This book is both a single work with an overriding argument and a kaleidoscope of eight chapters on different topics written by eleven authors. This reviewer can do no better to summarize its contents than to let the editors speak for themselves. Their introduction provides the setting, poses the major questions and summarizes the chapters. Hamashita in Chapter 1 shows that, even at the height of colonial power, European states colluded to reinforce elements of the historical East Asian [trade-] tributary system. Focusing on China’s political-military interaction with Inner Asia, Perdue in Chapter 2 sees security as the overriding problem that made military rather than commercial and productive power the decisive force in inter-state relations. Sugihara in Chapter 3 looks at the development techniques/technologies of production at the level of national economies. Hamilton and Chang in Chapter 4 draw attention to the structure of business organizations, while Pomeranz in Chapter 5 focuses on the development of the gender division of labor within and between households in [East Asia and Europe]. Finally the two concluding chapters, like the first two, analyze the East Asian region as a whole. In Chapter 6 Katzenstein compares the East Asian and European technological orders and in Chapter 7 Arrighi, Hui, Hung, and Selden concentrate on the role of capitalism and inter-state relations in promoting “first, a global shift of political-economic power from East Asia to Europe and North America, and then, the beginning in recent times of a seeming reversal of that shift” (pp. 10–11).

The heart of the book’s endeavor and argument is set out in the editors’ Introduction and in the sixty-page last chapter. This chapter opens with an elaborate statement of two “puzzles” and the authors’ proposal to offer novel solutions to them. Lest this critical reviewer be swayed by his own biases or alternative answers to these puzzles, which also define my own work and that of other members of the “new California School” of Kenneth Pomeranz, Bin Wong, Richard von Glahn, Bob Marks, and Jack Goldstone himself who coined this phrase, I prefer to quote the authors’ own summarized conclusion: “Conclusion. Our analysis started out with two puzzles – one concerning the rise of the West in early modern times and the other the rise of East Asia in our own times. The solution we have proposed to the first puzzle is that the extraordinary geographical expansion of the European system of states from the late fifteenth through the nineteenth century can be traced to two major features of that system: a balance of power that continually reproduced inter-state competition within the system on the one side, and the critical role that profits from trade with the non-European world (Asia, in particular) played in determining the outcome of that competition on the other. Taken jointly, these two systemic circumstances created an environment conducive to the combined development of capitalism and militarism – a development that sustained and was in turn itself sustained by economic and political expansion at the expense of other peoples and polities. In the East Asian system, in contrast, the unbalanced structure of inter-state power and the insignificance of profits from trade with the non-East Asian world in determining the outcome of inter-state competition created an unfavorable environment for the combined development of capitalism and militarism” (pp. 317–18).

Though this argument does not go far enough as I note below, it would be nice if it at least withstood empirical and analytical examination in itself. But it cannot. The final chapter and the book
as a whole are so littered – indeed rift – by internal contradictions that it would require another book to reproduce and examine them. True, as the editors rightly remark, the various contradictions among contributors are no obstacle to the presentation of a rich and varied textured kaleidoscope of complex analysis of a complex reality. But alas, the crucial last chapter fails to solve the first puzzle already in part because of its own internal contradictions, some of which it inherits from those in Arrighi’s discussion of capitalist development in his *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power, and the Origins of Our Times* (1994). But they also nearly accept the Wong-Pomeranz-Frank thesis that what happened in Europe after 1800 was the contingent response to momentary circumstances that could just as well have gone the way of the Yangtze Valley as the first two suggest. And the authors note that some of their own contributors, especially Sugihara and Hamilton and Chang, confirm that “the great divergence cannot be traced to prior technical and organizational edge of European institutions vis-à-vis their Asian counterparts” (p. 260). To the extent that such is the case, as we believe we (Wong-Pomeranz-Frank) have already shown, how can the otherwise interesting one-third of the chapter that is devoted to historical comparisons before 1800 offer even a clue to solving the first puzzle? It cannot and it does not, due also to additional internal exceptions, contradictions and irrelevances of its own. But that invalidates the entire explanatory paragraph quoted above.

In particular, the comparison of European and East Asian state systems to which they assign so much causative weight crumbles on closer examination of East Asia, including that in this book itself. Interstate and related rivalry and war was just as, or more, endemic in East Asia. Purdue’s chapter on the Chinese Northwest-Inner Asian frontier is entirely devoted to that. Throughout Southeast Asia, imperial political and military expansion went on for centuries, often also involving Yunnan, Tibet and China itself. As to Northeast Asia, the authors themselves stress the rivalries leading to wars among China, Japan, Mongolia and Russia over the control of Korea and Manchuria. Last but not least, China was not China and never has been and still is not. China was a territory and many peoples of ever-recurrent contention, including several-year-long invasions and rebellions like that of the Mongols, Manchus, the Zhang “family”, and the Taiping, who nearly overthrew the Qing after occupying all of southern China as far as Nanjing. European interstate rivalry and its effects cannot therefore have been exceptionally causative. Moreover in a more political-economic analysis, these rivalries and wars would appear more as consequences, as Sugihara rightly notes about the Sino-Japanese wars.

The following section of a further twenty pages examines the “Chinese miracle” [Sugihara] of rapid population growth without any significant decline of income in the nineteenth century. It was based on labor-intensive and capital-saving technology and organization, which Sugihara examined in detail as “industrious” development. Curiously the four authors begin with “re-centering the global economy on Europe”, when it had not previously ever been centered there but rather on China, if anywhere. The other authors follow Hamashita in focusing on an almost only-East Asian system previously centered on China, which still survived. Their good account of nineteenth-century Qing China scoops, I must say, the China section in my unfinished global *ReOrient the 19th Century*. They do analyze some “Asian foundations of the UK-centered global capitalist system”, but correctly so – like the, in this regard, pioneering work of J.B. Saul and myself – being based on India as its main and crucial support. They demonstrate the necessary China connection and emphasize the vital contribution of India to Britain’s capital [re] export especially to the United States and other regions of recent settlement. They also rightly note that Britain and its technology were not “the workshop of the world” and that, pace Marx, Britain and Europe were quite unable to penetrate the Chinese market except with opium and kerosene. And still today the West keeps trying and continues to fail to do so.

Sugihara however devotes much attention to the industrial evolution in Britain. He still calls it “revolution” and accepts and uses without question Angus Maddison’s admittedly Western biased numbers. But credit where credit is due, since then and elsewhere Sugihara has changed his mind on that. To the industrial, he counterposes the industrious evolution in East Asia as counterpoint and a heretofore much-neglected complement. But the analysis still rests too much on comparisons and not enough on connections. The infamous China-India-Britain opium triangle that is examined
complemented the earlier Atlantic triangular trade whose base was slavery; and it was itself then complemented by a US-China-Britain triangle. Ever more triangles, with Britain at their common apex, of trade, payments, division of labor, immigration and capital flows combined to form an ever more complex multilateral and multangular network of world trade [Hilgerdt/League of Nations 1943], which was the real support of Britain and the generator of the Great Divergence. Yet that did not really become important until the end of the nineteenth century, when it also began already to be reversed by developments in Asia. But the limitation of the book’s focus on East Asia prevents its authors from adequately – or even at all – dealing with this global system as a whole, within which we must search for the real answer to the authors’ first puzzle that they themselves are unable to unravel.

