

BOOK REVIEWS

Hawai'i Reader in Traditional Chinese Culture

VICTOR H. MAIR, NANCY SHATZMAN STEINHARDT,
PAUL RAKITA GOLDIN, EDITORS

HONOLULU: THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII PRESS, 2004
744 PAGES, ISBN 13: 978-0-8248-2785-4, HARDBACK

REVIEWED BY ARTHUR BARBEAU

Over several decades of teaching various courses, I've looked through literally hundreds of "readers." I've even used a few. At the worst, some students may have looked at entries because they knew this material would be included on tests. At best, a few may actually have been exposed to some of the documents that are part of history.

Now Victor Mair and two of his colleagues at the University of Pennsylvania have produced a reader that truly reflects the culture of their interest. Its ninety-two entries run a wide gamut of China's past, though the distribution is skewed toward the earlier periods. One-third covers the period up to the end of the Han Dynasty. The editors' journey is half over by the end of the Tang Dynasty and two-thirds complete with the demise of the Song Dynasty.

The translations are generally good; the better ones flow smoothly. Those of Paul Goldin, one of the editors, stand out particularly. The editors have added a few quite useful items such as a menu of the subjects of their entries and a brief, accurate historical chronology. Their two maps are generally useful (though Xinjiang is preferable to Xinkiang). The plates and photographs are excellent.

The bibliography, categorized by topic, provides a useful starting place for those who want to explore an area in greater depth. Though *pinyin* transliterations are used, the older Wade-Giles (or *Guo Yu*) are provided where necessary. I found the notes provided at the end of each entry to be among the most valuable facets of the work. Going far beyond mere explanation and providing the proper setting, these often offer important insights into Chinese culture. This book is designed for students in introductory college classes in Chinese culture and history. One or two copies would be a wonderful addition to any good high school classroom or would fit well on any teacher's bookshelf.

Although the editors suggest that their volume can be used as the main introductory college text, some content gaps make it more suitable as a classroom supplement or accessible student resource. Several areas need more attention. Despite Joseph Needham's long-standing demonstration of the brilliance of China's science and technology, only three entries are provided, six if medicine is included. There is nothing at all on Chinese astronomy and little on the culture's remarkable mechanical arts. Less than a dozen deal with foreign affairs or the customs of China's neighbors. Zheng He's voyages are absent, and China's minorities seem not to exist.

Given the size and quality of the book, I hope the University of Hawai'i Press keeps the price of the book affordable for high schools and for college educators. ■

ARTHUR BARBEAU is Professor Emeritus of History and Anthropology, retired from West Liberty State College in West Virginia.

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Muslims in China

*The Growth and Influence of Islam
in the Nations of Asia and Central Asia*

BY SHEILA HOLLIAN-ELLIOT

PHILADELPHIA: MASON CREST PUBLISHERS, 2006
120 PAGES, ISBN 10: 1-59084-880-2

REVIEWED BY EMILIAN KAVALSKI



The media fog of the "war on terror" has tended to obscure the complexity of global trends. Thus, thinking about the increasing prominence of both China and Islam gravitates easily towards the realm of fantasy and science fiction. That being so, an ungainly but important task is to distinguish between phantoms and substance in contemporary engagements with the perceptions of Beijing's power and the representation of Muslim identities. In this respect, Hollian-Elliott aims to dispel the ignorance underlying both popular and political views, and makes it quite clear that, just like any other country in the world or

any other religious community, neither China, nor the Chinese Muslim community, constitute homogeneous entities.

Her book offers a comprehensive overview of the emergence, history, and present status of Islam in China. Despite its complex subject matter, the volume presents the diverse aspects of the interactions and confluence between Islamic and Chinese traditions in an easy-to-follow, yet thorough manner. The book contains over forty color photographs that offer an intriguing immediacy to the issues discussed, as well as a map that indicates the extraordinary scale of the interpretation undertaken by Hollian-Elliott. Together with a detailed list of further reading and Internet resources, this volume is likely to provoke the curiosity of students, while assisting teachers in making comprehensible the diversity of both China and the Chinese Muslim communities.

In this respect, Hollian-Elliott has produced a comprehensive, accessible, and up-to-date reference book on Islam in China. It is expected that her effort will benefit both students and teachers at the secondary school level. At the same time, her book is not only an invaluable source of knowledge about the different Chinese Muslim groups, but it also offers an original glimpse at some facets that make Asia such a fascinating area of the world. Hollian-Elliott's book, therefore, seems to reiterate that one of the objectives of the education process is to help students develop critical skills that will assist them in becoming responsible citizens. Knowing about the "outside world" is a key to that project. ■

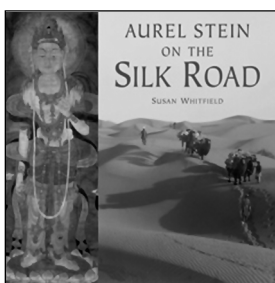
EMILIAN KAVALSKI is the Izaak Walton Killam Postdoctoral Fellow at the Department of Political Science, University of Alberta and the incoming Andrew Mellon Fellow at the American Institute for Indian Studies. He is the author of *Extending the European Security Community: Constructing Peace in the Balkans* (Tauris, 2007). His research focuses on the security governance of complexity and the interactions between China, India, and the European Union in Central Asia.

Aurel Stein on the Silk Road

BY SUSAN WHITFIELD

CHICAGO: SERINDIA PUBLICATIONS, 2004
143 PAGES, ISBN 10: 1-932476-11-3, HARDBACK

REVIEWED BY ROBERT W. FOSTER



Dr. Susan Whitfield has a number of publications dealing with the Silk Road. *Aurel Stein on the Silk Road* is an enjoyable, light introduction to one of the leading figures in the development of Silk Road studies during the early twentieth century. Dr. Whitfield's clear prose is injected with moments of dry humor, such as the chapter entitled, "The Cook, The Thief, His Dog, But No Lover," which encapsulates Stein's difficulties finding a decent chef, his encounter with a prolific forger, his love for his dogs (all named Dash), and his confirmed bachelorhood.

The 143-page book reads quickly and does not provide detailed information or scholarly analysis of Stein's life and work in Central Asia, but this does not seem to be Dr. Whitfield's intention. The book is an entertaining entry to Silk Road lore via the life of one of the area's early Western explorers. The author tends to focus on "human interest" vignettes, rather than Stein's archaeology; this choice brings to life the expeditions that are recounted in far greater and drier detail in Stein's own works. However, Dr. Whitfield does touch upon the major issues related to Stein's work: British imperialism, the Great Game, the ethical debate regarding removing cultural objects from China for permanent possession in European, American, and Japanese museums, and how Stein's work greatly expanded our understanding of the history, cultures, and religions of Central Asia.

The real strength of the book is Dr. Whitfield's meshing of text with ninety-nine images that range from clear photographs of Silk Road Buddhist artwork, to sections of Stein's hand-drawn maps, to photographs of Stein and the people with whom he interacted. The book contains a useful bibliography and suggested readings for those who would like to delve deeper. As such, the book is a useful introduction to the Silk Road and related issues. It is suitable for high school world history classes, but on its own is probably not suitable for collegiate work. It could be used to develop topics for further research using the suggested readings, or in conjunction with the immensely rich International Dunhuang Project Web site at <http://idp.bl.uk>, of which Dr. Whitfield is director. ■

ROBERT W. FOSTER is an Associate Professor of History and Coordinator of Asian Studies at Berea College, where he teaches courses on East Asian History, including a seminar on the Silk Road, inspired, in part, by reading Aurel Stein's, *Ruins of Desert Cathay* as an undergraduate.

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