

have been an illustration of the same tendency, albeit in a different register, rather than purely the product of imperial acquisitiveness? In these chapters, a marked inclination not to engage fully with the existing literature becomes most pronounced.

Chapter 6, “Wind of the West,” notes changes in conceptualizations of Europe, from “West Ocean” to “Europe” and ultimately “The West,” that occurred as maritime trade became essential to the rapidly growing Chinese market for consumer goods of all kinds. Chapter 7, “Pattern and Variation: Indigenisation,” brings the story into the early twentieth century, analyzing variables in the indigenization process, while chapter 8, “Race for Oriental Opulence,” touches on the “strange parallels” (p. 293) between European chinoiserie and Chinese euroiserie. The author concludes by drawing on a number of recent studies of consumption in twentieth-century China, including its links to nationalism, arguing for a fairly straightforward trajectory from late imperial to modern times.

Those seeking real maritime history may be disappointed by this book, but the author is to be lauded for having flagged both the importance of maritime trade to Qing China and the consequent boom in consumerism. It will be of interest mainly for historians of global economic and consumer history and of relations between China and Europe.

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## INNER ASIA

*The Uyghurs: Strangers in Their Own Land.* By GARDNER BOVINGDON.  
New York: Columbia University Press, 2012. xvi, 280 pp. \$45.00 (cloth).  
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After the riots of July 2009, few could doubt the extent of hostility to Chinese rule among Uyghurs in Xinjiang. Yet with resistance remaining sporadic and disorganized, and opportunities for field research highly constrained, the conflict in Xinjiang presents challenges to the traditional methods of political scientists. This book is introduced as a study of “representational” politics in two senses of the word: the first is delegation, i.e., who has the right to speak in Xinjiang. The second is representation itself: the conflicting narratives of Xinjiang’s past and present, which are pitted against each other in the competition for local and international opinion. The book’s source material consists of a wide variety of such representations, ranging from internal party bulletins and scholarly position

papers, to Uyghur counterclaims as expressed in everyday speech, subversive songs, and on the Internet. These are supplemented by vignettes from the author's fieldwork in Xinjiang in the late 1990s.

Chapter 1 begins with the history wars that surround the name and status of Xinjiang/East Turkistan. Bovingdon effectively contrasts the Republican period in which discussion of Xinjiang as a colony was common in China, with the rise of Maoist historiography in the PRC. Since 1949, Xinjiang's history has been redefined as an integral part of Chinese history, and the theoretical basis for even a limited form of Uyghur sovereignty was removed. Historians "worked for decades to make a persuasive case that the Chinese Communist Party's rejection of Lenin's principle of self-determination was doctrinally sound" (p. 39).

Chapter 2 treats the system of regional ethnic autonomy (*minzu qiyu zizhi*), from its origins to today. From its inception, the explicitly Uyghur character of autonomy in Xinjiang was compromised by the decision to build autonomous districts from the bottom up, first assigning large territories to other non-Uyghur ethnic groups, leaving the Uyghurs titular autonomy rights over less than half of the region. Equally problematic has been the overwhelming dominance of Han party secretaries, even in predominantly Uyghur villages and work-units. Bovingdon points out how Uyghur complaints on this score are seen by officials as symptomatic of wrong thinking on the national question, a stance that renders "autonomy" meaningless in terms of any constitutional definition. However, Bovingdon does not adopt the thesis that the system of autonomy is itself the source of discontent. For him, Uyghur discontent has deep historical roots, which defy such systemic explanations.

The extent of this discontent is explored in chapter 3, on "everyday resistance," employing a qualified version of James Scott's thesis, according to which the efficacy of "weapons of the weak" is felt primarily in maintaining and transmitting a sense of national identity. The examples cited of dissident speech and writing will no doubt satisfy most readers' definition of "resistance." I wonder, though, if preserving in-group solidarity among Uyghurs counts as resistance to an assimilationist *zhonghua minzu* project, then how should we regard the various officially sanctioned expressions of Uyghur difference that equally serve to maintain social boundaries in Xinjiang?

The book then turns to violent acts of resistance inside Xinjiang, a discussion that is supplemented by an appendix offering a provisional list of incidents since the arrival of the Red Army in Xinjiang in 1949.

Bovingdon concludes with a survey of Uyghur transnational activism, following exile groups from the first generation in Turkey, through a period of activation in newly independent Kazakhstan in the 1990s, to the rise of the World Uyghur Congress and Radio Free Asia, drawing on support from Europe and the United States.

This is an honest book, which will likely win the author few friends in the Chinese academy, where research on contemporary Xinjiang is intimately linked to policy formulation. Step by step, Bovingdon refutes the main tenets of the CCP's story about Xinjiang: the PRC's historical claims to Xinjiang are riddled with contradictions, autonomy in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region is a sham, and there is no independently verified evidence of terrorist

groups operating there. “Xinjiang has been far quieter since 2001 than has any part of China proper” (p. 112).

On the level of practical politics, though, there may be less disagreement. Bovingdon situates the emergence of the Uyghur issue internationally in the context of the Western “humanitarian” interventions of the 1990s—consistently opposed by China—and recognizes that talk of self-determination is meaningless for Uyghurs without similar infringements on Chinese sovereignty, highly unlikely in today’s context. The book thus ends on a pessimistic note: the author’s “representational politics” gives the Uyghurs a degree of agency, but in an exclusively ethno-national field, which in the real world seems to lead to a political dead end.

If maintaining a sense of national identity is the only realistic goal left for Uyghurs in Xinjiang’s ever-narrowing political environment, then the Chinese goal of “depoliticizing” nationality in Xinjiang has already been achieved: there is nothing left for them to bargain for *as Uyghurs*. Efforts of PRC scholars and politicians to forward this trend thus seem unlikely to bring the desired national harmony to Xinjiang, making this book a timely and important contribution to our understanding of the ongoing conflict in northwest China.

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*Shinchō to Chibetto Bukkyō: bosatsuō to natta Kenryūtei* [The Qing Dynasty and the Tibetan Buddhist World: The Qianlong Emperor Who Became a Buddhist King]. By YUMIKO ISHIHAMA. Tokyo: Waseda University Press, 2011. 330 pp. ¥7,000 (cloth)

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A decade after publishing *Historical Research on the Tibetan Buddhist World*, Waseda University professor Yumiko Ishihama presents another exceptional work contributing to the ongoing discussions on Qing China in relation to the Tibetan Buddhist world. Ishihama has consistently focused on the Tibetan Buddhist world, including Tibetans, Mongols, and Manchus (p. 331), a “network transgressing geographical and ethnic boundaries that took shape at the turn of the eighteenth century” (p. 253).<sup>1</sup> Consulting comprehensive sources in Tibetan, Chinese, Mongolian, and Manchu, she offers refreshing insights into eighteenth-century Qing China from a Tibetan Buddhist perspective.

The book challenges conventional approaches to the Qing-Tibetan Buddhism relation. Those approaches center on Qing court activities and consider Tibetan Buddhism as merely a political tool to mollify the Mongols. Ishihama

<sup>1</sup>All quotations in this review, as well as the book’s subtitle, were translated from the Japanese original by the reviewer.