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Reviews X

by
Paul R. Goldin and the Editor

Victor H. Mair, Editor
Sino-Platonic Papers
Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6305 USA
vmair@sas.upenn.edu
www.sino-platonic.org

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James D. Sellmann. *Timing and Rulership in Master Lü's Spring and Autumn Annals (Lüshi chunqiu)*. SUNY Series in Chinese Philosophy and Culture. Albany, 2002. xi + 265 pages. ISBN 0-7914-5232-8 (paper).

This is the first book-length study of the *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 in English. One might associate this volume with the burgeoning scholarly interest in the *Lüshi chunqiu*—the past few years have seen the publication of complete and authoritative translations into both French and English,¹ in addition to several first-rate studies²—if only the author were aware of these other works. Not one of the items listed in notes 1 and 2, below, is found in Sellmann's bibliography, and his work suffers as a result.

Sellmann focuses on three major themes in the *Lüshi chunqiu*: *xing* 性 (which he

¹ Ivan P. Kamenarović, tr., *Printemps et automnes de Lü Buwei*, Patrimoines: Confucianisme (Paris: du Cerf, 1998); John Knoblock and Jeffrey Riegel, trs., *The Annals of Lü Buwei: A Complete Translation and Study* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000). See my review of the latter in *Early Medieval China* 7 (2001), 100-29.

² A representative list of titles in Western languages alone: Michael Carson, "The Battle of Words in Ancient China," *Asian Culture Quarterly* 11.2 (1983), 48-61; Marc Kalinowski, "Les justifications historiques du gouvernement idéal dans le *Lüshi chunqiu*," *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient* 68 (1980), 155-208; *idem*, "Cosmologie et gouvernement naturel dans le *Lü shi chunqiu*," *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient* 71 (1982), 169-216; D.C. Lau, "A Study of Some Textual Problems in the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu*," *Bulletin of the Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy* 1 (1991), 45-87; *idem*, "The Doctrine of Kuei Sheng 貴生 in the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu*," *Bulletin of the Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy* 2 (1992), 51-90; John Louton, "Concepts of Comprehensiveness and Historical Change in the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu*," in *Explorations in Early Chinese Cosmology*, ed. Henry Rosemont, Jr., *Journal of the American Academy of Religion, Thematic Studies* 50.2 (Chico: Scholars, 1984), 105-17; Jeffrey Riegel, "Do Not Serve the Dead as You Serve the Living: The *Lüshi chunqiu* Treatises on Moderation in Burial," *Early China* 20 (1995), 301-30; Grigoriï A. Tkatchiënko, "Sur la composition du *Shi'er ji* dans le *Lü shi chunqiu* (*Printemps et automnes de Lü shi*)," *Modèles et structures des textes chinois anciens: Les formalistes soviétiques en Sinologie, Extrême-Orient Extrême-Occident* 13 (1991), 121-28; and Wang Chi-chen, "The Book of Lü Buwei: Excerpts," *Renditions* 33-34 (1990), 9-23.

Secondary studies in East Asian languages can be found in the excellent bibliography in Knoblock and Riegel (741-61), to which one should add: Hong Jiayi 洪家義, *Lü Buwei pingzhuan* 呂不韋評傳, *Zhongguo sixiangjia pingzhuan congshu* 11 (Nanjing: Nanjing Daxue, 1995); Li Weiwu 李維武, *Lü Buwei pingzhuan* 呂不韋評傳, *Zhonghua lishi wenhua mingren pingzhuan*, Daojia xilie (Nanning: Guangxi jiaoyu, 1997); Tian Fengtai 田鳳台, "Lüshi chunqiu shumu lieju xiyao" 《呂氏春秋》書目列舉析要, *Shumu jikan* 書目季刊 14.1 (1980), 91-104; and Wang Liqi 王利器, "Lüshi chunqiu shiming" 《呂氏春秋》釋名, *Tianfu xinlun* 天府新論 1985.2, reprinted in Wang's *Xiaochuanshu zhai wenshi lunji* 曉傳書齋文史論集 (Hong Kong: Zhongwen Daxue, 1989), 191-97.

translates as “character”); social order and rulership; and timing.³ A final chapter explores the possibility of applying the conception of time in the *Lüshi chungiu* to contemporary philosophical discussions. His thesis, *in nuce*, is that the *Lüshi chungiu* blends ideas from various ideological camps into a unified vision that stresses taking action at the appropriate time. The language that he uses to describe this syncretism is repetitive and vague: over and over one reads the words “blend,” “unified,” “hybrid,” and “amalgamated.” Such metaphors are drawn from the physical world and do not in themselves convey the text’s philosophical goals very clearly. One can “blend” or “amalgamate” juices and chemical compounds; Sellmann needs to explain at length what is meant by “blending” philosophies. Otherwise one is left with the impression that the *Lüshi chungiu* achieves its grand synthesis at the cost of reifying ideas.

Sellmann’s philosophical framework is largely borrowed from Roger T. Ames. In his treatment of *xing*, Sellmann takes care not to translate it as “human nature,” a rendering that his teacher has rejected.⁴ Instead, he translates *xing* in all contexts as “character”—even to the point of absurdity, such as when he renders *niuxing* 牛性 as “the character of a cow” (47). Sellmann advances what he calls a “correlative” reading, for which Ames is well known,⁵ and which Sellmann evidently feels obliged to maintain. But his use of the term “correlative” is confusing and smacks of shibboleth. On p. 58, he quotes the following passage from *Lüshi chungiu* (in his own translation):

In all cases to be “marital” [*sic*; he means “martial”] is to be awe-inspiring; “awesomeness” is strength. That there is awesomeness and strength in the people comes from their character (*xing*). Character is what is *received from nature* (*tian*). It is not something humans themselves can construct. One who is martial cannot alter it, and a capable artisan cannot change it. [Emphasis in original.]

³ These chapters are all based on the author’s earlier studies: “Seasonality in the Achievement of *Hsing* in the *Lü-shih ch’un-ch’iu*,” *Asian Culture Quarterly* 18.2 (1990), 42-68; “The Origin and Role of the State According to the *Lüshi chungiu*,” *Asian Philosophy* 9.3 (1999), 193-218; and “The *Lüshi chungiu* on the Ruler’s Use of Proper Timing,” *Asian Culture Quarterly* 27.1 (1999), 59-71. In his acknowledgments (x) and bibliography (250), Sellmann refers to *Asian Philosophy* erroneously as *Journal of Asian Philosophy*.

⁴ Roger T. Ames, “The Mencian Conception of *Ren Xing*: Does It Mean ‘Human Nature’?” in *Chinese Texts and Philosophical Contexts: Essays Dedicated to Angus C. Graham*, ed. Henry Rosemont, Jr., *Critics and Their Critics* 1 (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1991), 143-75.

⁵ See e.g. David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, *Thinking Through Confucius*, SUNY Series in Systematic Philosophy (Albany, 1987).

Then he writes:

In the above we find one of the strongest examples of human *xing* as a basic condition of life that one does not have direct control over. The *chenglian* chapter contains a similar expression that *xing* is received from nature. This is another way of emphasizing that human character is a correlative concept that must always be understood in terms of its relation to nature. To say that humans cannot make or alter their martial character is not to contend that the character is fixed or predetermined; rather, it means that people are limited to working with and cultivating the conditions and circumstances that are co-dependent on nature and cultural history.

This is not how “correlativity” is normally understood, either in general philosophical usage or in Sinological appropriations of it. A “correlative” explication of *xing* would be valid if *tian* were as dependent upon *xing* as *xing* is upon *tian*. That would be genuine “co-dependence.” But Sellmann does not mean “co-dependent”; he means simply “dependent.” Nowhere does the *Lüshi chunqiu* say that *tian* depends on our *xing*, whereas it is unambiguous in the passage quoted that we receive our *xing* from *tian*. Insofar as I comprehend his argument, Sellmann is saying that our *xing* does not exist independent of the world around us. But it does not follow that *xing* and *tian* are correlative concepts.

