendas and social interactions, rather than incomplete market transition as many argue, is answerable to most problems encountered in the reform. Lin Chun's diagnostic reasoning, backed by her 10-year diligent study, should help bring China's public debate on the reform's negative socioeconomic impacts closer to finding their root causes and final solutions.

There is no question that socialism is sponsored by the state. Yet Lin Chun stresses that the rise of Chinese socialism and its association with Chinese modernity in the twentieth century were also a logical development from and a collective response to the perceived national humiliation and social crises caused by China's defeat at the hands of Western powers since the Opium War. Socialism in China has thus never been an abstract ideal concept or a utopian aspiration. Nor has it ever allied itself with poverty, or pledged a stance against economic growth. On the contrary, Chinese socialism, as Lin Chun reasons throughout the volume, has always been a state project of concrete socioeconomic development. In China's quest for socialist modernity, overcoming backwardness has been a primary and urgent developmental imperative for both nation-building and ideological superiority. What has distinguished China from many other newcomer economies is that by choosing socialism as the means of national development it has launched a radical alternative to capitalist subordination, colonial modernity, laissez-faire enterprise and peripheral dependency.

Being a home-grown initiative, as Lin Chun persuasively points out, the Chinese model of socialist modernisation rests on a tripartite social-national-developmental foundation. The three components of this nation-building formula, however, do not always carry equal weight and are in competition with one another from time to time. To strike a balance among the socialist ambition for equality and social justice, nationalist aspiration for unity and autonomy, and economic determination to overcome backwardness has proved highly consequential but extremely challenging for the People's Republic. To a great extent, whether the equilibrium of the tripod is maintained has explained the upholding or breakdowns of political consensus, social cohesion and economic stability in China since the Mao era.

It is true that historical memories and contemporary international conflicts have often resulted in nationalist considerations being attached the greatest importance in China's state power. Yet Lin Chun maintains that it is changes tipping the socialism-development equilibrium that threaten the most serious systemic breakdowns. The Cultural Revolution is an often-cited example of an ideological frenzy upsetting the "revolution-production" balance and creating widespread social and economic destruction. Nevertheless, the largest-ever case in point, as Lin Chun forcefully argues, is the post-Mao reform in which the obsession with hyper growth in the state-led market integration into global capitalism has sidelined other normative objectives. The full-scale retreat from socialist obligations in terms of common prosperity, social welfare and social justice has been accompanied by similar decays of public morale as were seen in the Cultural Revolution.

When China's market-oriented reform was first proposed, development was generally regarded as a main source of regime legitimation. Yet the popular mandate enjoyed by post-Mao leaders for the reform was, as Lin Chun emphasises, conditioned on their promise of incorporating market dynamics, foreign capital and technologies, and Western managerial skills in the socialist moral boundary. The public attention was, in other words, not only on productivity and profitability, but also on their operation and distribution. That was further exemplified by the commonly-held sense of disillusionment when the reformers shied away from their initial socialist-self-adjustment agenda and radicalised themselves in the market transition in the 1990s. China's indigenous heritage of egalitarian justice in which the popular appeal of socialism was rooted in the first place, helps explain why the average Chinese feels alienated in the process of radical economic liberalisation and rampant privatisation. Lin Chun is absolutely right in arguing that the socialist past has not passed in China, and that the further reform policies and effects deviate from popular values and principles of Chinese socialism, the stronger they are popularly felt and missed. The prevalent nostalgia for the socialist past is, in other words, not a yearning to return to any pre-reform golden era, but a public cry of dissatisfaction with

rising inequalities, surging private concentration of capital and wealth, selling of public assets through insider deals, deepening internal colonisation, collusion between political and economic capital, “cheap labour” manufacturing cheap consumer goods for “market competitiveness”, shrinking public services, and increasing insecurity for jobless, old, sick and disabled.

There is nothing natural or inevitable about the cause of China’s reform. Lin Chun sharply points out that the market transition is a state-led project and its failures are therefore largely the fault of the state. Put differently, being the broker between national socialism/communism and international capitalism, the state has not been able to reshape the two mutually exclusive theories and practices into compatible visions and procedures. As a result, its single-minded Opening Up policy and market-as-salvation assumption have turned many political and economic elites, who are supposed to shield national and societal interests, into agents of international forces of globalisation and have enabled rent seekers to grow within its apparatus. Of course, the flip side of the coin is that since the PRC state remains the controller of the economy and the arbiter of social interactions, solutions to the problems faced by China in the reform also reside with the state. The question is whether it has the intention, the willpower and the wisdom to restore the tripartite socio-national-developmental equilibrium through reforming the reform.

Lin Chun’s confidence in the possible revitalisation of Chinese socialism is palpable throughout the book. Her perceptive research findings have demonstrated that while the state’s preoccupation with development has resulted in the rule of profit gradually colonising China’s political, social and cultural spheres, the socialist outlook continues to define the Chinese Government, and socialism is still the flagship in the nation’s modernisation journey. The persistent authority of Chinese socialism is perfectly expectable not only because the continuing relevance and legitimacy of the communist leadership rest on it, but also because the public’s attachment to socialist legacies implies that radical departures in policy rhetoric and action may cost the Chinese Communist Party as dearly in the reform as that in the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. The government’s ideological commitment and concerns about growing disparities of income fuelling social tensions and unrest have, in fact, already created reality. The official pledge of attaining “social harmony” and the national campaign to alleviate poverty are two related attempts of the post-Deng leadership to reemphasise a socialist state’s obligations and conscience.

