

the Great Pyramid of Giza unearthed the barge in an underground chamber—a chamber that had been sealed for 4,000 years. Conservators then raced against time to preserve the ship's remains before the wood desiccated and fell apart in the dry desert air. They ultimately rebuilt the vessel for display in a museum.

That's bracing stuff. So are Gordon's accounts of archaeological expeditions to the Aegean Sea (chapter 3) and the British Isles (chapter 4), both of which start off with investigators who unravel mysteries.

Now turn to Asia. The author has to go to Nigeria, to the Dufuna Dug-out site (chapter 1), to find an authentic example of a dugout. He then examines methods and materials for constructing dugouts before using the Dufuna project to illustrate the ship type whereby islanders fanned out across the South Pacific during migrations spanning millennia. That's an absorbing story that is largely lost to history. Physical evidence is minimal, forcing us to infer from what little we have.

Gordon carries the story to the twelfth-century Indian Ocean, using documentary rather than physical evidence to describe the loss of David Maimonides on a trading voyage to the subcontinent (chapter 6). There's no nautical archaeology to capture readers' fancy.

The same goes for the author's story of the ruins of the Chinese fleets that invaded thirteenth-century Japan (chapter 7). Assorted debris litters the seafloor at Hakata Bay, the Yuan Dynasty fleet's objective. With no single shipwreck to investigate at Hakata Bay, however, the author reverts to a more standard historical account of Kublai Khan's cross-Yellow Sea adventures and the *kamikaze*, or "divine wind," that helped repel them. The storytelling remains good, but it's less riveting without that focal point.

In short, Gordon's approach loses some of its allure without an artifact—a Pacific dugout, Indian Ocean dhow, or Chinese transport—to rivet readers' attention on the historical episode he wants to explore.

Gordon is determined to show how seafaring technology and practices developed outside the Mediterranean world, a nautical region amply documented since classical antiquity. Widening readers' gaze in time and geographic space represents a worthy motive. I applaud the author for making the effort. His formula—discovery, recovery, history—just works better for some oceans, seas, and historical epochs than others.

It's worth pointing out, moreover, that one Asia-centric chapter, on the Intan shipwreck (chapter 5), ranks among *Sixteen Shipwrecks*' best. That tale features Indonesian authorities who combat looters in the 1990s in the course of locating an eleventh-century merchantman loaded with tin ingots. Studying the craft opens a window into commercial and social interactions between China and Southeast Asia, the nature of South China Sea societies a millennium ago, and on and on. That's drama.

Sixteen Shipwrecks probably cannot stand alone as a textbook on world history or civilization. But it makes a worthy supplement, giving such courses some saltwater flavor. It might also entice students to dive into heftier works on maritime history, such as Fernand Braudel's *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (University of California, 1966), David Abulafia's *The Great Sea* (Oxford, 2013), or Lincoln Paine's *The Sea and Civilization* (Atlantic, 2014).

We will be in Gordon's debt if *Sixteen Shipwrecks* fires enthusiasm—if readers come away realizing that Asian and maritime history are fun. ■

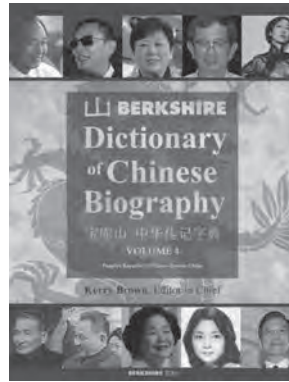
JAMES HOLMES is Professor of Strategy at the Naval War College and coauthor of the book *Red Star over the Pacific: China's Rise and the Challenge to US Maritime Strategy* (Naval Institute Press, 2010). The views voiced here are his alone.

Berkshire Dictionary of Chinese Biography, Volume 4

EDITED BY KERRY BROWN, PATRICK G. BOEHLER, SYLVIA HUI, AND WAI TSUI

GREAT BARRINGTON: BERKSHIRE PUBLISHING GROUP, 2015
640 PAGES, ISBN: 978-1614729006, HARDCOVER

Reviewed by David Kenley



With the publication of volume 4, Berkshire is nearing completion of the *Dictionary of Chinese Biography*. While the editors and writers will continue to add to and amend the online supplement, this is the final volume of the dictionary's printed version. Volume 4 includes figures who have influenced Chinese history since 1979. As with the previous three volumes, this one exemplifies high standards of research, writing, and editing. It is a welcome addition to an already-impressive reference work.

Intended to be sold separately from volumes 1–3, volume 4 is arranged in a slightly different format. Whereas the first three volumes included thirty to forty entries each, volume 4 has exactly 100 entries. Most are shorter than those in the earlier volumes but still include a short bio and a summary of the entry, followed by an informative essay and a list of texts for further reading. Volume 4 also has many of the appendices included in the original three-volume set, including a pronunciation guide, biographical directory, geographical directory, *pinyin* glossary, general bibliography, and a timeline.