There are at least two other notions that Sellmann inherits from Ames. The first is the “focus-field” paradigm (e.g. 5, 35, 140), which is derived ultimately from the physical sciences, and which Ames employed prominently in an article on the Confucian understanding of self-hood.⁶ Here too Sellmann’s application of the concept is nugatory:

For many of the pre-Qin thinkers, the “whole” would be considered an abstraction or a generalization about the overall interconnectedness and continuity of particulars. Their world is a plurality of coextensive, interrelated dependency of particular foci [*sic*]; it can best be described in terms of field and focus. The focus is any particular constituting the environment as field; the field is the dynamic processes of the interrelated foci. (163)

It is regrettable that this passage—Sellmann’s fullest explanation of what he means by “focus-field”—was allowed to go to press with a debilitating grammatical error. “A plurality of

⁶ “The Focus-Field Self in Classical Confucianism,” in *Self as Person in Asian Theory and Practice*, ed. Roger T. Ames with Wimal Dissanayake and Thomas P. Kasulis (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 187-212. Strangely, Sellmann does not cite this paper; his only revelation as to his source comes on p. 236, n. 28: “I was first inspired by particle physics for this focus-field image before I read *The Tao of Physics*.”

coextensive, interrelated dependency of particular foci” is simply unintelligible.⁷

The other doctrinal position for which Sellmann is indebted to Ames has to do with myth. Following Hall and Ames again,⁸ Sellmann claims repeatedly that cosmogony was alien to ancient China (although the relevance of this issue to the *Lüshi chunqiu* is far from obvious). On p. 21 he avers: “The earliest Shang records and objects of material culture are devoid of any complex mythology or even individual systematic myths. Cosmogonic myths are certainly absent.” In fact we are in the dark as to the content of “the earliest Shang records,” since these have not come down to us; Sellmann is basing this gross assertion solely on the corpus of excavated oracle bones, hardly the medium through which Shang scribes would have related their mythology. Where Sellmann’s own documents contradict his notions about the presence or absence of cosmogony in early Chinese sources, he minimizes their significance in clumsy prose. On p. 84, for example, he cites the famous passage from the *Shangjun shu* 商君書 that begins with the sentence: “During the time when heaven and earth were first established and humans were produced, people knew their mothers but not their fathers.” His comment: “The initial line contains one of the earliest references to one of the few pre-Qin statements that comes close to espousing a type of cosmogonic origin.”

At any rate, the Hall-Ames argument about China’s “acosmotic” beginnings is challenged by *Taiyi sheng shui* 太一生水, *The Magnificent One Engendered Water*, a text recently discovered in a tomb at Guodian 郭店, in Jingmen Municipality 荊門市, Hubei Province 湖北省. This pellucid cosmogony attributes the foundation of the cosmos to the god Taiyi.⁹ Sellmann seems to be unaware of *Taiyi sheng shui*, and makes no mention of it when discussing Taiyi in another connection (96).

Finally, Sellmann’s treatment of other scholars and philosophers is uninformed and

⁷ The book also contains many basic Romanization errors. For example, the name Zou Yan 騶/鄒衍 is consistently miswritten as “Zuo Yan.”

⁸ See their *Anticipating China: Thinking Through the Narratives of Chinese and Western Culture* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 11 and 183ff.

⁹ Jingmeng Shi Bowuguan 荊門市博物館, *Guodian Chumu zhujian* 郭店楚墓竹簡 (Beijing: Wenwu, 1998), 125. See also Li Ling 李零, “An Archaeological Study of Taiyi (Grand One) Worship,” tr. Donald Harper, *Early Medieval China* 2 (1995-96), 1-39; and *idem*, “Du Guodian Chujian *Taiyi sheng shui*” 讀郭店楚簡《太一生水》, *Daojia wenhua yanjiu* 道家文化研究 17 (1999), 316-31.

dismissive. As noted above, some of the most crucial studies are missing from his bibliography. Broader reading would have prevented certain blunders, such as “Dong Zhongshu’s *Chunqiu fanlu*” (19 and 72)—the bulk of the *Chunqiu fanlu* is forged.¹⁰ What Sellmann *has* read, he tends to vilify. On p. 136 the great scholar Hu Shi 胡適 (1891-1962) is criticized for doubting the authenticity of the *Shangjun shu*, but Sellmann presents no new evidence to refute the overwhelming consensus that the book cannot be trusted as a pre-Qin source. Derk Bodde is frequently taken to task, both for his understanding of Chinese mythology (21),¹¹ and for his alleged assertion that Chinese law had a non-Chinese origin (70 and 88). Sellmann offers no precise reference for the latter accusation, and Bodde never said any such thing.¹² Other scholars gratuitously deprecated are James Legge (2), Donald Munro (2), K.C. Hsiao (7 and 90ff.), and Vitaly Rubin (75).

In short, any writer who says anything inconvenient to Sellmann’s theories is either derided or ignored. This kind of abuse is especially noticeable in the final chapter, in which several twentieth-century philosophers whose studies of time prove irreconcilable with Sellmann’s agenda are dispatched as “biased” (151ff.). To disagree is one thing; to impute prejudice to one’s intellectual adversaries is childish and potentially libelous. Sellmann’s general presentation of Western philosophy is marred by the same flaws. Calling Rousseau a “Romantic” (p.

¹⁰ The foundational articles are Keimatsu Mitsuo 慶松光雄, “*Shunju hanrō gogyō shohen gisaku kō*” 春秋繁露五行諸篇偽作考, *Kanazawa Daigaku Hōbun Gakubu ronshū (tetsugaku bungaku)* 金澤大學法文學部論集 (哲學文學) 6 (1959), 25-46; and Dai Junren 戴君仁, “Dong Zhongshu bushuo wuxing kao” 董仲舒不說五行考, reprinted several times, e.g. in *Meiyuan lunxue ji* 梅園論學集 (Taipei: Kaiming, 1970), 319-34. See also Gary Arbuckle, “Some Remarks on a New Translation of the *Chunqiu fanlu*,” *Early China* 17 (1992), 215-38; *idem*, “Five Divine Lords or One (Human) Emperor? A Problematic Passage in the Material on Dong Zhongshu,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 113.2 (1993), 277-80; *idem*, “Inevitable Treason: Dong Zhongshu’s Theory of Historical Cycles and Early Attempts to Invalidate the Han Mandate,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 115.4 (1995), 585-97; and Sarah Queen, *From Chronicle to Canon: The Hermeneutics of the Spring and Autumn, According to Tung Chung-shu*, Cambridge Studies in Chinese History, Literature and Institutions (Cambridge, 1996).

¹¹ Derk Bodde, “Myths of Ancient China,” in *Mythologies of the Ancient World*, ed. Samuel N. Kramer (New York: Anchor, 1961), 369-408.

¹² If Sellmann has in mind Bodde’s discussion of the “Lüxing” 呂刑 chapter of the *Shangshu* 尚書, which ascribes the establishment of penal law to a people called Miao 苗, this would be an egregious example of careless reading, for Bodde himself takes no stand regarding the veracity of that (legendary) account. See Derk Bodde and Clarence Morris, *Law in Imperial China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), 13f.

223, n. 10) is a cliché suggesting perfunctory acquaintance with that movement.¹³ His conclusion is tendentious:

There has been a tendency in Western thought, following the notions of independence and individualism, to further assume that the core of human life is a simple, immortal soul, that the essence of human life is an unchanging spiritual substance that partakes of the eternal and the good or heaven. (168)

That may have been a “tendency in Western thought” in the eleventh century, but certainly not in the twenty-first.

PAUL R. GOLDIN

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

¹³ Cf. Isaiah Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism*, ed. Henry Hardy, The A.W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts; Bollingen Series XXXV:45 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 52ff.

The following twelve reviews are by the editor of *Sino-Platonic Papers*.

Nicholas Sims-Williams. *Bactrian Documents from Northern Afghanistan. I: Legal and Economic Documents*. Studies in the Khalili Collection, III. Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum, Part II, Inscriptions of the Seleucid and Parthian Periods and of Eastern Iran and Central Asia, VI: Bactrian. Oxford: The Nour Foundation in association with Azimuth Editions and Oxford University Press, 2000. 255 pages.

The first thing that must be said about this volume is that it is a thing of beauty. Physically, the book is a work of fine craftsmanship that suitably matches the high quality of the scholarship contained within it. Readers of this journal will be familiar with the author, Nicholas Sims-Williams, as one of the world's leading Iranianists, but may be more apt to think of a certain type of camel when they hear the word "Bactrian," rather than of a Middle Iranian language spoken in Central Asia in the period following the first century BCE. The present volume is the first of a three volume set that will consist of two text volumes and one volume of plates. Together, these three volumes are "intended to record as fully as possible one of the most sensational discoveries of the last decade, a series of more than a hundred Bactrian documents written in cursive script on leather, cloth, or wood." (From the Preface) With the exception of one document on cloth and a series of very short texts inscribed on wooden sticks, all of the documents presented in this volume are written on leather.