Lin Chun has made it unequivocally clear that rethinking China’s reform does not mean to renounce development or interrupt modernisation. It is, rather, an effort to repair the weakened but still abiding social-national-developmental consensus. To accomplish this goal requires both a vision and

a blueprint. Yet if Mao succeeded in lightening the distant goals but failed to chart the way, his successors seem to have done just the opposite. By busy “feeling for stones in crossing the river”, they seem to have lost sight of the bank on the other side. Lin Chun’s study has thus posed the same fundamental question that has been plaguing the reform since day one: whether and how a socialism worthy of its name can be reconciled with a market in its real sense, or whether and how it is possible to have a market economy being modelled to satisfy needs as the end, via profits, as the means. Researchers who intend to find answers to this question should include this volume in his/her must-read list.

Reviewed by XIN CHEN
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Tatsu Kambara and Christopher Howe, *China and the Global Energy Crisis: Development and Prospects for China’s Oil and Natural Gas*, Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2007, 144 pp., ISBN: 1845429664 (hbk.).

China’s economic growth has caused the country to have a seemingly endless thirst for energy. The effects of this increased demand for energy have reverberated world-wide as prices for oil, natural gas, and other energy sources have spiked. As the Chinese economy continues to grow, more of its citizens will share in the wealth and demand more energy. For example, millions of new cars will be purchased by first-time vehicle owners in the next couple of years. Additionally, there are many villages in rural and western China currently without electricity which will be added to the grid in the near future.

To counter this increase in demand, the Chinese government has made a priority of building new power plants and dams for additional energy supply. However, these plants and dams come at a significant cost. One of the costs is the environmental pollution that will result from the increased energy production and consumption. Many of the new power plants that the Chinese Government will build will be coal burning, resulting in carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide, and sulphur dioxide emissions that will cause smog and acid rain, among other problems. The pollution will also create a spike in health problems, mostly in respiratory disease. Another major problem is the serious global and regional effects as China attempts to acquire additional energy sources to feed demand. These acquisitions are reshaping the world economy and geopolitical relations, particularly among China, India, the United States, and Japan.

Therefore, this book is extremely timely, providing a considerable amount of information on China's oil and natural gas industry. The first chapter of the book examines the history of the oil and natural gas industry in China. However, of particular interest and importance are the sections on economic reforms and the offshore oil industry. Tatsu Kambara and Christopher Howe build on this foundation in the next chapter where they examine the on-shore oil and gas industry. Both of these chapters provide a comprehensive description of the oil and gas fields, as well as Chinese infrastructure initiatives. The next four chapters build on the first two, analyzing China's capacity to refine and distribute natural gas and oil. Throughout the book, the authors make generous use of maps and charts to illustrate the location of the various oil and gas fields and the amount of reserves China has. The authors provide meaningful insight into the imbalances of the current Chinese system. The last chapter provides the key points of the book and projects the future development of the energy sector within China.

If there are any criticisms of the book they would be the lack of addressing and/or understanding of the geopolitical tensions that the demand for energy by China is creating. This lack of understanding is evident in the last part of the book where the authors claim that the global impact of Chinese energy demand is not damaging to the world economy; that the major impact will be felt by Japan and the energy abundant countries of South and Southeast Asia. Much of the dam building that China is conducting, especially the Three Gorges Dam, will have a major impact on the lower riparian states.

Despite the positive spin of the impact of the Chinese energy system on the global market, this book should be a part of the library of anyone interested in the Chinese energy system.

*Reviewed by JOHN M. POLIMENI
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Melvyn C. Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet: Volume 2. The Calm before the Storm, 1951-1955*, Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 2007, 639 pp., ISBN: 978-0-520-24941-7 (pbk.).

The first volume of Case Western University Professor Melvyn Goldstein's *History of Modern Tibet* appeared in 1989. While heavily criticised for its pro-Chinese bias by many associated with the Tibetan Government-in-exile in Dharamsala (India), that work is now recognised as essential reading for an understanding of modern Tibetan history. Among other findings it demonstrated the failure of their lay and monastic leaders to properly situate

Tibet in the modern world during the period 1913-1950, when Tibet was effectively independent. This equally essential second volume covering the period from 1950-55 explores some of the consequences of that failure. It is also a reminder that 1989 was the year of Tiananmen square and the award of the Nobel peace prize to His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama. Tibet was then a popular cause, with high-profile celebrities lining up to support the exile movement. Eighteen years on, this new work of Goldstein's draws attention to the contemporary low ebb in the prospects for any form of Tibetan self-determination. The awarding of the Olympics to Beijing seems to signal the world's intention of allowing human rights issues to be sidelined in dealings with the new superpower, and the prospects for the Tibetan cause (along with that of other minority groups in the People's Republic), thus seem much bleaker.

Those who regard Goldstein as an apologist for Chinese imperialism are unlikely to receive this new volume, dealing with the first five years of the Chinese takeover of Tibet, any more favourably than the earlier work. Indeed the author seems deliberately provocative when he follows the communist model in his choice of terminology. We read, for example, of the Chinese army 'moving to *liberate* Qinghai and Gansu provinces' (25; c.f.: 55; my emphasis) and a group opposed to the Chinese are termed the 'Namseling *clique*'. There seems, furthermore, an assumption here that Tibetans should have worked towards an accommodation with the invading Chinese forces, allowing for example, the 'creation of a joint (food) procurement office' to solve shortages that adversely affected the Chinese invasion force and consequently food availability and prices in Lhasa. That many Tibetans resisted Chinese pressure in such areas is seen by their supporters as a heroic effort in the face of overwhelming force, but there is little apparent sympathy here for that perspective.