The second puzzle is the resurgence of East Asia in the second half of the twentieth century. Yet this had begun already in the late nineteenth century and accelerated further during the 1914–45 Western civil war and depression. And of course, the book’s 500- and 150-year perspectives are meant also to inform this last 50-year one. However only twenty of the main last chapter’s sixty pages – and of the whole 320 pages of text – are devoted to this second question. Even so, herein their analysis and explanation are much more satisfactory. Not so novel though is their reiterated emphasis on the place and role of the overseas Chinese throughout Southeast Asia and their investment in China of their capital, which had grown from some US$10 billion in the 1970s to $1.5–2.0 trillion by the mid-1990s. Indeed Taiwanese investments on the mainland also rose from US$100 million in 1987 to $4 billion by 1992 and much more since, so that by 1990, combined with Hong Kong capital, their investment in China had already reached $12 billion or 35 times more than that from Japan. Finally, the authors return to the red thread that goes through the entire book: the combination, interaction, and mutual contributions of Western and Asian economic, and even some political, institutions and development. That applies also to the Pax Americana, which has been both basis and consequence of post-war US-East Asian relations, which the book emphasizes following Cummings.

If I had to characterize this path-breaking book in two sentences, it would be that (1) it lays to rest the “traditional” Western “modernization” theory and view of East Asia first as simply victimized or benefited by Western imperialism and then as a laggard copier of Western models. Instead, (2) it features East Asian agency, or multiple and diverse agencies, as a more than worthy partner, with different ways of doing things in world history yesterday and today – and very probably again in the future as in the past.

_Tennō to chiisei bunka_. 天皇と中世文化

_By Hank Glassman, Haverford College_

E-mail hglassma@haverford.edu

DOI: 10.1017/S1479591404220265

The powerlessness of the emperor in late medieval Japan is well known, but what of imperial authority? Wakita Haruko, doyenne of medieval Japanese historians, uses this distinction between power and authority to demonstrate the central place of the emperor and his circle in the creation, growth, and articulation of what was to become traditional Japanese culture. Wakita argues that the emperor – as symbol, as institution, as personage – was a key player in the production of Japan’s first national culture. This culture, including the practices of _renge_, Noh, painting, and prose literature, was one that came to be shared by all classes – in the capital, in the Kantō, and in villages throughout Japan. Ironically, the emperor was useful to the flourishing of all of these arts and practices only because of his utter debasement _vis-à-vis_ the power structure.
This book is divided into eight chapters of varying length in which Wakita expands upon material published in articles and presented at conferences through the 1990s. The appearance of her book is very timely; the topic of the influence of the imperial house and the court on the systematization of various client-patron relationships in late medieval Japan has been an important topic in the scholarship of the past decade in Japan and the West. While many of the chapters in Wakita's book could stand alone as independent studies, the narrative is integrated and the book hangs together nicely. While the extent of annotation with furigana – to the level of names like Sanjō-nishi Sanetaka – will alert the reader immediately that this is a book written for a popular audience, the arguments are exciting, sophisticated, and engaging. It will be very useful to students of late medieval culture, no matter what their area of interest. The lack of an index is lamentable, but perhaps not unexpected in a project of this nature.

In her first two chapters, Wakita establishes the reasons for the continued, indeed increased, authority of the emperor throughout the Muromachi and Sengoku periods at a time when the political and economic power of the imperial house was at an all-time low. She disputes the commonly espoused notion that the emperor played a key sacerdotal role at essential empowering ceremonies, upon which the prosperity of the nation relied. Wakita makes the point that it is in fact the emperor himself who is the target of various rituals and that he is the one in need of divine protection. These rituals are mediated by any number of elite Buddhist and Shinto priests, but the emperor also has close ties to more marginal groups, such as the outcaste, or hinin, the shōmoji who were the first noh actors, composers, and dramaturges.

Against the majority of theorists of the imperial system, including Amino Yoshihiko, Wakita argues that the emperor is invested with authority not because of his own mantic power, but rather because of his ability to legitimize and bestow court rank on others, especially warriors and clerics of various stripes. The organization and systematization of poetry lineages, religious institutions, artisans' guilds, theatre troupes, and other burgeoning endeavors of the late medieval period also depended upon the procurement of various types of imperial sanction. Primary was court rank, a legacy of the Ritsuryō period. By obtaining title, these non-aristocratic constituencies were enfranchised by the system for the first time. Wakita asserts this extension of court rank to members of outside groups marks the lowered fortunes of the imperial house, not its increasing power. It is precisely this kind of secular legitimization that the regional daimyō and others sought from the emperor, rather than any kind of religious investiture. The imperial house, for its part, was by the Sengoku period desperately dependent upon the cash income generated by bestowing court rank, posthumous titles, and the like, upon non-aristocratic supplicants.

In the next three chapters, Wakita elaborates this process, using religious institutions as case studies. She illustrates the real power that imperial imprimatur gave to temples and to shrines. Primary among these was the “right of no trespass” (funyūken), which served to forbid taxation or corvée on shōen owned by these institutions. Honganji is a case in point. As an imperially sponsored temple (chakuganji), Honganji was able to protect the income generated by its vast land holdings. Warrior houses gained similar protection through imperial patronage. A mass culture develops during the Muromachi period and is disseminated during the Sengoku period. This culture is predicated upon the aesthetic prerogatives of the courtier class, which are in turn embodied in the person of the emperor.

We see that not only the philosophical schools of Ise Shinto and Yoshida Shinto, but also the former shōmoji or kojiki hōshi (“beggar priests”) who comprised the early Noh theatre were important both as brokers and as beneficiaries of these ties between religious institutions and the imperial house. The ideology of Ise Shinto and then later Yoshida Shinto served well for small local shrines seeking to raise their profile. The relationship was a symbiotic one in which adoption of imperial ancestors by local cults and the assimilation of deities of place with the divine cosmogenitors. Also, their association with the emperor gave them strong territorial rights: the jinnai machi of Buddhist temples and kasumiba of Shinto shrines. In this way, all parties benefited from the
association, and the emperor was the axis. Wakita points to a growing nationalist consciousness and the doctrine of the divinity of the Japanese nation (shinkoku ron) from the time of the Mongol invasions. The development of Ise Shinto, and the nativist thought of Kitabatake Chikafusa, is a well-known aspect of this shift in Japanese self-perception. Less well understood, however, is the important role of Sarugaku Noh in spreading the ideas and theology of these elites to every level of Japanese society, permeating geographical networks and tying the periphery to the center. Here, Prof. Wakita is truly in her element.

It was from the “outcaste arts” of the street preacher and the ecstatic dancer that there developed a theatre which could popularize both the new theologies of Shinto and disseminate the motifs of aristocratic culture among the masses. Wakita sees here the permeation, for the first time, of the ideology of the imperial system to mass society. Noh plays connected tutelary deities (ubusunagami) and other gods, worshipped in small village shrines, to the grand narrative of the national chronicles. Through local epiphanies of famous gods, these “god plays” established a direct link between rural localities and their inhabitants and the central and unifying figure of the emperor. A fascinating case study among several is the assimilation of local gods of childbirth (ubugami) to the cult of the imperial ancestress Jingu. Her legendary invasion of the Korean peninsula, led by the empress herself when she was pregnant with the Emperor Ōjin, coupled with Hideyoshi’s contemporary adventure on the continent, lent itself well to amalgamation of international, national, local, and family interests through the person of Jingu. The efforts of religious institutions of all sizes to rebuild and expand in the destruction and confusion of the Sengoku period coalesced in the creation of many miracle tales or engi relating the origins of shrines and temples. Imperial associations were invariably elucidated. The production of these texts, some illustrated scrolls or books, some theatrical treatments, drew together priests from various locales with those at the very center of court life, such as the literati Ichijō Kanera and Sanjōnish Sanetaka.

Wakita’s final three chapters examine the roles of such unlikely companions as Sōgi, rengashi extraordinare, said to be the son of a “beggar priest”, and Sanjōnish Sanetaka, the pinnacle of elite aristocratic culture. The rengashi acted as intermediaries between the great daimyō from throughout Japan and the aristocratic culture of Kyoto. Sanetaka himself composed many temple engi in the form of illustrated books or even Noh libretti. Finally, Wakita turns from such familiar phenomena as the development of Noh and the renga craze to evidence from new excavations of dishes from archeological sites. Import china from the Ming, discovered in much greater quantities than ever imagined, was an important medium of cultural exchange between courtiers, warriors, and commoners. The sacrality of glazed pottery, or kawarake mono, was essential to its adoption by all classes. Similarly the etiquette surrounding its use unified court ritual, temple and shrine ritual, and household ritual. Noticeably absent from this book is any extended discussion of the Zen sect and its wide cultural influence in the late medieval period; for this readers must refer to Wakita’s earlier work.