As the author points out, a dozen years ago the Bactrian corpus was essentially limited to a single inscription from the site of Surkh Kotal and short legends on seals and coins. Nearly all the other texts known at the time were either illegible or incomprehensible. Naturally, with documents of this sort, there are many uncertain passages, but Sims-Williams does not succumb to the temptation to pepper his transcriptions and translations with asterisks and question marks since, as he straightforwardly says, nearly everything in these texts is open to question. Instead, relying on context, he offers the best possible readings he can come up with.

There are four main types of documents in this volume, and they are grouped as follows: 1. legal documents (e.g., contracts and receipts); all of these are dated and arranged in chronological order, 2. similar, but mostly fragmentary documents of unknown date, 3. lists and accounts, 4. wooden slips. The documents in the last two groups are not dated.

Aside from their great linguistic importance, these documents afford us a glimpse of a wide variety of activities of the Bactrian populace. Thus, among the dated documents, we

find marriage contracts; receipts for quantities of flour, wine, grain, straw, and so on; a contract for a loan of grain and wine; a deed for the gift of an estate; a statement of produce due from an estate; deeds for the purchase or lease of an estate; a deed of manumission; a receipt for the repayment of a loan; contracts for the lease of vineyards; numerous undertakings to keep the peace (!); a contract for the purchase of a male slave; a contract for a loan of money; a deed for the gift of an estate and of a female slave; and a judicial declaration in the form of an open letter. Among the lists and accounts, we find a list of men supplied by various named persons; a list of quantities of wine produced (?) by various named persons; a list of quantities of an unspecified commodity supplied to various named persons; and lists of payments for animals (especially sheep) supplied by various named persons. The twenty-nine wooden slips are records of deliveries or receipts.

Preceding the transcribed texts and their translations is a section of succinct notes on orthography and grammar, as well as a list of usages employed in the presentation of the texts. Many of the texts are fairly lengthy and include surprising information. The very first document (A) tells how Bab and Piduk, the "legitimate sons" of one Bag-farn, both simultaneously married Ralik, the daughter of Far-wesh. The document includes these enlightened declarations: "And I, Bab, and I, Piduk, shall not have the right to make another (woman our) wife, nor to keep a free (woman as a) concubine, to whom Ralik should not agree; and if I, Bab, or I, Piduk should make another (woman our) wife, or keep a free (woman as a) concubine, to whom Ralik should not agree, then (we) shall give a fine to the royal treasury of twenty dinars of struck gold and the same to the opposite party." As if all of this were not complicated enough already (yet handled in a judicially clear manner), the plot thickens when we go on to read that Bab and Piduk are employed "in free service" by Ninduk Okhshbadugan, whose own sons had apparently also been attracted to the fair and fecund Ralik:

And a declaration was made (by us), Ninduk son of Muzda-wanind, and Yamsh-bandag and Pap and Yat, the sons of Ninduk, whose house is called Okhshbadugan, that we ourselves have requested Ralik, and in this matter we are in agreement, and (we) shall not have the right -- I, Ninduk, and I, Yamsh-bandag, and I, Pap, and I, Yat -- to assign duties and tasks to Ralik, nor (to) whatever (child) may be born from Ralik. And whatever son may be born from Ralik, then she may have (him) for her own, and may put (him) for hire in free service as (his) grandfather and father did; and whatever daughter may be born, then in as much as the father and the mother

and the family may agree to give (her) away, then (we) shall grant (their) wish.

These declarations are followed by a statement of the fines to which Ninduk and his sons will be subject if they contravene them, and the document ends with a list of the contents of the dowry which includes (among other items) four bracelets, three pairs of shoes, and two sheep.

Document X deals with a threesome of men (Kamird-far, Wahran, and Mir) jointly possessing a woman named Zeran.

In document B, Aspal-bid acknowledges that he has received from Zuwanind, the store-keeper, forty measures of flour and grain, twelve jars of wine, ten sieves, ten bags of straw, fourteen bundles of lucerne, and one chicken. The immediacy of such documents, where we know precisely the date of the transaction, the names of the parties involved, their positions, and who received exactly what from whom, is enchanting.

We also learn that estates and vineyards have names, that their boundaries are often determined by water courses, that water rights are a major topic of contention, that the Hephthalites (then later the Turks and the Arabs) were in a position of being able to tax the citizens of the realm -- often so heavily as to bankrupt them or cause them to sell off parcels of their property, that large payments were usually made in the form of gold and / or sheep, that wealthy families had fortresses, that judges and courts were respected, and so forth. Many of the documents occur in duplicate, for the obvious reason that each party to the agreement would keep their own copy. Another interesting aspect is the listing of the witnesses (usually distinguished as freemen) who affix their seals to the documents. Sometimes a god (e.g., Wakhsh -- whose name many individuals took as their own personal name) would be spoken of as present at the signing of a document.

The exactions of the Hephthalites seemed particularly onerous. Document al is a listing of moneys paid out by a person for all sorts of purposes, but mostly to satisfy the demands of the Hephthalites, including one whose horse died "in the city," giving him another excuse to exact payments from the local populace.

Document T concerns the deeding over of a property named Bashunan Pargan by a "queen, the lady of the household," to the god Kamird and, as his representative, the priest Kamird-far, together with "a slave-girl for (your) pleasure and for (your) use."

Following the presentation of the texts is a long Glossary giving Bactrian words transcribed into Greek letters, parts of speech, definitions, etymological and phonological notes, and lists of all occurrences by document number and line. After the Glossary comes a Reverse Index, which enables one to look up words by their endings, and an Index of

Words from Old Iranian, Middle Iranian, New Iranian, other Indo-European languages, Chinese, Elamite, and Turkish that have been cited in the "Notes on Orthography and Grammar" and in the lemmata of the Glossary.

The documents collected in this volume share features with documents from earlier cultures (Babylonian, Aramaic, Greek, and so forth) and with those from neighboring cultures (Middle Persian, Parthian, Sogdian, Khotanese, Uyghur Turkish, Tibetan, and so on). Sims-Williams, however, concentrates on deciphering the documents themselves and leaves the comparative work to others. In order to facilitate consultation with the Bactrian texts, the author intentionally makes his translation style as literal as possible.

The following are the owners of the documents: Muhammad Riaz Babar, Sam Fogg, Ikuo Hirayama, and Nasser David Khalili. The scholarly world owes all of them a debt of gratitude for making these priceless documents available for study and publication. Of course, we are all the more indebted to Nicholas Sims-Williams for doing the exacting work required to produce a volume of such ample dimensions and stellar quality.

Richard Salomon. *A Gāndhārī Version of the Rhinoceros Sūtra*. British Library Kharoṣṭhī Fragment 5B. With a contribution by Andrew Glass. *Gandhāran Buddhist Texts*, vol. 1. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001. xvii, 234 pages; illustrations.

Mark Allon. *Three Gāndhārī Ekottarikāgama-Type Sūtras*. British Library Kharoṣṭhī Fragments 12 and 14. With a contribution by Andrew Glass. *Gandhāran Buddhist Texts*, vol. 2. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001. xxv, 336 pages, illustrations.

With the publication of these two volumes, the Gandhāran Buddhist Texts series is in full swing. The series began with the survey volume by Richard Salomon entitled *Ancient Buddhist Scrolls from Gandhāra: The British Library Kharoṣṭhī Fragments*, with contributions by Raymond Allchin and Mark Barnard, and a Foreword by His Holiness the Dalai Lama (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999). This introductory volume received a lengthy, detailed, and laudatory review by Daniel Boucher in Reviews VIII, *Sino-Platonic Papers*, 98 (January, 2000), 58-71, so I shall not recount its contents and virtues here. Suffice it to say that the project is in good hands in the person of its director, Richard Salomon, the foremost Kharoṣṭhī specialist of our time. The American government has given the project good support in the form of substantial grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Henry Luce Foundation has also provided significant financial assistance. The number of scholars associated with the project, both at

the University of Washington (where it is headquartered) and elsewhere, is quite large, by now amounting to more than two dozen collaborators. Although the individual volumes in the series are attributed to specific authors, they are truly the result of impressive teamwork, which is duly recognized in the prefaces to each volume.

For those who are unfamiliar with several of the recurring terms in the study of these texts, Gāndhārī is a type of Middle Indic Prakrit (i.e., a vernacular language) characteristic of Gandhāra (roughly equivalent to the region that is now known as northwestern Pakistan and eastern Afghanistan, but with connections extending far beyond those environs) during the period between, at a minimum, the first century BCE and the third century CE. Kharoṣṭhī, one of the two indigenous writing systems of India, was the script in which Gāndhārī was customarily written.

