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"Key Issues" booklets introduce students to major cultural and historical themes and are designed to encourage classroom debate and discussion.

The first two booklets, written by leading teachers/scholars in their fields—"Political Rights in Post-Mao China" by Merle Goldman and "Gender, Sexuality, and Body Politics in Modern Asia" by Michael G. Peletz—are now available for purchase. More exciting titles are in the works—the AAS plans to publish 2–3 "Key Issues" booklets each year.



Gender, Sexuality, and Body Politics in Modern Asia
Michael G. Peletz
ISBN 978-0-924304-50-7, 2007, 6" x 9" paperback, 120 pages, \$10.00

Political Rights in Post-Mao China
Merle Goldman
ISBN 978-0-924304-51-4, 2007, 6" x 9" paperback, 80 pages, \$10.00

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Political Rights in Post-Mao China
Key Issues in Asian Studies, No. 2

BY MERLE GOLDMAN

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76 PAGES, ISBN: 978-0-924304-51-4, PAPERBACK

REVIEWED BY EDWARD FRIEDMAN

Merle Goldman has produced a gem of a booklet on political rights in China. Lucid and accessible, it is vivid with human detail and historically rich. The booklet traces the heroic struggles of numerous Chinese over a long time, so that it is clear how much and how many Chinese wish to not to have to continue to endure the indignities of life under a cruel and arbitrary regime.

In focusing on Chinese trying to promote "Political Rights in Post-Mao China," Goldman, however, may unintentionally lead some readers to think that those working for constitutional liberties and safeguards that allow people to lead normal human lives are in the mainstream. They are not. As most everywhere, most Chinese are apolitical. They fear losing whatever little they have. They are appreciative that the suffocating controls of the Mao era have ended and that they no longer have to worry about the ignominy, torture, starvation, fear, and premature death that marked Mao's tyranny.

They appreciate that the regime no longer interferes in family matters, that wealth and opportunity have expanded, and that they can travel more or less freely and enjoy the dignity of being recognized as respected members of a great nation.

Many are even nostalgic about the Mao era as an age of purity and strength. They resent the compromises required to get along with the rest of the world. One should take very seriously the question of a Chinese history professor: "Will nationalist ideas . . . acquire a martial, belligerent, and expansionist tendency in China?" (28).

I worry a bit that this excellent pamphlet's depiction of blessed changes away from Mao's suffocating tyranny does not capture how wide open China's future is, for better or worse. Goldman is to be congratulated for getting the reader to focus on the big picture. The big question about China's future is whether the economic reforms responsible for China's extraordinary rise in wealth and power can continue "without also restructuring the political and legal systems . . ." (39). I fear the answer may be yes.

Goldman concludes, finding that the increasing number of Chinese who embrace their political rights will prove a formidable challenge to the authoritarian regime headquartered in Beijing, that the future is wide open and unknowable and that it will depend in no small part on the ideals and actions of freedom-loving Chinese. The great contribution of Goldman is to introduce the general reader to a wide variety of courageous and caring human beings with such vivid specificity that the reader has to learn that Chinese are not culturally doomed to suffer authoritarian cruelties unto eternity.

Still, China is the world leader in journalists and netizens in prison. Goldman's reliable and illuminating essay clarifies how many Chinese of conscience are not cowed by the repressive Beijing regime. This wonderful pamphlet is about how these people struggle to advance the cause of "Political Rights in Post-Mao China." ■

EDWARD FRIEDMAN, a specialist in Chinese politics who teaches courses on democratization, is a professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Yale University Press has just published a paperback version of his book *Revolution, Resistance, and Reform in Village China*.

New Booklet Series from the AAS

Introducing *Key Issues in Asian Studies*

Published by the Association for Asian Studies (AAS), *Key Issues in Asian Studies* is a new series of booklets designed for use in undergraduate humanities and social science courses, as well as by advanced high school students and their teachers. *Key Issues* booklets are designed to complement *Education About Asia*, and serve as vital educational materials that are both accessible and affordable for classroom use. Booklets will sell for around \$10. AAS plans to publish two or three booklets per year.