Wakita Haruko’s Tenno to chūsei bunka is a delightful book, full of illustrations and graphs that clarify her arguments. It is an accessible book, but one full of original research and fresh insights. As with all of Wakita’s scholarship, the arguments are clear, the writing engaging, and the illustrative stories entertaining. This book is essential reading for all students of medieval Japan, and because of its readability could easily be adopted for graduate and advanced undergraduate seminars.

Notes
1 I adapt the notion of a national culture from Barbara Ruch’s seminal, “Medieval Jongleurs and the Making of a National Literature” in John Whitney Hall and Toyoda Takeshi, Japan in the Muromachi Age (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977).
2 One might point to works by Amino Yoshihiko, Andrew Goble, Lee Butler, Sakurai Yoshiro, Susan Blakeley Klein, David L. Moerman, Hosokawa RyMichi, Abe Yasurō, H. Mack Horton, and others.
Engendering Faith: Women and Buddhism in Premodern Japan
The Power of Denial: Buddhism, Purity, and Gender
Reviewed by Gaynor Sekimori, University of Tokyo
E-mail sekimori@ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp
DOI: 10.1017/S1479591404230261

During April and May 2003, a special exhibition was held at the Nara National Museum called “Women and Buddhism”. The exhibits, divided into nine thematic sections, combined archaeological material, documents, sculpture, painting, metalwork, and textiles to present a view of the contributions of women to Buddhism in Japan from ancient times and to elicit certain aspects of their faith in it. In a number of ways these objects provide a visual commentary on the material presented by Barbara Ruch in her edited volume, Engendering Faith, and as well reveal the same limitations, imposed by the nature of extant sources. Perhaps inevitably such sources show us in the main a tiny elite, women from the court, and later, the warrior aristocracy; women who commanded a social and economic status that allowed them to support the building of temples, the sponsorship of clergy, the existence of convents, and the donation of religious objects as marks of faith. The analysis of names appearing on kechien (supporters of religious projects) lists, of contemporary diaries and even of setsuwa (religious tales) and ōjōden (records of rebirth) literature tends to support this, certainly down to the early modern (post-seventeenth century) period. Thus we must issue a caveat regarding the work’s subtitle “Women and Buddhism”: for a long period of Japanese history, the voice of the majority of women has remained muted and it surely must be a work for future (English-language) scholarship to find ways of letting that voice be heard, following the lead of Ruch herself (for example, Ruch 1990). Bernard Faure, on the other hand, provides himself with a broader canvas by including in his understanding of “Buddhism” the wider Japanese religious experience (Buddhism as combinatory religion, shinbutsu shūkyō) and by drawing upon the vast compendium of literary sources which allude to aspects of female spirituality. In this sense the two works under discussion complement each other in a variety of ways.

Engendering Faith represents a major contribution to the field of Japanese religious history in the medium of English. There is a good balance of work that has been translated from Japanese scholarship and that which has been produced by scholars presently at work in the United States. The material is divided into five sections: “Women in early Chinese and Japanese Buddhism”, “Nuns and Nunneries”, “Scriptural Issues in the Salvation of Women”, “Deities and Icons”, and “Faith and Practice”. An introductory section by Ōsumi Kazuo and Barbara Ruch is also provided. Ōsumi posits the same question that concerns Bernard Faure also: to what extent was Buddhism misogynistic, in both its teachings and its practices? Was the physical and spiritual isolation of women principally a manifestation of a religious attitude inherent within Buddhism, or was it the result of social and cultural mores belonging to the various societies within which Buddhism flourished? Can we even separate the two? Whereas Ōsumi urges historians to move beyond the limitations set by the traditional dominance of the sectarian approach which has favoured political power and inevitably focused on men, and look broadly at Japanese spirituality, and Buddhist faith and practice in particular, in order to disinter the place of women, Faure prefers to take a broader cultural view, warning, in the words of Dorothy Ko (Ko 1994) that “any historical study of women and gender should be class-, local-, and age-specific” (6). He is concerned too with the broader theoretical concepts and issues of gender studies, and addresses ideas such as oppression, subjugation, and domination, and in particular, the opposing gender constructs within feminist literature: the model of gender as a social construction (and its deconstruction), and the model that asserts gender (and its differences).
The similarities and differences among the two works derive directly from this. *Engendering Faith*, emerging as it does from Ruch’s Imperial Convent Survey Project and from the pioneering work of Ōsumi and Nishiguchi Junko in Japan, is very much concerned with clarifying the links between women and institutional Buddhism. The collection opens with a study (by Chikusa Masaaki) of pre-sixth century Chinese nuns as a means of contextualising the early stages of Japanese Buddhism (which, officially at least, found initial authority through the ordination of women priests), and two studies of the eighth-century imperial consort Kōmyō and Court Buddhism, stressing her personal faith and its influence in the establishment of the Kokubunji system of state temples (Mikoshiba Daisuke, Hongo Masatsugu). The decline of officially ordained women between the eight and tenth centuries is then discussed in a wide-ranging article by Paul Groner, through an analysis of ordination patterns, both official and private. His conclusions that “nuns were clearly not just a female analogue of monks” (93), and that their social relationships remained an important element of their lifestyle as nuns as well as of their practices, are salubrious reminders of what Faure says: that “the gender difference is in the last instance determined by ideology, but the sexual difference is real and fundamental” (13). Another noteworthy work in this (second) section is a translation of some of Ushiyama Yoshiyuki’s important research on medieval convents. Here also are found studies of tonsure forms for nuns (Katsuura Noriko), politics and religion in the life of Hōjō Masako (Martin Colcutt), female biographies in the *Genkō Shakusho* (Marian Ury) and two studies of divorce temples (Anne Dutton, Diana E. Wright). The third section contains articles on attitudes towards women in Buddhist writings (Nagata Mizu), on the enlightenment of the Dragon King’s daughter (Yoshida Kazuhiko), and on Jōn Sonja and gender (Paul B. Watt). The next two chapters show how artistic forms can be analysed so that they shed light on female belief and practices: discussions of the ten female demons associated with Fugen (Nicole Fabricant-Person) and the nude jizō of Denkōji (Hank Glassman), both of which touch on gender-specific patronage. Glassman also uses his study to add to the growing body of scholarship which refutes Kasahara Kazuo’s contention that a concern for female salvation was a development linked specifically with the “new” Buddhist sects in the Kamakura period. This latter question is also taken up by Obara Hitoshi in his study of women in the late Heian diary, the *Chūyuki*, where he suggests that women played a greater part than men in religious matters within the home (which is in turn suggestive of modern practices). The concluding three chapters finally leave the more rarified court circles, and bring a wider variety of women to our attention. Susan Matisoff discusses sacramentation of the border zone by women forbidden to enter the male-only precincts of Mt. Koya through a study of legends from temples/areas at the foot of the mountain (Jison’in, Amano, Kamuro) and an extensive analysis of the Noh drama *Karukaya*, and highlights ordinary women and their concerns with childbirth, the female religious itinerants called Kumano bikuni, and women seeking salvation. Endō Hajime looks at Shin Buddhism and regards women as having been well integrated into its community because it was family based and tolerant of marriage for all believers, clerical as well as lay, and urges scholars to take up the long-neglected topic of the contributions of women to early Shin Buddhism. Finally Barbara Ruch uses a rich variety of narrative and pictorial “literature” to look at the images of female Buddhist teachers; in particular, she deconstructs the term “Kumano bikuni” to assert that the women thus described actually belonged to a variety of quite different groups. Her comment that “our reexamination of voluminous visual and textual data has clearly only just begun” (576) brings us full-circle, suggesting how we might attempt to turn our gaze towards non-elite women.