Since the *Rhinoceros Sūtra* is officially the first volume in the Gandhāran Buddhist Texts series (*Ancient Buddhist Scrolls from Gandhāra* was a sort of preliminary study that serves as its foundation), it lays out the format, transcription, and citation system before commencing with its presentation of the text. The study of the text proper begins with an introduction to the *Rhinoceros Sūtra* (hereafter *RS*) which, prior to the discovery of the Gāndhārī recension, was known in a Pali version representing the Theravādin tradition and in a Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit version incorporated in the *Mahāvastu-avadāna*, which belongs to the Mahāsaṅghika-Lokottaravādin school. The poetic sutra gets its name from a refrain that is translated variously as "One should wander alone like the rhinoceros," "One should wander alone like the rhinoceros horn," and "One should wander solitary as a rhinoceros horn." Regardless of the differences of opinion concerning the precise signification of the key word in the refrain, the meaning is clear: instead of becoming embroiled in social obligations to family and friends, one should seek enlightenment in solitude.

After a philological discussion of the meaning of the title of the sutra, a look at the place of the *RS* in Buddhist literature, a consideration of the date of the sutra, and an examination of its relationship to the Pali canon, the author turns to a description of the birch bark manuscript. Anyone who has looked at the original condition (rolled up in tight, hard scrolls) of the Gandhāran Buddhist manuscripts will marvel that conservators were able to coax them open without turning them into shambles. Still, even with the utmost care that has been expended in handling and preserving the manuscripts, stray pieces have broken off, thus a tremendous amount of ingenuity and patience is required to fit everything together. The application of sophisticated computer skills has been invaluable in moving the pieces around and in virtually reconstructing the scrolls. The author goes into extraordinary detail concerning the methods used to establish the text from its fragments.

Having completed his account of the physical conditions and treatment of the manuscript, Salomon launches into a textual analysis of the *uddāna* ("mnemonic summary") which is appended to the bottom of the scroll. Because the writing style of the *uddāna* is slightly different from that of the main text and because it was the *uddāna* that permitted the reconstruction of the original sequence of the disordered fragments, it certainly merits the attention that Salomon devotes to it.

The fourth chapter is a comparison of the Pali, Sanskrit, and Gāndhārī versions of the *RS*. Technical questions of language, translation, and meter are taken up, partly with a view toward determining the source of the Gāndhārī version. Salomon tentatively concludes that it derives from a midland Middle Indo-Aryan dialect, one not very dissimilar from Pali as it is known today.

Chapter five treats matters of paleography and orthography, including the type of pen used, general features of the hand, stroke analysis, "foot" marks (the endings of the strokes), minute analyses of individual letter forms (going through the entire alphabet, together with selected combinations), and corrections. On the basis of paleographic research, Salomon concludes that the manuscript of the *RS* probably dates to sometime during the first half of the first century CE. Orthographic questions (such as *anusvāra* [marking of nasalization] in word stems and in inflections, geminate consonants, diacritic marks, and sandhi phenomena) are also taken up, with perceptive observations being offered in each instance.

Part I of the book concludes with chapters on phonology and morphology, paying close attention to the special features of Gāndhārī.

Part II is the heart of the volume, giving transcriptions of the verses, including the reconstructed portions, together with their translations into English. "as a matter of convenience." In the midst of these typeset pages may be found eight color plates showing the reconstructed manuscript of the *RS*, what it looked like before reconstruction, and the following types of fragments: small fragments on recto, small fragments on verso, debris box fragments, clump of fragments located in debris box, and curl fragments in debris box. Some of the pieces are exceedingly tiny. So long as they carried the slightest trace of writing, however, they were carefully scrutinized for possible incorporation in the reconstruction.

Part III goes through the text again, but this time reconstructing it more fully on the basis of parallels from other texts (which are also provided for easy consultation), and giving extensive commentary for each verse. The commentaries discuss all types of relevant questions, from the meanings and structure of individual words to further analysis of specific matters pertaining to the reconstruction of parts of the text.

Four appendices are 1. readings of unlocated fragments, 2. a concordance of Gāndhārī, Pali, and Sanskrit texts of the *RS*, 3. texts of the Pali and Sanskrit versions of the *RS*, and 4. edition of British Library Fragment 5A. The volume concludes with a list of references and a word index with head words given according to their forms in the reconstructed text, followed by their Pali and Sanskrit equivalents, grammatical and etymological notes, and occurrences numbered by stanza.

All in all, Salomon's presentation of the *RS* is a truly impressive achievement, leaving (at least for me) virtually nothing to be desired.

Mark Allon's *Three Gāndhārī Ekottarikāgama-Type Sūtras* (hereafter *TGETS*) naturally adheres to the same format and practices as Salomon's *RS*. However, since it was published after Salomon's introductory volume, *Ancient Buddhist Scrolls from Gandhāra*, and his *RS*, Allon is able to dispense with some of the basic exposition and preliminary discussion. In his Preface, Allon briefly reviews the matter of the discovery of the texts and their acquisition by the British Library, the work that the project has done thus far, and additional volumes that are currently in progress.

One notable difference between Allon's treatment of *TGETS* and Salomon's of the *RS* is that, while there do not appear to be parallel Sanskrit texts available for comparison with much of the *TGETS*, Chinese translations of relevant texts are available (Chinese parallels are lacking for *RS*), and Tibetan parallels are also available for parts of *TGETS*. (Pali parallels, of course, are abundant for *TGETS*, just as they are for *RS*.) Another difference is that Allon is dealing with three texts that are in narrative prose. Furthermore, their subject matter is more philosophical, catechetical, and numerical (in terms of organization). Consequently, Allon devotes more attention to the structure, diction, content, and sectarian affiliation of *TGETS* than Salomon does for *RS*. As for the underlying source dialect of *TGETS*, Allon hazards that it "was something broadly akin to Pali, though not necessarily identical with it."

Allon's physical description of the manuscript and his examination of its paleography and orthography are similar to those afforded the *RS* by Salomon. Allon also provides very detailed information concerning the phonology and morphology of the language in which *TGETS* is written. Because Allon is dealing with three sutras, his apparatus for presenting the reconstruction and translation of the text(s) is somewhat more complicated than that of Salomon for *RS*. I should note that the three sutras in *TGETS* may be referred to as the "Dhoṇa-sutra" (Dhoṇa being the name of a brahman), the "Budhabayaṇa-sutra" (The Sutra on the Buddha's Teaching), and the Prasāṇa-sutra (The Sutra on Effort). Ekottarikāgama refers to one of the four types of āgamas (āgama signifies "peerless law" or system of teaching). These are the *dirghāgamas* (long āgamas;

compilations having to do with cosmogony), *madhyamāgamas* (middle *āgamas*, works on metaphysics), *samyuktāgamas* (mixed *āgamas*, treatises on ecstatic contemplation), and *ekottarāgamas* (numerical *āgamas*, general compilations arranged numerically).

Allon's line-by-line exegeses are quite elaborate, almost exhaustive. A notable aspect of his commentaries is their citation of materials from many other manuscript traditions and collections (e.g., Central Asian [esp. Turfan] finds, Gilgit manuscripts, Thai texts, and other Gandhāran finds). The back matter (appendices, etc.) in Allon's volume are comparable to those I have described for *RS*.

In short, Allon has suitably adapted the precedents established by Salomon for *RS* to fit the *TGETS*, but he has by no means departed from the high standards that were set in *RS*. The overall impression I get from reading Allon is that, in writing it, he has drawn upon a vast amount of lateral reading and that he has brought that broad knowledge to bear on virtually every letter of *TGETS* in the most extraordinarily concentrated fashion. With such tremendously conscientious efforts as those of Salomon and Allon establishing the bar for the Gandhāran Buddhist Texts series, the trustees of the British Library can rest assured that they have entrusted their precious manuscripts to the best possible team of scholars.

Charles Holcombe. *The Genesis of East Asia: 221 B.C.-A.D. 907*. Asian Interactions and Comparisons. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press and Association for Asian Studies, 2001. xii, 332 pages.

This is the third volume in an interesting new series under the general editorship of Joshua Fogel. Judging from what its author, Charles Holcombe, has achieved (I have not read the other two volumes), we can look forward to a lively and thought-provoking succession of volumes coming out under the aegis of this series. While there is much that I disagree with in this volume (above all, the author's strongly Sinocentric approach) and some assertions that I am not at all sure about (for example, that the first Vietnamese state did not arise until the year 939), I give him a great deal of credit for a number of things. Among these, one that stands out is the sheer effort of attempting to write an integrated history of East Asia for the period from the Qin unification of the East Asian Heartland in the late third century BCE to the end of the Tang Dynasty (i.e., the beginning of the tenth century). Secondly, Holcombe has read widely in an impressive number of primary sources originally written in Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, and Chinese, and he has acquainted himself with a large body of significant secondary literature written in English, Japanese, and Chinese. Third, he has looked beyond East Asia to Southeast Asia, South Asia, Central

Asia, and Northern Asia to see how these regions interacted with and compared to East Asia. Fourth, he has examined many facets of the development of civilization, from religion to literature to politics. Fifth, he has adopted a multidisciplinary approach, utilizing data from linguistics, archeology, and texts to build his case. Sixth, he makes useful comparisons to European and Middle Eastern history. Seventh, he is generally careful in his citations of materials written in other languages. And so forth and so on.