In many ways, the *Dictionary of Chinese Biography* self-consciously bucks many academic trends. As recently as February 2016, Charles W. Hayford wrote in the *Journal of Asian Studies* that "academic historians have long found biography a little dodgy. Nowadays the prudent grad student avoids straight biography, and academic journals do not generally review popular biographies." Instead, Hayford argues, "Writing accessible biographies for the public was left to journalists, retired diplomats, independent scholars, and Jonathan Spence." Hayford points out that "heroic biographies" are especially suspect, useful only as Christmas presents.¹

Despite these widely held assumptions, there are many advantages in using biography to study history. Individual lives often encapsulate and typify larger societal trends, enabling the reader to analyze these trends at a more personal level. For these reasons, dozens of highly respected academics from Harvard, New York University, Tsinghua University, Taiwan National University, and other such institutions have eagerly contributed to volume 4 of the *Dictionary of Chinese Biography*. They bring a level of credibility to this reference work, written for the nonspecialist and English-speaking audience. Not surprisingly, the top Chinese historians have praised the dictionary. William Theodore de Bary of Columbia University writes, "All students of China, and indeed of East Asia and world history, will be greatly aided in their studies by this comprehensive reference work, a true milestone in collaborative historical research." Rana Mitter of the University of Oxford has added, "This magnificent work will surely be a must-have for serious libraries around the world."²

In many ways, volume 4 is the best in the series. It includes a more diverse set of subjects than any of the previous three books. In volume 3, nearly 80 percent of the subjects are military or political figures, all but

three entries are men, and none are non-Chinese. By contrast, of the 100 entries in volume 4, only about one-third are political figures, and there are no military figures. Instead, readers can find information regarding authors, business leaders, filmmakers, musicians, sports figures, and personalities in other interesting fields. Volume 4 also includes a biography of at least one non-ethnic Chinese, Rebiya Kadeer, President of the World Uyghur Congress. It can be debated as to whether or not others, such as Taiwan's Chen Shui-bian, are "ethnically Chinese." Volume 4 also includes several entries for individuals living in Hong Kong, Taiwan, the United States, and other areas beyond the political control of Beijing. Unfortunately, women still only comprise 10 percent of the entries, mostly in the fields of acting (Gong Li, Joan Chen, and Maggie Cheung) and politics (Anson Chan, Wu Yi, Li Xiaolin, and Rebiya Kadeer).

Western readers will find many familiar names among the list of entries, such as Jackie Chan, Deng Xiaoping, and Yao Ming. Some names seem to be included especially for the English-reading audience. For example, Nobel Prize winner Liu Xiaobo is widely respected internationally but virtually unknown within China and has debatably had very little influence on contemporary China. Other entries will be completely unknown to those in the West but are vitally necessary for a volume such as this one. While most Americans have never heard of Terry Gou, his role as founder and chairman of the manufacturing Foxconn Group makes him one of the most important figures in not only Chinese history, but also in the new global economy.

Many of the entries include cutting-edge scholarship. In his entry on the disgraced politician Bo Xilai, John Garnaut analyzes China's ongoing social divide, shedding light on such timely issues as inequality, economic liberalism, and political populism. Similarly, Szu-wei Chen's examination of Taiwanese pop singer Teresa Teng tackles intractable theoretical problems, including transnationalism and the commodification of culture.

Indeed, because the figures in volume 4 are so contemporary, with the majority of them still living, most of the entries represent the latest research in the field. At the same time, however, it is difficult to provide a definitive analysis, given the lack of historical perspective regarding many people included in the volume.

Teachers will find many uses for volume 4 of the dictionary. They can assign their students entries according to their various lesson needs. If, for example, the lesson is on censorship, teachers might select the biographies of singer Teresa Teng, blogger Han Han, activist Wei Jingshen, and journalist Liu Binyan. If the lesson is on economic development, they could choose entrepreneur Ren Zhengfei, gymnast Li Ning, and businessman Huang Guanyu. There are many other such combinations highlighting pop culture, human rights, environmentalism, and several other timely topics. This is one of the many appealing elements of using biography as history. It allows the educator to select individuals based on the narrative he or she is seeking to create. Of course, this is also the challenge and risk of using biography. Nevertheless, volume 4 of the *Berkshire Dictionary of Chinese Biography* is a powerful and insightful resource that teachers will welcome. ■

NOTES

1. Charles W Hayford, "Where's the Omelet? Bad King Deng and the Challenges of Biography and History," *Journal of Asian Studies* 75, no. 1 (2016): 21.
2. Berkshire Publishing Titles, "Berkshire Dictionary of Chinese Biography," accessed March 29, 2016, <http://tinyurl.com/jl8nlov>.

DAVID KENLEY is Professor of Chinese History and Director of Asian Studies at Elizabethtown College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. His teaching and research interests focus on Chinese intellectual history and overseas migration.

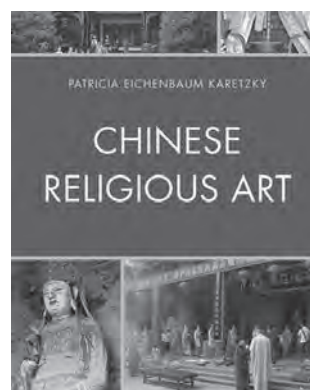
Chinese Religious Art

By PATRICIA EICHENBAUM KARETZKY

LANHAM: LEXINGTON BOOKS (ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD), 2013

394 PAGES, ISBN: 978-0739180594, PAPERBACK

Reviewed by Benita Stambler



It seems hard to believe that there has not been a volume prior to this one devoted to Chinese religious art, but this work by Patricia Eichenbaum Karetzky is the first comprehensive volume on the subject. It thus fills an important gap in literature on Asian art by providing a less-familiar lens for examining dynastic art. In this book, the Tang Dynasty, instead of being characterized by its frequent artistic symbols, tricolor horses and polo-playing women, is analyzed through objects such as Daoist and Buddhist carvings found in caves.

General books on Chinese art have been organized by different principles: dynasty, materials (jade, ceramics), purpose (trade, ritual, domestic), location (tomb, temple), etc. This text is organized first with a section on

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