Faure’s work follows rather a similar structure, though his methodology is very different. His nine chapters discuss the evolution of the female Sangha in India, China and Japan; the “rhetoric of subordination” (including blood pollution); scriptural bases (particularly Mahayana) for female salvation; instances of gender equality in Buddhism; the image of the mother; eminent Buddhist women; the exclusion of females from sacred sites; itinerant “religious” women, and the power of women. Rather than a study of some aspect of the topics he has chosen, Faure attempts to provide a comprehensive
survey of the (mainly Japanese) scholarship and literature and then concludes with his own analysis and interpretation. The content of Power of Denial is broad-ranging, and, though often dense, it is always stimulating, and in most cases inclusive of the most important contributions made to the particular field of research. He does not labour the theoretical models he set up in his introduction, but his analyses are always informed by these concerns. However, despite his stated regard for historical placement and identity, his extensive use of literary sources sometimes gives the impression of a-historicity. For example, a discussion on the origins of itinerant women (250–86) includes allusions to and/or quotations from Engelbert Kaempfer, Towazugatari, Kagerô nikki, Ryojin hishô, Yûjo no ki, the work of Orikuchi Shinobu, Kugutsu no ki, Heike monogatari, Tzurezuregusa, Azuma kagami, Gikeiki, Sangoku denki, Senjûsho, and a great deal more. This is an embarras de richesse which is scintillating, mind-whirling, but also perhaps confusing for someone who does not know the field very well.

A short review cannot do justice to the complexity of content in these works. The significant parallels in subject matter between them encourage the reader to move from the particularity of the topic in the Ruch book to the Faure book to provide a background for further study. They will undoubtedly become lodestones for future English-language research on gender and Japanese religion.

References

Republican Beijing: The City and Its Histories.
Reviewed by Ronald Suleski, Harvard University
E-mail suleski@fas.harvard.edu
DOI: 10.1017/S1479591404240268

Anyone in China will tell you that Beijing is a special city. Like many other cities in China these days it is booming with numerous construction sites for high-rise buildings, and its population is expanding as a flood of migrants from the countryside arrive daily seeking work. But it is unlike any other city in China because the presence of the national government dominates the mood of Beijing.

For the past 800 years, since the Mongols made it their capital in 1272, this city has been, with only brief interruptions, the home of China’s emperors. After 1644, under the Qing dynasty, Beijing seemed to exist only to serve the imperial court, which was located in the Purple Forbidden City (Zijincheng) at its very center. Manchu officials, with garrison soldiers and their families, lived within the Inner City (Neicheng), or Beijing proper. It was a residential space that allowed for the existence of temples and their supporting religious communities, but there were relatively few markets, teahouses, theaters or shops. Commercial activity tended to take place in the Outer City (Waicheng) just beyond the fortress-like Zhengyang Gate. The goods available in the Dashalar and surrounding market streets were, equally, focused on the imperial court and the wealthy officials. Shops produced and sold official robes and embroidered insignia, exquisitely detailed soft shoes for women and sturdy riding boots for military officers, cloisonné and lacquer ware for the homes of the well-to-do, rare books and antiques for the scholar elite. Manchu officials went into these commercial districts, where the Han Chinese lived
and where extensive markets also sold all sorts of daily necessities, for their banquets of food, alcohol and sexual pleasure.

But what happened to Beijing when the Qing government collapsed? Professor Madeline Yue Dong, in this clearly written and well-organized book, explains how the city itself seemed to stumble and stagger as if in a daze, proud of its pedigree and accomplishments, but unsure of how to go about re-defining itself. She has organized the book into three sections, discussing in turn the attempts of city planners to bring Beijing into the modern world, the effects of new economic realities on Republican Beijing, and how the city was viewed by the writers and intellectuals who tried both to capture and to mold its image.

The shock of the Boxer uprising in 1900 and the trauma of seeing foreign troops pillaging the city helped to free city officials from older conservative ideas and allowed them to begin making Beijing more like other modern capitals in the west. As a result, Republican-era Beijing became a city serviced by a number of railway lines which, in order to deliver their goods to the heart of the city, were permitted to pierce the formidable city walls, and the outside fortifications of several major gates were even torn down so the trains could easily pass. Within the walls several trolley lines were laid and a new gate, in 1925 named by Duan Qirui the Heping Gate, was created by again piercing the city wall to make travel easier between the inner and outer cities. Some former imperial lands in scattered areas of the city were turned into public parks or amusement areas in the manner of such areas long popular in European cities. Beijing continued to be a city of almost no tall buildings, dominated by residential courtyards and grey tile roofs, although the major shopping area of the inner city Wangfujing boasted modern western-style department stores.

Economic and political reality during the Republican period hit the city hard. Dong’s structural analysis of the economic forces that impacted every facet of life in Beijing during the Republican period is one of the most original and convincing sections of her book. She notes how the Beiyang governments from 1912 to 1928 were weak and ineffectual. Often unable to pay government officials, they sold off the bricks from portions of the gates and walls being torn down in order to raise cash. Tianjin, which historically existed as the major port bringing goods of all sorts into Beijing, turned outward to draw its economic vitality from the import and export of cotton, foodstuffs and manufactured goods, just as Shanghai and Guangzhou were doing. The light industry and small-scale manufacturing that was set up in Beijing produced just enough to meet the city’s needs, not enough for outside markets and not enough to allow those industries to grow. When the central government was pulled out of Beijing in 1928, the major banks that had formerly invested government funds or managed the financing for large-scale projects, also began to pack up and leave, relocating to Tianjin or Nanjing.

In those years, roughly during the late 1920s and 1930s, Beijing became a city whose residents in general lived at or below the poverty line. Professors, journalists and writers, while not paid handsomely, were nevertheless better off than the unemployed government bureaucrats, out-of-work accountants, or the even less secure tailors, shop owners, monks or traders who had no steady source of income. In what is central to Dong’s analysis of these decades, she explains how Beijing’s economy became a recycling economy. Winter clothes were pawned in the spring and reclaimed in the fall by people who had only one set of clothing to wear for half the year. Broken oil lamps and cracked pottery were repaired by the wandering traders who then sold or bartered their goods from small carts or temporary stalls set in the shadow of a courtyard wall. Old bedding and curtains were used to patch worn clothing, which could be had at the sprawling Tianqiao market near the Temple of Heaven. Discarded paper was gathered up to be recycled or used as fuel or packing material. As the wealthy ran out of money, their old books ended up in the used-book markets in Liulichang and Longfusi, precious household items showed up at the stalls of antique dealers, while scrolls, carved seals and furniture delighted the foreign tourists who increasingly found Beijing to be a collector’s paradise, where genuine treasures could be had at bargain prices.
It was the writers and essayists, discussed in the third section of the book, who found it most
difficult to swallow their pride as Beijing was stripped of its former glory. Many reacted by celebrating
the distinctive language, the special words and pronunciation used in old Beijing. Others described the
unique customs remembered from their childhood, and the way the festival decorations and local
foods combined with the grey walls and dusty *hutong* alleys to create an atmosphere that existed
nowhere else on earth. Younger intellectuals, feeling overwhelmed and ignored by the cascading
rhythms of metropolitan Shanghai, claimed Beijing as their hometown, a Chinese city both proud and
cultured, where the foreign presence was minimal. Many of those intellectuals had not in fact been
born in Beijing, but they felt that Beijing, as the quintessential Chinese city, could embrace them in
a way that the more modern and international Shanghai never could.