Having said so much positive about the book, my final impression is that the book is flawed in fundamental respects. Among these, some of the most salient are: 1. an overemphasis on the continuity of the Chinese state, when what we actually have is a succession of states, many -- if not most -- of them established by non-Sinitic peoples, 2. a too-easy acceptance of official Sinitic historiographical views of other peoples, 3. the proposition that non-Sinitic states in East Asia necessarily wished to emulate the Sinitic imperial model, 4. a failure to recognize the profound interactions between eastern and western Eurasia already from the Neolithic and Bronze Age, such that the model of Chinese civilization as having originated completely independently and constituting a polarity with the West simply can no longer be maintained, 5. an unwillingness to confront the reality of the cumbersomeness of what the author somewhat surprisingly, yet consistently, refers to as *kanji* (i.e., "sinographs") -- even the great Song period encyclopedist, Zheng Qiao (1104-1162), sensed that *devanāgarī* was more efficient in recording language (and spreading ideas) than Chinese characters.

Still and again, this is a book that is engagingly written (without being contentious) and makes one think. It is definitely worth reading, and I expect that many people will be doing so in the coming years.

Peter Francis, Jr. *Asia's Maritime Bead Trade*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002. xi, 305 pages; 48 black and white plates, 48 color plates.

This book forms a very interesting contrast with the volume by Charles Holcombe reviewed just above. It is ironic that both books were published by the same publisher, that both books begin the intensive period of their investigations at around the third century BCE, and that both attempt to synthesize developments in East Asia and beyond. Other than that, however, they could hardly be more dissimilar. Whereas Holcombe deals with very big ideas and many different types of evidence, Peter Francis, Jr. focuses on tiny, seemingly insignificant, beads. Holcombe is a professional academic with extensive Sinological training and the ability to read and cite texts in Chinese and Japanese; Francis

appears to be an amateur who must rely on secondary sources and translations for information in non-Western language materials. And so forth.

That said, I have tremendous respect for what Francis has achieved. Through dint of utter dedication, the author has made himself into **the** authority on glass beads. And that, as will become clear to anyone who takes the time to read this book carefully, is no mean feat, since beads can tell us a tremendous amount about cross-cultural contacts and trading patterns.

Francis writes that he became attracted to the "universality and complex history of beads" while he was teaching English in Iran during the mid-1970s. This led to his enrolling in the Department of Archeology at Deccan College, Pune, India. By 1979, he had become so engrossed in the subject that he founded the Center for Bead Research, and he hasn't looked back since. The bibliography of the volume under review lists over 80 books and articles on beads written by Francis, and I am sure that there are hundreds more, including *Beads of the World*, a standard work on the subject. He is also the webmaster of TheBeadSite.com, which is the most popular location for information of all sorts on beads.

So what has Peter Francis, Jr. wrought in *Asia's Maritime Bead Trade*? Simply put, this is a fascinating, fact-filled examination of a flourishing pattern of trade that linked up half the world during classical and medieval times. Part One serves as an introduction to the book. It commences with a chapter that tells the scope of the work, where we learn (p. 7b), among other valuable bits of information, that "The presence of Harappān etched carnelians in North Grave A of Hili, Oman (ca. 2300 to 2100 B.C.), attests to an early maritime trade in beads." (We are off to a good start!) For this and all other evidence cited in his book, Francis gives a source: Serge Cleuziou, "The Bronze-Age Cultures of Oman and Their Relations with India and Mesopotamia," Paper read at the Fifteenth International Conference on South Asian Archaeology (Leiden, 1999). This, typically, reveals Francis's extreme assiduousness in tracking down valuable references. His bibliography is both up to date and comprehensive in its inclusion of earlier materials. For instance, among many other intriguing items entered in the bibliography, Francis lists "Articles of Import and Export of Canton," *The Chinese Repository*, 2.10 (1834), 447-472. Or how about this item? Liu Yingsheng and Adrian B. Lapien, "San Fu Qi, Its Dependent Port States, and the Trade Among Them (A Study of the Description by Zhao Rukua [*sic*])," Paper read at International Seminar: Harbour Cities along the Silk Roads, Surabaya (Copy available at Center for Bead Research, Lake Placid, New York). The bibliography is filled with such items. If a book, article, pamphlet, report, or paper of any sort has anything to do with beads and it is written in English or French, Francis will track it down and find it. His bibliography is almost intimidating in its thoroughness. In this respect (and in many of the

other aspects I have already mentioned above), he reminds me of Emma Bunker, the well-known researcher on early Chinese metallurgy and ornament, except that he is -- if anything -- even more comprehensive, if not actually compulsive. Reading through his bibliography, I kept saying to myself, "How in the world did he ever find this? And this?" The bibliography alone bespeaks a lifetime of energetic activity, with his tentacles continually extended in eight directions ready to snatch up any delectable bead-snack that comes to his attention.

Francis quotes Pliny as effortlessly as he does Yan Shigu, a seventh-century Chinese commentator on the *Han shu* (*History of the Han*). He relies on such excellent early Sinologists as E. Bretschneider, F. Hirth, and W. W. Rockhill. He refers to technical terms in Hebrew, Sanskrit, Chinese, and dozens of other languages. For more than thirty years, Francis has lived beads. He eats, sleeps, and dreams about beads. His seriousness about anything concerning beads ensures that he maintains a high degree of critical judgement about the reliability of sources and data.

The second chapter is, in effect, a brief primer on beads, bead materials, and beadmaking, taking the reader through a definition of beads, their (universal) distribution, materials (glass, semiprecious stone, and organically derived substances), techniques for working the materials, and terms for describing them. Francis's definition of glass is indicative of the scientific approach he employs: "All glass discussed in this book is a fabricated substance, technically a state of matter made by heating a metal or metalloid above its melting point and allowing it to cool below that point without crystallizing." This is undoubtedly something that Francis could say in his sleep or effortlessly during conversation at a meal.

After the Introduction, the book then proceeds methodically through an investigation of the following: Indo-Pacific beads, Chinese glass beads, beads from the Middle East, stone beads in the Asian maritime trade, and some minor bead industries (particularly in South and Southeast Asia). Francis commences his first chapter on China with this tentative (under)statement: "There is something of a 'problem' when it comes to an accounting of Chinese glass beads." As with so many aspects of the study of China, contentiousness swirls around the study of the origins of beads and the glass that they were made from. Not wanting to offend the proud and powerful Chinese people, Francis deftly dances around the facts that both came from abroad (see the next review below) by unleashing a barrage of information about the writing of history in China and the development of its own beadmaking industry. Since Francis's focus in this book is on the period from 300 BCE forward, from which time the Chinese probably were indeed making their own beads and perhaps even certain types of glass, he is under no obligation to discuss

the ultimate Middle Eastern origins of glass and glass (as well as faience) beads. Since, however, he often discusses earlier precursors of the bead trade in other parts of the book, one gets the strong impression that he does not have the stomach to engage in a debate over the sources of Chinese glass and glass beads, and that he does not want to cut off his access to sources and materials from China.

Once he gets into the historical period for China, Francis is on much solid ground, and he does an excellent job of describing the various regional beadmaking centers and the trade emanating from them. For my taste, though, there is still too much "patting on the back" of this sort (p. 62 b): "China is only now receiving the credit it deserves as a glass-making nation. Early Chinese beadmaking during the Late Zhou period is one of the artistic highlights of bead production anywhere in the world." Given that indigenous Han period beads were of manifestly poor quality, I find such statements to be offensive and condescending. Honest Chinese scholars do not appreciate hearing them either.

Despite his extreme diffidence with regard to the overall history of glass and glass beads in China, Francis is occasionally willing to make a daring speculation when it is not likely to get him in trouble. He mentions (p. 66a) a Chinese Buddhist at Canton around 750 CE who observed boats on the Pearl River that were owned by Indian Brahmans, Persians, and Malays among others "whose numbers are difficult to determine." The Buddhist also noticed red, white, and other colored "barbarians" from Ceylon, the Arab lands, and a place called "Goutang." The last-named place is otherwise unidentified, but its people were blond. I was somewhat startled to read Francis's note number 4 on p. 230b which consists solely of the following question: "Could they possibly have been Vikings?" At first that seemed outrageous to me -- until I reflected that "Goutang" might conceivably be a plausible Middle Sinitic rendering of Gotland.