Despite the author's approach, no serious scholar of the region and its history can ignore this work. It contains a wealth of previously unknown source material and is a major contribution to our understanding of the period. It sheds considerable light on the complex processes of negotiation and power which followed the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1950 and on the role of external powers such as the United States, focussing particularly on the various factions within both Chinese and Tibetan power structures. Indeed, perhaps its greatest strength is its avoidance of the dualist model of Sino-Tibetan relations, which envisages a monstrous and monolithic China conquering a brave and heroic Tibet. In actuality, there were tensions among the two arms of the invading Chinese forces, the Northwest and Southwest Bureaus, and subsequently between those who favoured the immediate implementation of Chinese communist policies and those, including Chairman Mao, who promoted a gradualist strategy of incorporation. In the absence of an unquestioned leader such as Mao, the Tibetans were even more,

indeed hopelessly, divided. With the Dalai and Panchen Lamas still in their teens, there was an absence of strong central leadership, and many, probably most, of the aristocracy and monastic leaders were soon on the Chinese payroll. Regional and sectarian factionalism further weakened the Tibetans' unity, and democratic structures or means of expression were almost entirely absent from their society. (Indeed one of the key problems in analysing Tibetan history is that the feelings of the majority of the peoples remain unknown to us.)

Goldstein's work is important in showing that disunity and self-interest were a primary cause of Tibetan weakness. But its conclusions will not necessarily be accepted. This reader, for example, is not convinced that Chairman Mao's professed gradualism was a humane or culturally sensitive approach to taking over Tibet. Rather, it appears to be a case of *Realpolitik*. Mao was well aware of the logistical difficulties of conquering Tibet, the takeover of which coincided with China's involvement in the Korean war. Thus his gradualist policy surely derived largely from his desire to avoid war on two fronts during the formative years of the republic, with the cynical Chairman seeking to buy time until roads were built onto the Tibetan plateau to allow his troops and necessary supplies rapid access to Lhasa.

Amidst the wealth of detailed discussion on the complex developments as the communists sought to implement their policies in Tibet there are one or two curious omissions. The author's treatment of American involvement in the Tibetan cause is fragmentary, there is no mention, for example, of Douglas Mackiernan and Frank Bessac (the former a CIA agent, the latter probably so), who escaped the communist takeover of Sinkiang and entered Tibet in 1950. Mackiernan was shot dead by Tibetan border guards, but Bessac survived and his reports on the situation there seem at least worthy of note. Similarly Goldstein seems unaware that the apparently bizarre sponsorship of a Tibetan appeal to the United Nations in 1950 by El Salvador was an individual initiative by Hugh Richardson, the last British representative in Lhasa. Indeed the focus on Sino-Tibetan sources does occasionally appear to lead to an understatement of the involvement of foreign powers. The reports of India's representatives in Tibet were routinely forwarded to the British and Americans, and as the notes here reveal, are retained in the archives of both countries. This implies a degree of intelligence cooperation between the nations that has been emphasised by S. Mahmud Ali, whose work (*Cold War in the High Himalayas: The USA, China and South Asia in the 1950s*, Richmond: Curzon Press, 1999), is absent from the bibliography.

That such caveats arise, however, is partly an indication of the stimulating nature of this work. This is a prodigious piece of scholarship drawing on an extensive range of primary sources and interviews with eye-witnesses to the period, and it demands to be engaged with by any scholar of

the period. In that it quotes most relevant documents in full (including translations from Chinese and Tibetan), it will serve as a valuable resource for future scholarship. As an in-depth study of Sino-Tibetan relations in this period it is currently unmatched, though its interpretation of source material will certainly not be unchallenged. We now await the promised third volume in the series covering the period 1956-60, for which we will not, hopefully, have to wait another eighteen years!

Reviewed by ALEX MCKAY

Nanyan Guo, ed., *Self-Awareness on Peripheries: The Otago and Tsugaru Experiences*, Hirosaki, Aomori: Hirosaki University Press, 2007, 208 pp., ISBN 978-4-902774-17-7 (pbk.).

A few would know much about Otago and Tsugaru. The former is the region of New Zealand, on its southern periphery, and the latter is in northern Japan. Are such peripheries just areas of marginal importance to us? What does it mean that his or her region is regarded as a periphery, especially for one who is native to or who has been deeply involved in the region? The volume under review provides us with a way to answer those questions, dealing with the experience of two peripheries: Otago and Tsugaru.

The connecting argument shared by twelve researchers with diverse academic backgrounds is provided in Nanyan Guo's fascinating 'Introduction – Self-Awareness on a Periphery'. A region's identity as a periphery has something to do with the way the things and people living there are different from that of those in the central part of a country. As Guo notes, therefore, 'the culture of a region is something that has been founded upon self-awareness of its identity' (1). This argument does seem to coincide with the classic statement by Osamu Dazai (1909-1948), one of the most well-known Japanese novelists, himself native to Tsugaru. Though living in and around Tokyo for most of his life after graduating from high school, Dazai once had a chance to return to Tsugaru in 1944, a journey chronicled as *Tsugaru* (Tokyo: Koyama Shobo, 1944). Recollecting the journey two years later, in *Jugo Nenkan* (Fifteen Years) (*Bunka Tembou* 1946 Spring Issue), Dazai wrote:

All I could find in this journey was a sort of *awkwardness* of Tsugaru. Tsugaru seemed to have few means of expressing [Tokyo-oriented] culture. This was indeed what I myself felt to be true. Yet, at the same time, I felt that there was something salutary about that. Perhaps I believed that a completely new form of culture could emerge in such a place. Perhaps a new way of expressing affection could be born and

raised. Upon sensing something akin to self-confidence in my identity as a native son of Tsugaru, I returned to Tokyo. Thus, I was relieved to discover that I too, being someone from Tsugaru, was not in the least a man of [Tokyo-oriented] culture.