Booklets in the series will tackle broad subjects or major cultural and historical themes in an introductory yet compelling, jargon-free style, written to encourage classroom debate and discussion. The idea for a teaching booklet series was first conceived by Jim Huffman and Peter Frost, names familiar to readers of *Education About Asia*.

Former *Key Issues* Editor Robert Entenmann commissioned two booklets. *Political Rights in Post-Mao China* by Merle Goldman, and *Gender, Sexuality, and Body Politics in Modern Asia* by Michael Peletz are now available for purchase. Please visit www.aasianst.org for details and ordering information.

After Robert Entenmann's resignation due to personal commitments, AAS Editorial Board Chair Martha Selby and I asked Lucien Ellington whether he would consider taking on the role of *Key Issues* Editor. We are thrilled to announce that Lucien has agreed to spearhead this important new series. Lucien, who will of course continue as Editor of *Education About Asia*, is ideally situated to guide *Key Issues* to great success. We have high hopes for the series under his editorship.

We are pleased to announce that interest from potential authors about writing *KIAS* booklets has been very encouraging. Potential titles include: *Caste in India*, *Traditional China in Asian and World History*, *Understanding East Asia's Economic Miracles*, *South Asia and Globalization in Early World History*, *Korea in World History*, and *Japanese Pop Culture*.

When you have questions about *Key Issues*—or have suggestions for topics that would be useful in your teaching—please contact Lucien at l-ellington@comcast.net. For further information, visit www.aasianst.org. ■

Jon Wilson, AAS Publications Manager

Helen Foster Snow

An American Woman in Revolutionary China

BY KELLY ANN LONG

UNIVERSITY PRESS OF COLORADO, 2006

237 PAGES, ISBN: 978-0870818479, HARDBACK

REVIEWED BY DIANA MARSTON WOOD



For those who entered the Asian Studies field in the 1970s, the names Edgar Snow and Helen Snow (Helen wrote under the pseudonym Nym Wales) "loomed large." These two individuals, along with Agnes Smedley, Israel Epstein, and Rewi Alley, wrote extensively about the Chinese Communist Party and became advocates for understanding and supporting its policies during the late 1930s and throughout the 1940s. The Snows both visited (on separate occasions)

the Communist Yan'an base during the years prior to World War II, and each was able to interact personally with Mao Zedong and other Communist leaders. However, it is Edgar Snow's *Red Star Over China* that appeared on required reading lists in the 1970s. Despite the publication of her own books and her marital connection with the famous Edgar Snow, Helen Snow's work is often overlooked. Kelly Ann Long's biography effectively clarifies the reasons.

While Long divides this thoroughly documented biography into discrete, chronological chapters, I believe the work can be appreciated best by focusing on three major sections. The first section focuses on Helen Snow's family background, pathway to China, marriage, and partnership with Edgar Snow, and the couple's entry into radical Chinese politics during the mid-1930s. I was surprised to learn that Helen was raised in a conservative Mormon family. However, her intelligence, determination to become a "great author," and the confidence she gained because of her glamorous appearance, led her to "ship out" to China in 1931 in the midst of the depression. She quickly found work in Shanghai and became part of a coterie of Western correspondents and writers assembled to monitor those turbulent years in Asia. Once married to the correspondent and occasional university teacher Edgar Snow, Helen created in their home a "salon" where university students and intellectuals gathered to discuss politics. Through this involvement, Helen honed her ideas about China and East Asian policy and, according to John Dower, "contributed to a growing body of foreign correspondence that over time would help to move US public sentiment away from long-standing negative views of China and its people, eventually shaping new images of the Chinese" (69).

The second section focuses on Helen Snow's half-year stay in Yan'an, its impact on Helen, and its significance for the larger world.