There is a tremendous amount of valuable information in this large volume. While the author could stand to benefit from a bit more courage and a critical sense in dealing with Chinese sources, I am nonetheless in awe of his extraordinary devotion to his chosen field of research. If only we had a thousand other researchers like him who would be willing to spend their lives studying other vital phenomena of material culture, such as stirrups, snaffle bits, and piping on clothing! If we knew as much about the origins and distribution of such objects and techniques as we do about beads, human history would be so much clearer, and we would have a much stronger realization of the close ties that bind us all together.

Elizabeth ten Grotenhuis, ed. *Along the Silk Road*. Asian Art and Culture, 6. Washington, DC: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution; Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002. 144 pages.

This is a major coup for the University of Washington Press, which advertises the book in their catalog as by "Yo-Yo Ma *et al.*" Although the real editor's name does not appear on the cover, it is clearly printed on the title page. Yet it is true that the renowned cellist is represented in this volume by an interview with the ethnomusicologist Theodore Levin. Indeed, the book is a spinoff from the Silk Road Project which was initiated by Mr. Ma and whose director is Levin. As Milo Cleveland Beach, former director of the Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery remarks in his Foreword, this volume was produced in honor of the multiyear events sponsored by the project.

The book opens with a magnificent two-page topographical map showing the Silk Road lands and giving an excellent sense of their vast extent and great variety. Appropriately, the editor provides a brief, general introduction to "The Silk Road: Ancient and Contemporary." It should be noted that, although silk was transported from China westward along this fabled route, many other things, including various key musical instruments (particularly important in the context of this book), came eastward along it to China. As ten Grotenhuis points out on the last page of her introduction and in the "Silk Road Timeline" that appears just before it, the oldest glass known in Egypt dates to around 2000 BCE, whereas it was not until approximately the middle of the first millennium BCE that glass spread to East Asia. Moreover, "imported glass beads were often valued like gems."

After the interview with Yo-Yo Ma, which forms the first chapter of the book, comes another musically oriented chapter, this one on "Melodic Migration in Northwest China" by the composer Bright Sheng. It consists almost entirely of an account of the author's trip from Xi'an, through the Gansu Corridor, and on to Ürümqi and Kashgar, taken in the year 2000, and a description of the types of musical performance he encountered.

The following chapter holds a special appeal for me personally, because it is by Elizabeth Barber, whom I took on my 1995 expedition to Eastern Central Asia. One of the world's foremost experts on prehistoric textiles, she is both an outstanding linguist and an accomplished archeologist. In less than ten pages, she tells a fascinating story that begins with the words "Silk for glass! Silk for glass!" Barber explains how the Chinese of the Han Dynasty (206 BCE-200 CE) wanted dazzling glass from the west as badly as Greeks and Romans desired shimmering silks from the east. She describes technical innovations in glass production that made it very much "a fitting cultural rival for silk." So much sought

after was fabulous Roman glass in the east that Barber is even willing to speak alternatively of the route along which it travelled as the Glass Road. Aside from silk and glass, which both travelled the Silk Road (though in different directions), Barber also discusses wool, which came eastward at least two thousand years before either. Wool is very much in evidence in Eastern Central Asia, where the famous Bronze Age and Early Iron Age Europoid mummies were discovered, but it did not have much of an impact in China until much later. Facilitating east-west travel (but concentrated north of the mountains across the steppes) were horses and chariots, which had an enormous influence upon China just at the moment that the earliest states were being formed there. Barber's main topic is, of course, textiles, and she treats this subject magisterially, covering various aspects of its technology, linen (which came before wool), and the ultralong sleeve, a fashion craze that came to China during the Han period and became all the rage from then until the Tang (618-907). Such sleeves are still displayed on the Peking Opera stage when an actor wants to be particularly expressive and among Chinese dance troupes. Barber treats all of these subjects in her customarily witty, yet erudite, fashion. A virtuoso performance!

The editor's main contribution to the volume, other than bringing it all together, is a chapter on "Astrology and a Japanese Star Mandala." In it she investigates an astonishingly eclectic ink, color, and gold painting on silk (!) from the Kamakura period (thirteenth century) that is preserved in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. At the center of this circular *mandara* (< Sanskrit *maṇḍala*) sits a red-robed Śākyamuni Buddha on top of Mount Sumeru, axis mundi of the universe. He is surrounded in three concentric rings by human figures and animals inside little circles of their own. They are personifications of the celestial bodies, and among them are Leo the lion, Cancer the crab, and Taurus the bull. Ten Grotenhuis traces these figures, and indeed the *mandara* itself, back to Tang China. Beyond that, she traces the roots of astrology to the paleolithic search for universal order (e.g., notches in reindeer bones and mammoth tusks that may record cycles of the moon and other astronomical or calendrical phenomena). We are on more secure ground in third millennium BCE Mesopotamia, where astrology originated, and where it became highly developed among the Babylonians by the fifth century BCE. Chinese astronomy and astrology had probably begun to receive Babylonian influences by the sixth century BCE. A major theme in this chapter is the role of Indian specialists in transmitting astronomical lore and calendrical science to East Asia and Southeast Asia. Again, in less than ten pages of text, ten Grotenhuis has managed to convey a tremendous amount of intriguing ideas and captivating knowledge.

The next chapter, "Sacred Sites along the Silk Road," consists of photographs by Kenro Izu that are accompanied by the text of Debra Diamond. Izu's method of

photography is so special that I will not attempt to describe it in a diluted fashion, but will say only that it serves exceptionally well to capture the stark spirituality of stone, mud brick constructions, and vast mountain settings. His unusual ability to capture shafts of sunlight is particularly evident in the amazing photograph of Lamayuru Monastery in Ladakh that graces the cover of the volume.

In "Traveling Technologies," Merton C. Flemings, a professor of materials science and engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, stresses the contributions of the modern scientific disciplines (such as geology, archeology, chemistry, metallurgy, and biology) to the understanding of the ancient Silk Road. Flemings begins his tale at what must surely be accounted as the ultimate origins of the Silk Road:

Two hundred million years ago, the great supercontinent called Pangea had broken into several smaller continents. The era of the dinosaurs was beginning. One hundred twenty million years ago, one of those continents, which was to become what we know today as India, was located five thousand kilometers south of Asia, traveling northward at a speed of about ten centimeters [lovely factoid!]. While India was on its way north, the great extinction of the dinosaurs and many other species took place. By forty million years ago, India had collided with Asia....

And so on right up to the prehistory and the history of the Silk Road. Among the technologies mentioned by Flemings that were transferred from east to west or from west to east were glass manufacture, sericulture, printing, gunpowder, the eccentric connecting rod and piston rod, and (clockwork) escapement. The author devotes most of his attention to metallurgy, however, and he gives an exceptionally fair, honest, and well-informed account of its origins in West Asia, its development in Central Asia, and its magnificent elaboration in East Asia. Covering both the copper-bronze and iron-steel traditions, Flemings has written a succinct, yet masterfully authoritative, essay that includes such precious primary evidence as this letter Hatusilis III, king of the Hittites, sent to Shalmaneser I of Assyria in the mid-thirteenth century BCE around the time when iron was first produced:

As for the good iron you wrote me about, good iron in Kuzzuwatna in my seal house is not available. It is a bad time for producing iron, as I have written. They will produce good iron, but so far they have not finished. When they have finished I will send it to you. Today I am having an iron dagger brought to you.

Who says that science is boring?!

The final chapter of the book was quite unexpected for me. On Iranian cinema and written by Hamid Naficy, it seemed at first to be totally inappropriate for a volume that attempts to provide the American public with an intelligent and informative overview of the Silk Road. Reading through Naficy's sensitive study, however, and reflecting on its deeper implications, I realized that it provides a perfect capstone for the volume and that whoever suggested its inclusion is a genius. For the last several years, I myself have come to see the Iranians (= Aryans = "nobles ones") as the prime movers (literally and figuratively) of what we now call the Silk Road from around the end of the third millennium and the beginning of the second millennium BCE when we can first begin to detect their existence. So much so, in fact, that I frequently allude to the Iranians as the *Kulturvermittlers* (cultural brokers) par excellence of Eurasia. This is not the place to enter into a disquisition on the huge (but all too often totally ignored) impact of the Iranians on the history and culture of the world -- from Camelot to Japanese court orchestras, from Chinese mythology and novels to the yinyang symbol on the shields of Roman soldiers (half a millennium before it appears in China!), from ovicaprids (sheep and goats) on the steppes to horses and chariots almost everywhere -- not to mention ubiquitous chess (which, though originally borrowed from the Indians, was introduced to everyone else by the Iranians). [I had better stop right now if I ever want to finish this review, and finish I must. Tomorrow I depart for an archeological journey to the Ukraine, where -- among other manifestations of Iranian presence -- I want to investigate the burial mounds of the Scythians, having earlier seen copious evidence of their activity in the east.] The book about the true place of the Iranians in world history has yet to be written.