During the Republican years Beijing struggled to stay alive. Even though it seemed to have lost
every reason to remain China’s special city once the government institutions left, in the psyche of
every Chinese, because of its long history and rich cultural overlay it had every reason to remain as
China’s symbolic capital. Dong’s book discusses the political forces and literary currents that held
sway in the capital in those years. She links those currents by deftly analyzing the city’s economy that
initially propelled it to begin changing in the early Republic, then virtually condemned its citizens to
poverty in the latter years of the period.

This is the first full account of Republican-era Beijing to be published in English and it is
based in good part on Dong’s thorough research in the Beijing Municipal Archives. Because of her
well-formulated analysis, this book will no doubt become the standard interpretation of the city’s
economic and social history during those turbulent and fluid years.

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Reviewed by Lee Yok Fee, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, Malaysia
E-mail yokfee@yahoo.com
DOI: 10.1017/S1479591404250264

In this slim book, Hara’s central concern is to scrutinize the transformation of identity consciousness,
or in sociological terms, of “Chineseness”, of Malayan Chinese from a China-oriented identity to a
Malaya-oriented identity. Focusing on Malayan Chinese and on relations with China from 1945–57,
Hara attempts to improve his previous analysis on Chineseness, which concentrated greatly on an
analysis of the leftist organizations and the Chinese Communist Party. In his previous effort, Hara
made an analysis based on Chinese-language newspapers and journals and on Chinese organizations
in Malaya, but he found the analysis to be incomplete without an examination of public gatherings,
Chinese language newspapers, the Chinese consulates and the Chinese government policies toward
the “overseas Chinese”. To fill this gap, he has in this work analysed the above-mentioned elements
based on a survey of Chinese-language sources, particularly the Chinese-language newspapers of the
period, in order to provide a greater understanding of the transformation of China-oriented identity
consciousness into Malaya-oriented consciousness within the local Malayan-Chinese community.
These analyses make up the four substantive chapters of Hara’s book.

Hara first examines the political influences of that period. He finds the Malayan-Chinese identity
consciousness changed according to the Malayan political situation. Political forces, for instance
the Kuomintang (KMT) and the Malaya Communist Party (MCP), which essentially split the com-
community but paradoxically strengthened their attachment to China as their motherland, influenced
the Malayan Chinese at this time. But the Japanese invasion had stimulated the sense of belonging
by Malayan Chinese towards Malaya and also brought about unity among them. To substantiate
this, Hara uses public gatherings, especially the “Double Tenth” celebration, and also the involvement of the Chinese associations and political parties, as the gauge of the level of change of the Malayan-Chinese identity consciousness. For Hara, the complete disappearance of the “Double-Tenth” and other China-related gatherings by 1958, and also the decline in involvement of the pro-CCP Chinese associations in organizing and financially supporting the China-related gatherings, signified the reinvention of Chineseness among the Malayan Chinese.

Hara then studies the social institution of the mass media. He investigates how the reconfigured Chineseness occurred by examining the Chinese-language newspapers. The term used in newspapers to refer to China, “zuguo” (“our country”), was eventually replaced by terms like “guguo” (“homeland”). Other indications of the reconstitution of Malayan-Chinese identity that Hara finds significant include transition to the Western calendrical system, the changes that took place in publication holidays, and for how long correspondents continued to be dispatched to China.

Finally, Hara examines another social institution, politics. Here he focuses on the role of the Chinese Consulates (of the KMT government) and on the Mainland government's policy towards overseas Chinese. He concludes that the failure of the Chinese Consulates in meeting their expectations, mainly in protecting their civil rights, caused Malayan Chinese to turn to the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) and gradually lose any interest in China’s internal affairs.

The importance and influence of the Chinese government's policy towards overseas Chinese faded into insignificance, especially in selecting representatives to the Republic of China’s National Assembly in 1948, due to the criticisms of the British authorities, the Malay nationalists and different Chinese groups and individuals. Besides this, the significance of Chinese government policy in the area of education, such as official visits by the chief inspector of schools and the compilation of textbooks, waned at the local level in Malaya due to the process of Malayanization. Similarly, in the case of selection of athletes for the Olympic Games, after 1956 Malayan Chinese athletes no longer had any ties with the Chinese delegation and began participating in the Olympics as members of the Malayan delegation. All these, according to Hara, serve as evidence to illustrate the reconstruction of Malayan Chinese identity.

One of the challenges of such studies is the difficulty in conceptualizing the nature of identity due to its dynamics and complexity. In his study on the Malayan Chinese identity in the period 1945–57, Hara freezes the nature of identity by hypothesizing its relations with political variables. In other words, ontologically, he assumes that the individuals in society are powerless and passive. His attempt to determine the reinvented identity by focusing on only the structures and not the agency is inadequate and fails to recognize the nature of identity. People in general, and the Malayan Chinese in this study, are not simply passive victims of social pressure and circumstances.

The phenomena of identity can be very dynamic. Social actors can define themselves very differently from one another. Their level of identity consciousness can be different although they are in a similar situation. The dynamism of identity consciousness can become very complex when the social actors interpret cultural and political circumstances differently. In addition, the interpretation of the social actors can be changed or modified in the process of their interactions with other social groups in the social world.

During 1945–57, the Malayan Chinese experienced numerous changes in their lives. Their persecution during the Japanese Occupation left a great mark on the Malayan Chinese, both physically and psychologically. The Emergency in Malaya also brought further changes to the relocated Malayan Chinese in terms of freedom. As independence approached, Malayan Chinese were troubled by the citizenship right issue and also by restrictions on their language, culture and educational development, the very pillars of Chinese identity. These are all factors that were not emphasized in Hara’s study but can nevertheless influence the consciousness of Chinese towards their identity. Additionally, the Chinese in Malaya are not the homogeneous group Hara has perceived in this study, but far more heterogeneous.
Heavily depending on the analysis of the associated “texts”, particularly newspaper reports in the *Min Shen Pao* and the *Nan Chiau Jit Pao*, Hara tries to make sense of his hypotheses. Problems may arise if we question the reliability and validity of the newspaper reports in the past; these might be biased and selective due to the influence or pressure of political forces.

Even though Hara does not in this study seem to address the issue of “identity consciousness” sufficiently, his great effort in surveying the political ties of the Malayan Chinese to China between 1945 and 1957 cannot be overlooked. In this sense, this book is useful for an understanding of the political relations between the Chinese in Malaya and China in the pre-independence years.

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**Innermost Borneo: Studies in Dayak Cultures.**


**Reviewed by Ong Puay Liu, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia**

E-mail pliu@pkrisc.cc.ukm.my

DOI: 10.1017/S1479591404260260

This volume speaks much for the commitment and tenacity of a three-in-one scholar – geologist, anthropologist and historian. Spanning thirty years of ethnographic field work and experience living among and learning from Dayak communities residing in the Müller mountain range in the Borneo hinterland, this collection of thirteen essays presents an exhaustive historical, social and physical description of small tribal communities living in, according to the author, the most remote corner of the Borneo hinterland. The volume’s title, *Innermost Borneo*, aptly accentuates the remoteness of the research area and the symbolism it represents as the last frontier of out-of-the-way human habitation.

For potential ethnographers, anthropologists and development workers, this collection of essays on ethnic minorities provide a rich base of knowledge regarding the methods of doing social or ethnographic research among human communities living in remote areas, as well as on the theory of social transformation and continuity.

As an ethnographer, the author sets out to live with his “community-under-study”, the Aoheng, evolving from being an outsider, a total stranger, to being an insider, a full, ritually-sanctioned member of the community. This total incorporation into the community under study, in other words, of *going native*, indicates the dynamism of the researcher in his ability to step in and out of the community under study. This fluidity and flexibility require the researcher to be psychologically mobile. First, as a participant observer (or researcher-as-native), he attempts *to go native culturally*, that is to be a *real native*, becoming like the real members of the community under study. Second, as a researcher (or researcher-as-author), he tries *to go native socially*, that is to be *marginal native*, internalising the culture of observation (in Sellato’s case, the Aoheng) to a certain extent but remaining a member of the culture of orientation (as a Frenchman) (Gulick in Freilich 1970).