(*The Complete Works of Osamu Dazai Vol. 8*, Tokyo: Chikuma Shobou, 1982, 217.)

The eleven chapters following Guo's insightful introduction, in this sense, may well be as a whole an academic journey of exploration of something like 'a completely new form of culture' or 'a new way of expressing affection' in such peripheries as Otago and Tsugaru.

In 'Awareness toward Peripheries and Ainu History,'²³ Hidemichi Kawanishi points out that the regionalism espoused by the likes of Kojiro Fukushi (1889-1946)²⁴ and Kunio Yanagida (1875-1962),²⁵ who were recognized as those with an understanding of regional issues, had converged with a rather homogenous image of Japan and its people. It is fair to say that little knowledge of local history and a lack of awareness towards cultural identity on peripheries help perpetuate such a naïve image.

As the contributors of this volume reveal, however, neither Otago nor Tsugaru has existed in such a naïve way. In 'Awareness toward Peripheries of Writers Native to Tsugaru', Masataka Yamaguchi shows how the varieties of Tsugaru dialect captured in texts have been used as ways of regional identity, in particular, against Tokyo-oriented culture where the so-called standard Japanese prevails. Also, in 'Self-deprecating Expressions Used by Writers Native to Tsugaru', Nanyan Guo demonstrates that self-deprecating expressions provide a firm basis of those writers' self-relativization, self-confidence, and flexibility. Such expressions appear in the works by Zenzo Kasai, Yojiro Ishizaka, Osamu Dazai, and Hideo Osabe, all well-known writers native to Tsugaru. In 'Tsugaru in the Literature of Yao Kitabatake', Hannah Joy Sawada refers to a feeling of *otherness*:

'Kitabatake, born in Tabako-machi, Aomori-sh', referred to Kamakura as a 'foreign land' despite having lived there for over half her life. She did not ever lose her awareness of herself as an outsider (43).²⁶

²³ Ainu is one of the indigenous peoples in Japan, mostly living in Hokkaido Prefecture, the most northern part of the country.

²⁴ Fukushi is a poet, as well as an historian, and folklorist.

²⁵ Yanagida is one of the most well-known folklorists in Japan.

²⁶ Aomori is a city in Aomori Prefecture. The Prefecture is, in a geographical meaning, the same as Tsugaru. Kamakura is a historic city in Kanagawa Prefecture (adjacent to Tokyo), where the first Shogunate or the military government started with Minamoto Yoritomo as a military and political dictator of the entire nation in 1192.

Without retaining such *otherness* ‘obstinately’ (43), Kitabatake would not have produced such a masterpiece as *Tsugaruno no Yuki* (Snow on Tsugaru Plain).

The following three chapters, dealing with the Otago experience, provide us with more complex patterns of one’s vision of marginality. In ‘Marginality of the South Island and the Literature of Janet Frame’, Raquel Hill notes Frame’s floating identity, which is often overlooked in discussions of this world-famous novelist. In ‘James K. Baxter and Dunedin’, Masami Nakao examines several poems written by Baxter, using them to illustrate one way in which a region and its literature correspond to one another. In ‘Dunedin as the Place Where It All Began’, Shinichi Sawada shows us an alternative way of understanding the world. In order to secure her own way to look at the things, Ruth Dallas, a well-known poet from the South Island, has tried to ‘relativize’ even Dunedin where she lived her whole life.

As a consequence of these perspectives, can we observe something like ‘a completely new form of culture’ or ‘a new way of expressing affection’ (*Complete Works of Osamu Dazai*, 217) in Otago and Tsugaru? The final four chapters attempt to answer that question. Kanako Kitahara’s ‘On the Legend of the Apple’ probes the background of a very popular legend in Tsugaru. This is that the apple industry of Tsugaru began when a missionary from the United States brought three seedlings to the region in 1875. In terms of its credibility, to our surprise, the legend is supported by little evidence, yet Kitahara’s concerns are towards the reason why it was born, not necessarily on its veracity. She suggests that the birth of the legend had something to do with the high degree of freedom granted to foreigners (teachers and missionaries) by Touou Gijuku, a private school founded in the region in 1872, an open-mindedness which when compared to other areas in Japan is a unique aspect of Tsugaru culture.

In ‘Overseas Chinese and Chinese Descendants in Otago’, Edward W. Tennant insists, in a restrained manner, that the Chinese immigrants that arrived in the 1920s differed from those who had come before. Tennant explains that those who arrived in the 1920s wanted to become permanent residents and naturalized citizens of New Zealand and that this attitude allowed the modern overseas Chinese community to emerge in the 1950s.

Henry Johnson’s ‘The Music of Marginal Areas’ describes Dunedin as the focal point of the New Zealand music scene. In Dunedin, the so-called Dunedin sound, Māori traditional music, and Pākehā music (Scottish bagpipe music) all have flourished. Johnson also mentions that, in recent Japan, Tsugaru-style *shamisen* music with a distinctive ‘wild rhythm’ has emerged as ‘a new tradition’ primarily among young artists.

Nanyan Guo, Paul Star, and James Beattie’s ‘The Protection of Old-Growth Forests’ shows us that a region’s cultural identity has often been

formulated through efforts to protect resources (in Otago, its old-growth forests and in Tsugaru, its cypress forests). One of the most important implications provided by this chapter is that the interests of human-beings and ecosystems are by no means incompatible. We should also know that the so-called programme of Place-Based Management, which stresses the importance of a region or area's individual identity and the need for its management to reflect these values, is not new, and has in fact often been an aspect of the region's identity and culture.