One of the most noteworthy statements Mr. Ma has made about the Silk Road, and it is repeated several times in the volume by various contributors, is that the Internet may be seen as the contemporary equivalent of this transcontinental route. And so it is. Both were / are wide-reaching networks of communication and both effectively link(ed) up virtually the whole of the civilized world. Yo-Yo Ma is a friend of mine, and it was -- to the best of my recollection of what he told me when we first met over half-a-dozen years ago -- his airport reading of the first article concerning my work on the desiccated Europoid corpses of Eastern Central Asia that galvanized him into starting the Silk Road Project (Evan Hadingham, "The Mummies of Xinjiang," *Discover* [April, 1994], 68-77). (The interview with Levin understandably is almost wholly about musical aspects of the Silk Road.) But I suspect that there is something deeper within the great musician himself that has driven him to organize this large project. His surname may indicate Central Asian or West Asian

ancestry, since it is very common among ethnic Hui Muslims (in which case it could be thought of as the transcription of the first syllable of Muhammad; cf. the last review below). Then there is Mr. Ma's distinctive physiognomy. But I have never asked him about these private matters. Perhaps someday I will if the opportunity presents itself.

It goes without saying that the volume is lavishly illustrated in color on thick, semi-glossy stock throughout. *Along the Silk Road* is a pleasure to behold and a joy to read. All who participated in its creation deserve a warm round of applause, nay, a standing ovation!

Britta Erickson. *Words without Meaning, Meaning without Words: The Art of Xu Bing*. Asian Art & Culture. Washington, DC: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution; Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001. 84 pages.

In the same series as the volume reviewed just above, *Words without Meaning, Meaning without Words* was published to coincide with an exhibition at the Sackler Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution. Edited by Britta Erickson, an independent scholar living in Stanford, this book includes a revealing autobiographical essay by XU Bing, a substantial examination of the artist and his work by the editor, plus 39 color illustrations and 16 black-and-white illustrations.

Xu Bing is my favorite modern Chinese artist. Like Yo-Yo Ma, he is also a friend of mine. Though we have not yet met (we will shortly), I have corresponded with Mr. Xu and we have exchanged our publications. Both Mr. Xu and I have a deep concern with the role of the Chinese characters in the development of Chinese civilization, and we have both experimented with a variety of means to probe their form and function. Here is my own brief essay that distills what I take to be the essence of the artist.

Xu Bing was born in Chongqing (Sichuan) in 1955, although his ancestral roots lie in Wenling (Zhejiang). After graduating from upper middle school in 1973, Xu Bing was sent down to the countryside for re-education the following year. He shared a house with four other students in Huapen Commune, a village consisting of thirty-nine peasant families who worked their poor land in Yanqing District northwest of Beijing. Aside from carrying out his mandatory farming duties, Xu Bing found time to help edit and produce a newsletter entitled (after a line of Chairman Mao's verse) "Brightly Colored Mountain Flowers in Full Bloom (Lanman shanhua)." Already in his graphics for this newsletter, as well as in his exquisitely written and illustrated chalkboard announcements, Xu Bing's exceptional talent was evident. With the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, it became possible for him to return to Beijing. In 1977, Xu Bing was admitted to the Central Academy of Fine Arts

where he graduated in 1981. He stayed on to teach and continue his studies at the Academy, and received his Master of Arts in 1987.

Following a lengthy period of preparation, Xu Bing's monumentally iconoclastic installation exhibition entitled *Book from the Sky (Tianshu)* opened at the China Art Gallery (Beijing) in 1988. The combination of the severe criticism to which Xu Bing was subjected for this work and the generally repressive climate that ensued upon the massacres in and around Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989 compelled him to emigrate to the United States in 1990. Since moving to New York, his artistic creativity has flourished.

Xu Bing is one of the foremost Chinese artists working today. His formidable interational reputation, however, is based not on painting or sculpture, but rather on graphic arts. Xu Bing is particularly noted for the bold and daring transformations that he works upon the Chinese characters. He has now gone far beyond the utterly impenetrable *Book from Heaven* that is so perfectly familiar and thoroughly redolent of tradition for Chinese viewers. Among his recent experiments have been the exhibition of copulating pigs whose skin is covered with inscrutable alphabetic and character writing, English words written in the shape of Chinese characters, and Chinese characters morphing into alphabetic form and even taking flight as winged fowl.

Xu Bing continues to probe the relationship between language and writing. Living in the cosmopolis of New York City, he has ample subject matter to stimulate his interest and broaden his vision. While it is impossible to predict what his next experiments will be, it is likely that his preoccupation with the cultural conditioning of script will remain a vital concern.

Chaturachinda, Gwyneth, Sunanda Krishnamurty, and Pauline W. Tabtiang. *Dictionary of South and Southeast Asian Art*. Chiang Mai, Thailand: Silkworm Books, 2000. 144 pages.

I would not recommend this book to the specialist, although it may be of some value to the layman who knows next to nothing about South and Southeast Asian art. There are a lot of real problems with the work that severely limit its usefulness and lower its reliability. First of all, it neither clearly distinguishes Sanskrit from Pali nor provides diacriticals for either of these languages. Secondly, its small size and scope mean that it can only include the most common terms, terms that will be known to anyone who has taken the equivalent of a semester of instruction in the art history of the regions in question. Third, some of the definitions are, to put it bluntly, erroneous. For example, the definition for "trigram" begins

thus: "Symbol indicating the eight points of the compass used by geomancers." The illustration, labeled "trigram," shows the *yinyang* symbol surrounded by the eight trigrams. Other definitions are close to useless. "Mudra," for instance, is defined as "A symbolic gesture of the hands in Buddhist iconography; a mark or seal." The accompanying illustration shows six different hand gestures and is labeled simply "*mudra: six variations*," without identifying any of them. It would have been helpful had there been a reference to the entry on *abhayamudra*, where we do actually find a fairly full explanation of the nature and purpose of this particular mudra. A few of the entries seem to be out of place in a dictionary of this sort, especially one where space is at a distinct premium (e.g., "betel nut," whose definition begins: "Containers and equipment, usually with a tray, used to hold and prepare the ingredients for betel chewing, a long-standing tradition in Southeast Asia." Still, for travel or quick reference, one can occasionally find useful, or at least curious, information within the covers of this book. I have long been aware of how widespread various transformations of the word "Frank" is in many languages to indicate people or things from Europe, but did not realize that it was also in Thai: "*farang*, a white-skinned foreigner."

The color photographs between pages 11 and 18 enhance the book, and there are scores of helpful line drawings. The dictionary proper is preceded by a chronology of South and Southeast Asia, and it is followed by lists of selected readings and suggested museums.

Karl, Rebecca E. *Staging the World: Chinese Nationalism at the Turn of the Twentieth Century*. Asia-Pacific: Culture, Politics, and Society. Durham: Duke University Press, 2002. xii, 314 pages.

Despite its title and the photograph of an actor applying makeup that is on its cover, this is not a book about the theater. Rather, it employs the stage as a metaphor for the projection of a nationalistic self-image. Yet the book does begin with the presentation of an actual drama, and the notion of international relations as a play serves as a foundational image for the rest of the author's argument. The play in question had its debut in a crowded Shanghai teahouse on August 5, 1904. A so-called "new-style Peking opera," it was the actor-playwright Wang Xiaonong's first attempt to produce a work specifically designed for his opera reform movement. Entitled *Guazhong lanyin*, the play is about an imaginary war between Poland and Turkey, which leads to the partition of Poland. The title of the play is not particularly difficult to translate (it literally means "Seeds of the Melon, Cause of the

Orchid." Each character of the title, however, conveys a complicated pun: *gua* ("melon") also stands for *guafen* ("partition [a nation]"), *zhong* ("seed") may also signify "race [of people]," *lan* ("orchid") also serves as the transcription of the second syllable of the name Poland, while *yin* ("cause") evokes the Buddhist concept of *yinyuan* (Sanskrit *hetupratyaya*, "dependent causation"). The highly charged political questions that the play addresses on its surface are thus undergirded by traditional philosophical notions and introduce contemporary ideas such as Darwinism. An English translation of the text of *Guazhong lanyin* is given in the Appendix. It is a rare treat indeed to read lines such as this sung (N.B.: presumably in Peking opera style) by the Polish Emperor: "These buildings, decorated with dragons and phoenixes, are ancient and have endured for centuries." It is also intriguing that the emperor passes his messages on to others through a head eunuch. While all of this may strike us today as inordinately charming, Wang's purpose was one of dead seriousness. The issues he dealt with included those of national dignity and war.