Sellato however does not share with us the process, progress and meaning of his becoming a full, ritually sanctioned member of the community. For example, was there an initiation ceremony, a *rite de passage*, to become “the adopted son of a prominent ritual leader, and eventually a respected village council elder”? (p. 14).

As an anthropologist doing ethnography, Sellato, the researcher-native, sets out *to make the strange familiar*, in order to “provide the reader with a few keys to a better understanding of traditional life in one of our planet’s last isolated spots” (p. 14). In this way, Sellato hopes to debunk the mythical notion of the Bornean people as the “wild men of Borneo”, the “oran-ootans” (Beeckman 1718, p. 37). Sellato’s wish to make the Aoheng and their neighbours appear less foreign, less “exotic”, and more familiar, more “normal”, to a Western reader, is commendable. Tom Harrison, one of the leading writers on
Borneo and Sabah history, expressed his disgust at the depiction of the Bornean people “by enterprising ‘explorers’ (French, Danish, American etc) claiming to discover cannibals, pygmies, a tailed tribe and other wonders which remain sadly unknown to those of us who have lived in and loved the great island over decades . . .” (quoted in St. John 1862 repr. 1974, Preface). To his credit, Sellato, like Harrison, disassociates himself from such sensational frivolities.

At the same time, however, as an anthropologist acting as the voice of the real natives, Sellato, the researcher-author, has to remake the familiar strange in order to present the real natives as the Other – different and complex, historical and ecological, dignified and cultural, yet dynamic and contemporary. Indeed, in undertaking this task, Sellato overtly presents to the reader his agenda in producing this volume. At this stage, it needs to be pointed out that this work is not an ethnographic study of Dayak cultures per se as the sub-title, Studies in Dayak Cultures, seems to suggest. The titles of the thirteen essays may induce the reader to think that these essays are mere ethnographic descriptions of tribal minorities living in faraway places. On the contrary, the essays attempt to piece together a jigsaw puzzle and provide a coherent kaleidoscope of the history, social structure, culture, economy, politics, linguistics, religion, habitat and geology of the communities under study. Why is such a coherent database of knowledge important?

Herein lies the main agenda of this volume: to present a critique on the impact of the governmental and non-governmental development projects on each of these aspects associated with the lives of the target communities. In line with his emphasis on taking a holistic and multi-disciplinary approach to his research, Sellato undertakes to illustrate how one development project, for example, affects all aspects of social life of the target community. He is especially critical of short, shallow social and economic surveys carried out by social scientists employed by governmental and non-governmental agencies who do not subscribe to the necessity of undertaking preliminary in-depth, multi-disciplinary, and ethnographic studies of target communities. This brings to mind Robert Chambers’ (1983, pp. 2, 10) critique of the urban-based professionals who function as rural planners and who claim to know all about the rural people, rural conditions, rural needs through rural development tourism – the phenomenon of brief and hurried rural visits.

Chapter 4 on “Forest Economics: The Dayak and their Natural Resources” carries this theme well. Focusing on the ways in which forest people earn a living off their natural environment – the tropical rain forest, and the resources it provides – it highlights the conflicts between the forest people and the State’s social and economic policies. Sellato (p. 54) argues that socio-economic programmes initiated by government agencies were based more on certain humanitarian (or national ideological) principles than on a rational evaluation of the forest nomads’ (Punan’s) situation. These rural development tourism-type programmes engendered significant change on the mode of subsistence and lifestyles of the Punan as well as on the natural environment.

The social transformation caused by a change in the mode of subsistence and production (that is from nomadic to sedentary or semi-sedentary; from hunter-gatherers to swidden agriculturalists) brings to mind the agrarian question: when rural development programs are introduced to primitive cultivators (for example, the Punan) or rural peasants (for example, the Dayaks or Aoheng in Sellato’s study), do these primitive cultivators and peasants become richer and capitalists, or do they become poorer, losing their space and land to the capitalists? Sellato’s account of the impact of these rural development programmes on the Punan and Dayak indicate that the latter holds true for them both, as he poignantly illustrates (referring to the Punan’s situation). As successful hunter-gatherers, they are wealthier than neighbouring farmers, and their products contribute to the national income. As failed farmers, they become charges on the nation (p. 55).

Chapter 8, “History and Myth among Borneo People”, is to me a particularly fascinating chapter. Based on a short manuscript in Indonesian written by a man called Saping Gemala, a Bukat notable of the tiny hamlet of Nanga Balang, regency of Kapuas Hulu, West Kalimantan, the chapter is both a narrative and a critique of oral history. Sellato’s critique encourages him to caution scholars
attempting to take local oral and/or written testimonies at face value (p. 159). Sellato employed key
words to present his appraisal of the contents of Sawing's manuscript and his interpretations of history
and legends. Prominent key words featured are invention of tradition (p. 138), historical manipulation
(p. 150), and cultural constructions and reconstruction (p. 150).

The manner of Sellato's appraisal and the key words used brings to mind a book written by Gewertz
and Errington (1991, p. 28) on the changes, choices and constraints in the lives of the Chambri, a small-
scale twentieth century society of Papua New Guinea. The Chambri see tourism as the principal source
of income and the primary road to development. It affects their internal politics, their artistic produc-
tion and their sense of place in the world. In their book, Gewertz and Errington describe how the
Chambri, at individual and collective levels, create and re-create aspects of their culture for tourist
consumption in return for monetary gain. Appropriately entitled Twisted Histories, Altered Contexts:
Representing the Chambri in a World System, the book examines the Chambri's role as agents of choice
and change and as negotiators of their political interests under circumstances they were themselves in
part both intentionally and unintentionally altering.

One consequence of this process of construction and reconstruction is the phenomenon of “twisted
histories and altered contexts”, that is, of creating and re-creating history that went in another direc-
tion because of a choice made in the past and now in the present the actor wants to divert the existing
consequence. Likewise, in the case of Sawing Gemala’s construction and reconstruction or manipula-
tion of Pak Halangi’s story, as Sellato alleges, Sawing might have “twisted history and altered
the context”, to borrow Gewertz and Errington’s phrase, according to his responses to prevailing
conditions. For example, Sawing might have been alarmed by the transformation of his community
from being hunter-gatherers to swidden agriculturalists and by the radical impact this transformation
had on his people. Concerned, Sawing presented an alternative version of the legend with this message
to his people in mind: in wanting the new, in embracing change, the old must not be forgotten or
abandoned or destroyed. This included both the social and natural environments.

One chapter which to my mind helps to emphasise the political significance of this volume is
Chapter 9. Entitled “How Tribes Come into Being: The Ethnogenesis of the Aoheng”, it provides the
platform for the people’s voices (Punan, Aoheng or Dayak in general) to be heard. Earlier, I mentioned
that this collection of essays written over a period of thirty years is not about the history, culture
and social organisation of tribal communities. Neither is it about social change per se. Rather, it is also
about the social transformation brought about by interventionist policies upon the tribal communi-
ties and the impact this transformation has on the lives of the people. What has been mentioned so far
might have presented the tribal communities affected by these interventionist policies induced by
external agencies as passive recipients, or actors. Fortunately, we have Chapter 9 to rectify any false
impression. It outlines how the Aoheng utilised a ritual called ngo sang as a political tool to maintain
their ethnic space, identity and influence in the face of mounting external encroachments.

Sellato’s simple writing style allows readers to imagine and situate themselves in the context
being described, giving them a chance to participate in the production and reproduction of meanings
attached to his text.