Self-Awareness on Peripheries-The Otago and Tsugaru Experiences is a valuable addition to the large body of works on area studies. This is an excellent book that offers fresh insights into the relationship among self-awareness on peripheries, individual identity, and a regional culture. Such insights will be extremely useful not only for students majoring in humanities but also for anyone who has eagerly sought out his or her identity. A periphery is never an area of marginal importance to us but the rich soil for our discovering or rediscovering 'a completely new form of culture' or 'a new way of expressing affection' (*Complete Works of Osamu Dazai*, 217).

Reviewed by KEIICHI OIKAWA
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&

HIROKI OIKAWA
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Sabine Frühstück, *Uneasy Warriors: Gender, Memory, and Popular Culture in the Japanese Army*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007, 275 pp., ISBN 978-0-520-24795-6 (pbk.).

This work by Sabine Frühstück provides a rare and very informative insight into Japan's Self-Defence Forces (SDF). In fact, in the northern summer of 2001 she was the first scholar, Japanese or foreign, to be allowed to participate – albeit just for a week – in basic SDF training. It is also very heavily researched: the list of references occupies an astounding 54 pages relative to a main text of just 189 pages. I cannot recall any other work I have seen with such proportionality.

Frühstück writes largely from an anthropological standpoint, as evidenced for example in her actual participation in her object of study, but also brings in research from sociology, history, and to an extent politics and military studies. There is a particular focus on gender, especially female SDF members, but she also addresses issues such as how the SDF tries to capture

the interest of young people through popular cultural appeal (including manga and ‘cute’ catchy posters), how it attempts to deal with the paradox of an armed force that is constitutionally constrained from military action (though there appears to be increasing support in Japan for a revision of Article Nine of the Constitution so that Japan can be ‘normalised’), and how it should best mould its image in an age in which there is an increasing aversion to the use of violence.

One particularly difficult task for the SDF is that of trying to disassociate itself from the negative aspects of its *de facto* predecessor, the Imperial Army, its brutality and of course defeat, while retaining the positives, such as the sense of service to the nation. Inevitably, playing down brutality and defeat causes a certain awkwardness for the SDF spin doctors, who of course put their own twist on history – creating ‘ersatz histories’, to use Frühstück’s term. Frühstück examines this spin doctoring in some detail, indicating for example how the SDF publicists at base museums embed defeat in a long chronological list of military engagements by Japan and other nations, so that the defeat in World War Two appears as simply one loss among a number of victories and achievements. (This is my metaphor and not Frühstück’s, but it seemed to me not unlike a soccer team’s website or similar – even Manchester United can’t win all the time.) Another tactic for the base museums is to focus strongly on the immediate locality, such as emphasising which locals went off to war and what contribution the area made, rather than the broader – and in that sense less immediately appealing and potentially more problematic – history of the Imperial Army.

Frühstück discusses at length the difficulties each gender faces, including in terms of identity construction. For example, SDF males are often liable to feel subordinate to American male soldiers (the relationship with America’s military and its presence in Japan being a source of ambivalence), and in terms of traditional concepts of maleness in Japan to feel a sort of emasculation relative to the samurai of old. Far from fighting to the death for their emperor and nation, as was expected up until 1945, it is now by total contrast a priority, when the SDF goes on support and relief missions in the international arena (including Iraq), to avoid any death at all. However, the sense of serving the nation (not so much the emperor) is still retained, and indeed is broadened to a sense of serving the international as well as the Japanese community. And the sense of service is accompanied by a sense of commitment, which can be viewed to an extent as a legacy of the samurai, though not exclusively so. In postwar years it has been common for the samurai image, suitably moulded, to be applied to the ‘corporate warriors’ of Japan, but it would seem that not a few male SDF members dismiss these ‘salarymen’ as wimps. Interestingly, some felt that they could be more individualistic in the SDF – which one might imagine to be very regimented – than a salaryman could within his company. There is, of course,

the added factor of potential excitement for those joining the SDF, which could hardly be said of joining a company, and this is certainly not overlooked in recruitment strategies, which also include attractants such as worthwhile service to the community and opportunity to learn a skill.

Many of these attractants and motivations are also applicable to females. In fact, the idea of avoiding company employment is almost certainly more appealing than for males, given the lowly status that has so persistently been assigned to women in companies. Japan has recently passed several laws to promote gender equality, but attitudinally it may still have some way to go, although younger people seem to have an increasingly egalitarian attitude. Sexual harassment of women does unfortunately linger (and of course not just in Japan), and can and does happen to some females in the SDF. And it is undeniable that matters military have overwhelmingly, regardless of nation and historical period, been traditionally seen as a male domain – with certain non-combatant exceptions such as nursing and administrative support. There have been women warriors in history, though relatively few in number, including in Japan, but how many can you name? In Japan's case the twelfth century Tomoe Gozen (of whom Frühstück makes no mention) is probably the best known, but she and those like her, even when fighting alongside male samurai, were never formally referred to as 'samurai' or given any rank. America is among the leaders in the recruitment of women, who now comprise 15.5 percent of American armed forces, whereas the figure for Japan is just 4.2 percent (among NATO nations Latvia is top with 20 percent, Britain has 9 percent, and Poland is bottom with 0.5 percent).