The thesis that Rebecca Karl builds in *Staging of the World* is both novel and persuasive. Namely, the emergence of Chinese nationalism at the turn of the twentieth century was not strictly a response to Japan and the West, as is generally thought, but also the result of a growing sense of identification with the dispossessed nations of the world. Karl's gaze is wide-ranging, touching upon revolution in the Philippines, ethnic aspects of the Boer War, and Hawaii as legitimate national space for Chinese (a sobering prospect). One is almost afraid that the center will not hold, but what keeps it all together is the idea that China was fully capable of creating its own stance toward all the other nations on earth. It did not have to wait passively to react to the aggressive moves of hostile powers. According to Karl, Chinese nationalism was strongly conditioned by ethnicity.

Eloquently expressed and solidly researched, this is a book that anyone with an interest in late Qing-early Republican history will profit from reading.

Barlow, Tani E., ed. *New Asian Marxisms*. a positions book. Durham: Duke University Press, 2002. xv, 422 pages.

Just when we thought that Marxism was dead, or at least close to dying, we discover that there is a whole new host of Marxisms arising. Or so it seems.

I read this volume not so much as wishful thinking but as a coming to terms. The prefatory remarks of Tani Barlow, godmother of the positions project, are well-nigh wistful. As always, it is a time of "late capitalist modernity"; in other words, capitalism is perpetually

on the verge of dissolution. Yet the work of the scholars whose essays have been collected in this volume

is not so much... about disillusionment or hope as an attempt to confront desacralization on a profound scale and in light of absolutely specific historical catastrophes. Thus a highly invested, even pedantic concern with the places where everything has diverged does not counsel disillusionment. On the contrary it confirms to me a willingness to excavate the here-and-now.

It is telling that Barlow's language mixes religion and history on a grand scale, the pathos serving as an indicator of the most intense commitment against all odds. Scholarship may be redemptive after all, but still one must cope with divergence. The real question, then, is to discover the nature of this divergence and what it presages. Unfortunately, all of the contributors to this volume (save one, to be noted momentarily) are, first and foremost, scholars. Not only does this profession get in the way of their commitment, it vitiates any attempt at resurrection. Faith and unfettered inquiry are poor companions.

The baker's dozen of essays in *New Asian Marxisms* have all been previously published in *positions*. Only the Introduction ("Decency and Debasement") was newly written just for this volume, and only its author, William Pietz, a political activist from Los Angeles, is not an academic. It is striking that -- although the volume is saturated with moral rhetoric, the highest ground of all is claimed by none other than Pietz, and it is this that enables him to critique all of the other authors from a **position** that is virtually unassailable. Pietz was a superb choice for someone to write the introduction to a volume on the verge of grief, yet striving to maintain dignity.

I close the way the volume closes: people who end up asking questions end up asking questions. That may be all to the good, *n'est-ce pas?*

Zhang, Xudong, ed. *Whither China? Intellectual Politics in Contemporary China*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001. ix, 391 pages.

Speaking of questions, I love the title of this book. If we are going to ask questions, why not ask the biggest one of all? Do not all other questions for China scholars ultimately boil down to this one? What perplexes me is whether any of the answers proposed have any claim to correctness or, indeed, whether any answers have been given at all.

The volume under review started out as a special issue of *Social Text* (no. 55, Summer 1998). In its present reincarnation as a book, several articles previously published in journals have been added and a new introductory chapter has been contributed by the editor. In his preface, Xudong Zhang provides part of the answer to the BIG QUESTION:

In a holistic (and simplistic) way, one can see the contradictions of contemporary Chinese intellectual life as predicated on the difficulty for the Chinese nation (as experienced, imagined, and conceptualized by its intellectuals) to reassert itself in an enveloping new world order -- now present in every domain and at every level of human activity -- as the country rapidly merges with the economic system of global capitalism. Consequently, the general ideological and political battle line among Chinese intellectuals is drawn between those who seek smooth integration with a homogeneous "world civilization" (as it is defined by the neoliberal discourse of free-market capitalism and Western triumphalism, i.e., the rhetoric of "the end of History") and those who envision and strive for a pluralistic world in which differences in tradition, culture, and social-political ideals can be viewed as assets rather than burdens for the creation of better lives. This profound difference cuts across various ideological persuasions, political convictions, theoretical frameworks, and cultural identities; yet its expressivity often takes the form of particular combinations or configurations of those elements. Thus, the situation today can be described not only by how intellectual politics is defined in domestic terms, but by how Chinese intellectual life relates itself to and participates in international cultural politics. The expectation that globalization dictates that intellectuals of different national or regional backgrounds participate in, or even submit to, intellectual and academic politics in the West or the United States without the mediation of that background is naive and unwarranted. However, that qualification does not mean that the intellectual and political struggle in each and every national / regional context does not yearn for an international audience and contribute to an international critical consciousness.

The single most salient term in this pregnant passage is "intellectual." If I may be permitted to ask a fairly large question of my own, when it comes to the direction that a nation decides (or happens) to take, do the views of intellectuals loom large? Xudong Zhang is an intellectual. Not only has he asked the biggest question of all (for China), but he has also

proffered the makings of an answer. However, as is wont for intellectuals, his answer is so well balanced that, in essence, it devolves into a question. This is not necessarily a bad thing. The promise of answering a question with another question may actually be both salutary and honest. To wit, the initial question is so hard that there is, in truth, no simple answer.

The editor is not only an intellectual, he is also very intelligent (the two do not always go hand-in-hand). His introductory chapter, "The Making of the Post-Tiananmen Intellectual Field: A Critical Overview" amounts to a small book of its own. Laced with poignant data and penetrating insights, it is a fitting overture to the ten essays that follow. A leitmotiv of the book is anti-neoliberalism, and there are four chapters grouped under that rubric. They range from a debate over liberalism and democracy, to issues of property rights, the changing role of government, and the question of modernity. After an interlude of post-Tiananmen art, the second major theme of the book, globalism, is introduced. Under this rubric are considered the "handover" of Hong Kong in 1997, two films about the Opium War, market politics, consumerism, mass culture, and subalternity on the streets. An Appendix, which functions as a sort of coda, discusses the perplexing phenomenon of "socialist everydayness."

Whither China? Right where it is headed, and nobody is going to stop it.

Wei MA, Jianzhong MA, and Kevin Stuart. *The Folklore of China's Islamic Salar Nationality*. Chinese Studies, 15. Lewiston, New York: E. Mellen Press, 2001. x, 260 pages.

This is a valuable collection of authentic Salar stories, legends, myths, songs, and proverbs. Anyone who reads through the materials presented in this book will learn a great deal about the origins, notable figures, social values, religious practices, and folkways of this intriguing group of people who are located in the far northwest of China. The topical arrangement (e.g., by "Romance," "Brotherhood," "Humor," "Lullabies," etc.) and generous index make it easy to find what one is looking for. Especially to be noted are the close cultural and linguistic interactions of the Turkic Salar with their Tibetan and Chinese neighbors.

The materials presented in this volume will be particularly useful for scholars doing research on language contact and interference. The authors have conscientiously provided each text in three forms: a semi-orthographic transcription (the Salar Alphabet which is compatible with Pinyin for Modern Standard Mandarin), a slightly modified IPA

(International Phonetic Alphabet) transcription, and a faithful English translation. Because they carefully number each phrase in all three forms of the texts, even those who are not familiar with Salar and the other languages involved can readily locate specific words and grammatical patterns.

The bulk of the book consists of approximately 50 texts, but it also comes with an unusually helpful Bibliography, a brief but functional Introduction, a complete list of contributors (eleven all together, including storytellers, translators, and editors), extensive endnotes, two tables, six illustrations, and a Preface by Arienne Dwyer (an authority on Salar language).

N.B.: The editor of *Sino-Platonic Papers* warmly encourages readers to submit reviews of books they deem worthy of being called to the attention of our colleagues.

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