A review of such a rich coverage is a tall order. Thirty years of direct, first-hand research cannot and
should not be compressed into one brief review. The thirteen essays produced in this volume demand
specific attention and evaluation, and this I have not been able to do in the space permitted me. I can
only recommend the book to readers, especially Malaysians and Indonesians, who may not know of
the existence of the communities with which Sellato spent thirty years.

References
There were Indian capitalists long before the twentieth century. A thriving business community existed in the period that the Buddhist Jatakas refer to, while the Mughal emperors licensed merchants to coin money for them, and Indian merchants used bills of exchange to transfer money all over West, South and Southeast Asia. The British impact inhibited the growth and even threatened the survival of some merchants because the alien rulers erected numerous obstacles to their trade. Nevertheless, by the beginning of the twentieth century, many Indian merchants had entered the few modern industries that grew up under the regime of one-way free trade imposed by the colonial power.

Aditya Mukherjee’s book is not about how the Indian capitalist class was recruited but about the ideology of that class. In Marxist language, it is about how a class in itself became a class for itself. Let me first say that as a description of the nationalist ideology of some capitalists in the period from 1920 to 1947, the book would be useful to students who are interested in the construction of the public stance on policy issues of some Indian capitalists. Mukherjee discusses in detail the capitalists’ views on monetary and fiscal policy, and on protection and government patronage in India, in some cases from 1916 to 1947 and in others from 1926 to 1947. They are useful as narratives of the attitude of Indian big business and its spokesmen in those times.

But the author has a more ambitious target of attack, the economists and historians whom he groups as “radical left scholars”. He accuses the latter of underestimating the anti-imperialist force of the ideology of Indian capitalists. There are several problems however with the way he addresses this issue. First, his defence of the Indian capitalist class often degenerates into a hagiography. He attributes to Indian capitalists an innovative way of looking at problems when there is plenty of evidence that other groups were articulating their views in very similar ways. To take a striking example, in her recently completed doctoral thesis, Manali Chakrabarti has shown that the British industrialists based in Kanpur were vociferous in their protests against all the policies of the British Indian government that they thought favoured foreign, and especially British, manufactures at the expense of Indian products. The basic economic motive for such protest was that the British industrialists of Kanpur were mainly dependent on the domestic market just as the earliest group of Indian industrialists were. Or to take another example, if Indian capitalists were voicing concern about the parlous state of Indian agriculture, even the British government could not be indifferent, at least publicly, as was shown by their appointment of a Royal Commission on Indian agriculture in the 1920s.

Secondly, Mukherjee uses the explicit statements of Indian capitalists to criticize the critique of the neo-colonial policies pursued by an independent India mounted by the “left radical scholars”. The Indian capitalists could advocate the cause of peasants in colonial India because they knew that the British could not afford to disturb the landlord-dominated social order which was the bulwark of their authority. But what did they do to support pro-peasant land reforms in India after independence? In fact, the media controlled by them consistently opposed the governments of the only two major states, Kerala and West Bengal, that carried out radical land reforms. It could be pleaded that they could not affect government policy in that direction given the weight of the landlords in electoral politics. But in the area in which they could have followed a policy directed towards attaining independence, namely,
technology and product development, they pursued a short-sighted policy of dependence on foreign suppliers without attempting even to absorb the technologies they imported. They failed to learn from Japan and its East Asian followers in this respect. So the achievement of the Indian capitalist class after Indian independence cannot be boosted by examining their free-riding statements in the 1930s.

Mukherjee is sometimes slipshod in the use of evidence in his chosen area of discourse. For example, he often tries to defend the conservatism of Indian capitalists in the 1920s by citing their more daring statements in the 1930s. By then not just Indian capitalists but policy-makers and publicists in many major countries wanted public works and deficit financing to fight depression. Sir George Schuster, the Finance Member of the Indian government during the height of the depression, after pursuing savagely deflationary policies, went on to advocate national planning for India. There are also major gaps in the scholarship of Mukherjee in his chosen area. He seems to have overlooked the work of Raghabendra Chattopadhyay and several other scholars on the pre-history of Indian planning and seems to have read nothing of the present reviewer’s work, which began to be published in the early 1970s. Before casting stones, Mukherjee should perhaps have found out which targets he wanted to hit.

The book had the potential of giving a clear view of the economic ideology of the Indian capitalist class in the years of heightened nationalist struggle, but the clarity of the discourse has been marred by unnecessary, ill-directed polemics.

Reference

*Sexuality, Obscenity, Community: Women, Muslims, and the Hindu Public in Colonial India.*
Reviewed by Karin Deutsch Karlekar, Freedom House
E-mail karindeutsch@yahoo.com
DOI: 10.1017/S1479591404280263

In recent years there has been considerable scholarly attention devoted to the emergence of Hindu nationalism and its implications for women and gender equations, as well as for both male and female sexuality. Other scholars have charted the growth of communalism and the creation of “Hindu” and “Muslim” identities during the same period. Charu Gupta’s path-breaking work pulls a number of distinct themes together, as she teases out the hitherto largely unexplored connections between the construction of patriarchy and the construction of Hindu identity. Using the medium of the Hindi public sphere in late colonial India, she examines how Hindu publicists redefined ideas of sexuality and obscenity and how these issues were linked to a growing preoccupation with delineating more rigid communal boundaries.

At first glance, Gupta’s study seems to cover much disparate ground. A perusal of the Table of Contents reveals sections on the definition of obscenity in print; efforts to control prostitution, women’s dress and entertainment, familial relationships, and healthcare practices; the evolution of the Hindi language; Hindu proselytization and conversions; and attempts to divide the public spaces that Hindus and Muslims shared by employing negative stereotypes of Muslim men. Some of the issues she covers have been treated by other scholars, while in other cases – particularly in the chapters on erotic literature and on aphrodisiacs – she enters relatively uncharted ground. At times, the connection between topics such as male sexual practices, cow protection movements, and Muslim
saints seems obscure, and the narrative appears to jump from one issue to the next without fully exploring any in depth. In such places, one needs to keep Gupta's overarching themes in mind, even if the links are not immediately apparent. In the end, she is largely successful in drawing out the connections between obscenity, sexuality and community and in adding to our understanding of the disparate methods by which Hindu identity was formed.

As someone whose own scholarly work has focused on gender and the formation of Muslim identity in late colonial north India, I was struck by the similar tactics employed by Hindu and Muslim revivalists during this period. In trying to unite disparate religious communities who were divided by caste and class, they focused on issues, such as women's sexuality, that could appeal to a wide audience. Both demonstrated an overarching preoccupation with regulating women's comportment in the public as well as the private sphere. Aspects of shared culture or "borrowed" customs were seen as impurities that had to be purged. The new "reformed" woman then became an icon who was tasked with upholding and transmitting the distinctive values and traditions of the community.

Gupta points out that for the publicists, women's agency ideally should be confined to actively upholding Hindu honour and values, for example by participating in sangathan movements or by defending themselves against Muslim sexual advances. However, one question that remains largely unanswered in the book is the extent to which Hindu women acquiesced with the new boundaries that were being drawn up around them. Although she does touch on the ways in which women were able at certain points to subvert or negotiate around these boundaries (such as by widow remarriage, elopement, or conversion), this is an issue that deserves further attention, perhaps by examining in more depth the writings in the women's journals of the period.

Gupta's primary sources for her study are archival materials and official records, Hindi popular tracts and literature, and contemporary newspapers and magazines. The book's particular strength is the sheer breadth of "high" and "low" Hindi writings by a wide range of authors that have been consulted, making it a particularly valuable resource for those who would not have the ability to analyze such materials themselves. I did feel, however, that the flow of the narrative was somewhat disrupted by the decision not to translate Hindi words or phrases at their first usage in the text, but rather include them in the glossary. This was the case not only with words that would be generally understood by a scholar of South Asia, but also with esoteric phrases that are not commonly used by native Hindi speakers. Readers may also be jolted by the somewhat abrupt ending to the book; after summing up her main points, Gupta enters into a brief discussion of elopements and conversions but does not wholly relate this digression to the thrust of her conclusions.