These military SDF women, who in a sense can be seen as pioneers, have a particular challenge in gender identity construction in that they have to go against strong traditional norms of what a woman is expected to be – a challenge even greater than that for 'new age' men who have to contend with traditional 'macho warrior' ideals. They have to enter a traditionally masculine realm but without becoming, if I may borrow Frühstück's term 'ersatz' to use in this context, an 'ersatz male', and instead retain gender integrity as a female. On this matter I have to say that I was surprised and disappointed by what seemed to me (and my wife, who also read the book) to be occasional indications of a rather old-fashioned, anti-male, 'women can do anything' type of feminism on Frühstück's part, rather than a more progressive and surely more realistic femaleism. (For those unfamiliar with the term, femaleism, concordant with today's prevailing paradigm of recognition of diversity in so many matters, accepts that men and women are indeed different, with different strengths and weaknesses, which balance out and give grounds for equality overall.) For example, she interviewed a senior officer at a base where almost all applicants were male, and she had to press him to discuss female applicants (39). And when he did, he made the

comment that the great majority of women at that base resigned when they had children. Frühstück then immediately refers to this as an ‘attitude of benign patronization’ that is off-putting to women, and typical of many men of his generation. Neither my wife nor I felt this accusation to be justified on the evidence provided, and as a male I found Frühstück’s apparent attitude quite irritating and indeed offensive. Perhaps there was some background that we missed. Similarly, in discussion of women’s physical performance capabilities relative to men’s, Frühstück repeatedly uses qualifiers such as ‘supposed’ or ‘assumed’ limitations as though men and women have in fact the same physical capabilities. This seems to ignore scientific findings, Olympic records, and so on. And if their capabilities are the same, why are there so few sports (other than mixed doubles in tennis and similar) in which men and women are not segregated and compete against each other? Both genders being able to achieve the same required minimum of physical performance in the SDF does not mean that physical potential is the same, and surely physical strength is one area in which men have the advantage, to balance out our many shortcomings in other areas (such as patience). Anyway, I will not pursue this further, other than to say that, if gender comparison in the physical domain is to feature in this book, then a little more in-depth discussion of it would have been helpful.

I was also surprised to find no focussed discussion of the SDF’s role and image in the specific context of post 9/11 terrorism. There is only one mention of ‘terrorism’ in the book, and that is in a quote from the anxious mother of a recruit. There is some discussion of the SDF in Iraq, which perhaps indirectly relates (or so some would say), but I would have thought that post 9/11 changes to the rules of engagement, increasing anxiety worldwide, increasing need for military alertness, the use of women and children in terrorist activity, the targeting of civilians, etc, etc, would have been significant enough to merit dedicated discussion about the implications for the perception and actuality of the SDF.

Other reservations I have include a lack of focussed discussion of female warriors in Japanese history; a puzzlingly misleading subtitle (‘Army’ implies the Imperial Army, whereas ‘Armed Forces’ would in my view have been more accurate); and – contrary to the shortness of the main text – a style that seemed to me at times rather stodgy, verbose, and repetitive. I have to admit that my attention drifted on more than one occasion, but perhaps that’s due to my ageing brain. (Yes, I’m in my late fifties and I’m a femaleist.)

Overall, despite the reservations mentioned above, this is a very useful book on an important but relatively little researched topic, and will be of benefit to all who are interested in Japan.

*Reviewed by KEN HENSHALL
University of Canterbury*

Leonard Y. Andaya, *Leaves of the Same Tree Trade and Ethnicity in the Straits of Melaka*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008, x + 320 pp., ISBN 978-0-8248-3189-9 (pbk.).

At the opening of this fascinating book, Leonard Andaya quotes the anthropologists Jean and John Comaroff, who recognise 'the ambiguous nature of ethnicity'. Is it 'an object of analysis, something to be explained?', they ask. 'Or is it an explanatory device capable of illuminating significant aspects of human existence?' Professor Andaya has sought to deploy the 'slippery concept' 'as a way of understanding Southeast Asian history' (1).

Reading that, I called to mind my own attempts to deal with another slippery concept, imperialism. Was it something to be described and analysed? Or was it of use as an explanatory device? If it were to be the latter, I concluded, it had to be defined very clearly, and confined to a particular period. Otherwise, readily bandied about, it was too broad to explain anything.

I felt something of the same misgiving with Professor Andaya's attempt to handle ethnicity. It is, of course, a modern coinage, like imperialism, but much more recent than that term, in fact. Historians often gain insights into the past by attempting to apply current terms and concepts, but it has to be done with many a caution, many a backward glance. Professor Andaya seems to come close to denying that. 'While some have argued that ethnicity is a modern phenomenon', he writes, 'there is every reason to believe that group identity based on shared beliefs, practices, and real and fictive ancestors would have been as significant in the past' (5). 'Although [in the Southeast Asian past] people, and hence documents, may not have used such terms as "ethnicity" or "nationalism", there is no reason to believe that such notions of group identities were absent', he continues. Inventing tradition, imagining communities, he proposes, were practices not only of modern but of pre-colonial Southeast Asia. But to accept that surely requires us to shred the notions of Eric Hobsbawm and Benedict Anderson of so much of the historical context in which they are embedded that they lose some of their validity.

It certainly requires a definition, as Professor Andaya admits. 'Ethnicity' he uses in terms of 'group identity'. A second key term, he says, is 'ethnic group': in defining a group in the Straits of Melaka, 'greatest emphasis was on a strong social network established through real and fictive kinship ties, reinforced by shared myths and symbols associated and often created by their leaders'. 'Ethnic category' is a third term, applied to 'a loose and generalized collectivity [sic] to which groups attach themselves or are

assigned by outsiders because of certain shared characteristics' (6). In the course of the book, he also writes of 'ethnicization', though he does not appear to define that till the closing pages. It is, he says, 'a conscious political decision by the group to adopt a particular ethnic identity for some perceived advantage' (236).

The geographical focus of the book is on the Straits, a part of Southeast Asia Professor Andaya greatly illuminated in the past, with his path breaking study, *The Kingdom of Johor*. The Straits, of course, became early in the Common Era a great international commercial route, the source of economic change, the source, too, of religious, political and social innovation, 'a channel of goods, ideas, and news from the outside world' (9). He assigns it prime importance in the process of ethnicisation. Indeed he suggests that one source of it, the main source, perhaps, is competition in the market. 'As with the other ethnic communities in the Straits of Melaka', he writes, 'it was international trade that proved the decisive element in the formation of Menangkabau ethnicity' (83). The emphasis on the 'market' is again, perhaps, a piece of contemporaneity that prompts us to review our evidence of the past. But may it not also be misleading?

In dealing with a period of history where, despite the labours of archaeologists, anthropologists, linguists and literary scholars as well as historians, much remains tantalisingly obscure and open to conjecture, I was not entirely persuaded by Professor Andaya's attributions of 'agency', tempting though it must have been to make them. Opening his chapter on the Menangkabau, for example, he suggests that in time 'some areas decided to emphasize a separate ethnic identity from the Melayu in order to maximize economic and political advantage' (82). Utilising a concept of the 1980s, Professor Andaya suggests that, in an increasingly competitive commercial world, 'any comparative advantage would have been sought' (95). 'Through a convergence of local beliefs in the supernatural powers of the Pagaruyung ruler' and the Dutch East India Company's decision to support his claims, 'a new Menangkabau ethnicity was created that proved effective in rallying the people to act as one for economic and political advantage' (15).

It might rather be argued that over time peoples became more distinctive as a result of a range of factors, political and economic, religious and social, of both assumptions and ascriptions. Picturing them, or their 'area', as asserting an 'ethnic' identity seems to require knowledge of 'agency' which even experts like Professor Andaya do not really have, and emphasising their response to what we call 'market forces' risks anachronism.

Unable fully to accept the theory informing his book, I was nevertheless much impressed by the reinterpretations his research and thinking have enabled him to offer. His re-examination of Sri Wijaya and the Melayu world, for example, sets the latest work in the context provided by earlier archaeologists and historians. The result is not to dislodge the

mandala concept that was central to Oliver Wolters' interpretation, but to deepen its meaning. The structure of Sri Wijaya, he makes clear, was not merely a matter of leaders and followers, nor of the mana of the ruler, but also of a network of kin relationships both natural and constructed by marriage and milk relationships.

Professor Andaya's account of the emergence of Aceh and the Acehnese is also illuminating. Becoming a leader in the 'sea of Malayu' following the Portuguese capture of Melaka in 1511, it traded with and borrowed from India, and its promotion helped to make Islam 'an indispensable part of Malayu identity' (124). Sultan Iskandar Muda's commissioning of the *Hikayat Aceh* in 1613 (or 1615) was 'a significant affirmation of the new identity evolving in Aceh', Professor Andaya suggests (127). That identity was further defined by the revival of Johore in the late seventeenth century. But for that, he argues, the Malay world would have mirrored Aceh more closely. Aceh itself began to orient its affairs more towards the interior and develop a distinctive identity on that basis.

Professor Andaya is, of course, fully aware of the fluidity of ethnicity, perhaps even more marked in Southeast Asia than elsewhere. His chapter on the Batak takes account of his theory: as different ethnic groups became increasingly competitive in international trade especially between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, 'every avenue was explored to gain advantage over others, including ethnicization'; and the Batak stressed 'cultural discontinuities with their neighbours, especially the Malayu' (170). Groups also moved 'in and out of ethnicities' (172), he adds: 'Malayu Batak' on the coasts forged links between the coastal Malayu kingdoms and the interior Batak communities. Does that fluidity, however, support his thesis or argue against it? He returns to the question when discussing the relationships of the Malayu and the 'Orang Asli', and then refers to individuals rather than groups. '[T]he economic complementarity of the groups made the ethnic boundaries clear, while the porosity of these boundaries provided individuals with unimpeded access to well-defined options' (207). I am not sure that this answers my question.

The extraordinary history of the Orang Laut is handled with great penetration and extraordinary sensitivity. Essential adjuncts of Malay rulers and would-be rulers, pirates to the rulers and traders of early Singapore, they preserve their ethnicity when it is advantageous. Professor Andaya argues – again perhaps not quite consistently with his concept of 'market advantage' – that they still preserve it when their historical position has been lost: 'they continue to reinforce difference as a strategy for survival of their chosen way of life' (210).

In his conclusion he renews his reference to the fluidity of ethnicity, and usefully reminds historians of the crudity of their attempts to deploy ethnicity in interpreting the Southeast Asian past, the struggles, for example,

of the Mons against the Tai and the Burmese, the Khmer against the Tai and the Vietnamese. His own deployment of ethnicity is far more subtle. Whether the misgivings I feel about it are justified or not, it has the signal advantage of stressing the need for a more nuanced and considered approach. His book is thus essential reading not only for those interested in 'early modern' Southeast Asian history, but also for those concerned with Southeast Asian history more generally.

This is a learned book, full of interest, full of stimulus. Professor Andaya speaks of the twilight of his academic career. But I hope that there is yet more illumination to come.

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Robert B. Marks, *The Origins of the Modern World: A Global and Ecological Narrative from the Fifteenth to the Twenty-first Century*, 2nd edition, Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2007, xiv + 221 pp., ISBN: 978-0-7425-5419-1 (pbk.).

This is a splendid book that, in a little over 200 pages, brings together the very latest scholarship to provide a highly readable and erudite account of world history over the last half a millennium. A particular strength of this narrative is its concern to debunk the Eurocentrism inherent in many surveys purporting to offer a 'global history' but which in reality only end up with charting 'the rise of the west'. Instead, Marks carefully ensures that the reader is left in no doubt that even the events of the nineteenth century which saw western European powers gain control over vast swathes of the world can only be understood within a global context, that is, not simply in relation to developments within Europe.