Nevertheless, as well as providing a wealth of information about ways in which Hindu identity was formed during this crucial period of Indian history, the book is also highly relevant reading when viewed in the context of present-day communalism. As well as covering the more familiar terrain of the discourses on the abduction of Hindu women by Muslim men and on the Muslims' supposedly higher rates of fertility, Gupta also examines calls for economic boycotts of Muslims and campaigns to separate the day-to-day interactions between the two communities. Her material can be viewed in two ways. On the one hand, one can see that publicists' use of emotive issues such as abduction to antagonize Hindus against the "aggressive" and "lustful" Muslim "other" has had a long and successful history that continues to this day. Her description of conscious attempts to persuade Hindus to boycott Muslim artisans and the advocacy of occupational and locational segregation strikes a chord when compared to the economic marginalization and ghettoization of Muslims that has taken place in present-day Gujarat since the riots two years ago. On the other hand, if there is any comfort to be gained in examining such historical antecedents, it is that the propaganda that surrounded the Gujarat riots was following a well-worn pattern rather than espousing a particularly new and virulent form of communal hatred. In sum, this study should be considered key reading both for those interested in issues of community identity, gender, and sexuality in a formative phase of Indian history, as well as for those who seek to understand the genesis of communalism in present-day India.
Early Feminists of Colonial India: Sarala Devi Chaudhurani, Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain.
Reviewed by Malavika Karlekar, Centre for Women’s Development Studies, New Delhi
E-mail karlekars@vsnl.com
DOI: 10.1017/S147959140429026X

Over the last two decades, part of the mandate of women’s studies world-wide has been to excavate the life and times of well-known, together with not so well-known, women. Academic-cum-politician Bharati Ray adds to this tradition in her slim, neatly argued volume on Sarala Devi Chaudhurani and Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, focusing on two amazing women who straddled the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Bengal. Presented somewhat in the “compare and contrast” mode of history-writing of earlier decades, much of the information presented has had an airing before. However, Ray puts it all together in a compact, readable book, and an extensive bibliography and short biographical notes at the end on major players add value to her work.

Ray traces the life histories of the two women and the differences in background, socialisation and family dynamics. Sarala Devi (1872–1945) was the daughter of Swarnakumari Devi, sister of eminent literateur Rabindranath Tagore and perhaps one of the earliest Indian women novelists. Rokeya (1880–1932) came from a more conservative home, the daughter of a Muslim landlord (zamindar) from Rangpur district in northern Bengal in what is now Bangladesh. Unlike Sarala Devi who became one of the earliest women graduates of the country, Rokeya was not sent to school and “from the age of five, I had to observe purdah [use of the veil] even before ladies who were not family members” (p. 19).

After introducing us to the two women, in “The Age and its Women”, Ray provides a very useful context to their lives. She goes over the now-familiar ground of male commitment to the creation of a companionable daughter and wife, and the incipient growth of employment opportunities for women and their induction into the nationalistic struggle for freedom. Early professional involvement as a school teacher away from home (in Mysore), editorial activities as well as skill in music kept Sarala Devi busy; she became editor of the family journal Bharati through which she propagated her nationalist ideals. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, she organised an akhara (gymnasium) for nationalist-minded young men for training in physical fitness and the martial arts.

Sarala’s marriage at the relatively late age of thirty-three years to Rambhuj Chaudhury, a lawyer-cum-journalist who was also a political activist of the Punjab, took her away from a life where she had established a niche. Undaunted, she continued her political and literary work and helped her husband with the editing of “the powerful nationalist Urdu weekly newspaper, Hindusthan” (p. 14). When the government threatened to cancel the paper’s licence if Rambhuj remained the proprietor, Sarala became its editor and proprietor – and brought out an English edition as well. Many of the details of Sarala Devi’s life and work are described in her autobiography, Jibaner Jhara Pata (Life’s Fallen Leaves).

Yet, while Ray does draw attention to Sarala’s recounting how she was almost forced to marry and indeed to the fact that the book ends abruptly with this marriage, she does not dwell much on an extremely important leitmotif in the earlier part: Sarala wrote at length of her childhood anguish at being rejected by her mother who apparently had little time for her children. Ray overlooks her heroine’s early childhood angst and litany of complaints against upper-middle-class patterns of Bengali child-rearing where the infant barely saw its mother; in the opening sentences of Jibaner Jhara Pata, Sarala speaks of her being put out to a wet nurse soon after her birth, a custom in the Tagore household (Karlekar 1991). This was soon followed by other family traditions, a strange pastiche of Victorian and zamindari norms of child-rearing and feminine roles. Ray’s obvious admiration for Sarala and her lineage – something few Bengalis can claim to be free from – means that her assessment

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often teeters on the brink of hagiography. This is hardly the case in Ray’s description of Rokeya, whom, she somewhat judgmentally commented, “blamed” men for the ills of women.

Rokeya’s father was not in favour of educating his daughter and she was married early to Syed Sakhwat Hossain (a widower) from Bihar. Her husband was much older than she was (as was Sarala Devi’s husband) but “he was an educated man and liberal in his views” (p. 21). Though he encouraged his young wife’s literary pursuits – and she in turn named the school that she founded after his death with his money the Sakhwat Memorial School – Ray feels that “Rokeya’s indebtedness to Sakhwat has been exaggerated” (p. 22). At the same time, though her powerful and revolutionary *Sultana’s Dream*, a utopian fantasy where women rule in Ladyland and men are confined indoors in the *mardana* (men’s quarters, a take-off on the established female space, the *zenana* or women’s quarters), led her husband to exclaim that it was “a terrible revenge”, he never curbed her writing. In fact, unlike Sarala Devi who had established herself before her marriage, Rokeya’s acerbic pen flourished in her married years (Jahan 1988).

Both women wrote extensively on “the woman question” – the need for education, freedom from purdah, formation of associations, establishment of schools and so on. However, if one were to compare the literary merits of their writings, Rokeya’s work and interests were of a different order. She was more interested in the politics of gender and in existential questions of the basis of gender inequality, and while Ray writes at some length on Rokeya’s at times unhappy family life and early relationships, she does not deal in any great detail with the imaginative, creative aspects of her most unusual writing, and indeed, *Sultana’s Dream* was, in many ways, well ahead of its times. In fact, Rokeya’s parable-like tales, her use of names, situations and fantasy mark her out as a rare woman who used unusually powerful tools to convey her message that women were oppressed and that true equality could only be achieved if parameters were redefined, not necessarily within the context of the family.

Sarala, Ray points out, was committed to the new, educated woman – the *bhadramahila* – who would take her place beside menfolk in roles defined by them in a patriarchal world order. Clearly, though also committed to women’s emancipation, Rokeya was introspective and analytical while Sarala was more a woman of action, who used her literary, musical and organisational talents to work against the imperial presence. In her desire to show that both women were committed to “the cause”, Bharati Ray tends to gloss over their differences, and the dominant metaphor is that of two successful women who were both committed to that annoying holdall phrase.

While both were remarkable women, Sarala’s obvious advantages of birth, religion (her family was an integral part of the reformist Brahmo Samaj), and relatively easy access to education and employment, need to be offset against Rokeya’s disadvantages. Perhaps it was these very factors that led her to argue for women’s rights to a home, and not, like Sarala and many others of her background, to argue for rights within the home. Rokeya was iconoclastic and revolutionary, but she was also a builder of institutions (the Sakhwat Memorial School still exists in Kolkata); Sarala Devi was an exception within a growing category of emancipated Bengali women, and she had many peers and supporters. Bharati Ray’s painstaking work would have benefited from a little more critical analysis of her heroines; a commitment to finding similarities and looking at the larger picture often obfuscates the differences, as well as the different strengths.

**References**