Marks argues that four major periods of globalisation characterise the 'modern' world. For Marks, the Spanish establishment of a colony in Manila in 1571 ushered in this first period. This was because Manila connected up South America and the Pacific with Asia. This explains the Spanish viceroy of Peru's peevishness in 1594, that 'Chinese merchandise is so cheap and Spanish goods so dear that I believe it [is] impossible to choke off the trade to such an extent that no Chinese wares will be consumed in this realm' (quoted from 81). There had certainly been earlier periods of integration. The Mongol invasions of the thirteenth centuries had, for instance, taken the plague from China to Europe. The Mongol invasions also made it possible, argues Marks, to speak of a 'dar al-Islam' ('the abode of Islam') as a cultural and linguistic realm that extended from southern Europe and northern Africa

across to Indonesia. And one must not forget the expansion of China, marked most-famously by the world voyaging of Zheng He from the early 1400s; nor those vast trading networks snaking across the Indian Ocean world. Still, in Marks' opinion, that ushered in by the establishment of Manila marked a point from which much of the world became connected and so is globally significant.

Driving this, Marks shows, was China's voracious demand for silver, a demand that set in motion global flows of commodities and raw materials. The second major period of globalisation was jump started by a number of conjunctures taking place in Asia and elsewhere. These included the discovery of large-scale coal deposits, which proved so crucial to industrialisation in Europe; Chinese demand for silver and its decision centuries earlier to focus on internal trade rather than mercantile expansion; the declining power of the Chinese and Mughal states; the taking of colonies that provided ready markets for European manufacturing and sources of raw materials, and so on. The rise of Europe represented something unprecedented. One must remember that in the period 1400-1800 CE, China and India dominated production of manufactured goods and the accumulation of wealth. By comparison, Western Europe was a bit-player. Taking Kenneth Pomeranz's argument (*The Great Transformation*), that industrialisation can be better understood as a process releasing vast areas of land otherwise required for agriculture, Marks demonstrates that this process allowed the British (and later others) to expand beyond the ecological limits of their environment. The so-called 'old biological regime', a system which relied on inputs of solar energy, was thus able to be bypassed through harnessing steam power released through the burning of coal. Later developments in technology and weakened Asian powers led to the period now referred to as 'New Imperialism', as European states scrambled for territories throughout Asia and Africa.

According to Marks, by the time the third wave of globalisation emerged, following the Second World War as relations between the United States and the Soviet Union froze into the Cold War, the pattern of today's world had been set. Borrowing Mike Davis' work (*El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World*), Marks shows how entrenched the unequal relationships established through colonialism became, relationships whereby former colonies became suppliers of raw materials but importers of manufactured goods. If anything, he shows global wealth disparities have become more extreme: the poor have become poorer, the rich, richer. Characterising this third period as one of greater globalisation in a polarised world amid state-making (through decolonisation), Marks makes the important point that both the Soviet (state-planned) and United States (free market) models of development, in addition to third-world 'developmentalism', all strove for economic growth. Another key post-war

departure was the growth of consumerism. Previously manufactured goods had been made for other producers rather than for consumers. This began to change in the United States in the late 1940s, spreading to Britain (1950s) and the rest of Europe and Japan (1960s), then the Soviet satellites (1970s), and elsewhere. For Marks, the fourth great period of globalisation dates from the early 1990s. This decade was marked by the expansion of capitalism, the end of the Soviet Union, and the re-emergence of the industrial might of China and (to a lesser extent) India.

Over the last century or so, economic growth and industrialisation – what one may term the ending of the biological old world across much of the globe – has led to massive changes in lifestyle, patterns of consumption and opportunities. It has also led, as Marks and many other commentators warn us, to unprecedented levels of human impact on the environment. Humans remake entire ecosystems, obliterate species, pump billions of litres of sewage into the ocean, cut down swathes of rainforests to the extent of altering local climates, and initiate other destructive processes. These are enormous costs, Marks argues, that economic models have too frequently ignored but which humans must address soon. As Vaclav Smil has elsewhere written, such are the enormous rates of pollution in China that continued industrial growth, unless tackled, threatens to choke economic development (*China's Past, China's Future: Energy, Food, Environment*).

As a world history that engages with ecological issues this book is invaluable, particularly in this day and age as we are finally facing up to the end of the carbon age. It is also a welcome addition to a steadily growing field. This field emerged in the challenge-and-response model of Arnold Toynbee's now-dated *Mankind and Mother Earth* of the post-war years, received a valuable revisiting with Clive Ponting's ground-breaking, but somewhat apocalyptic, *A Green History of the World* (1986). And more recently, it extends to Jared Diamond's problematic and overly deterministic *Guns, Germ, and Steel* and Joachim Radkau's excellent (but sadly only still available in German), *Natur und Macht: Eine Weltgeschichte der Umwelt*.

I thus thoroughly recommend this book, a second edition of an already justly popular monograph. (This second edition, incidentally, includes a new chapter, taking the book's argument from 1900 to the end of that century.) My one gripe is the poor quality and minute maps reprinted in the book. Nevertheless, general readers and students should find this book accessible and informative. These qualities are enhanced by the author's largely chronological chapter-by-chapter discussion of the major characteristics of world history in the period since 1400 CE. The first chapter includes a particularly useful survey (and debunking) of theories attempting to explain 'the rise of the west' that would be especially helpful in undergraduate courses. Another of its strengths is Marks' masterful synthesis of a vast range of the very latest scholarship available at the time. Thus, I enthusiastically

recommend this book to both general readers and to any lecturer seeking a lively undergraduate text for survey courses on world history or world environmental history.

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