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**Laurel Bossen and Hill Gates (2017). *Bound Feet, Young Hands: Tracking the Demise of Footbinding in Village China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. 264 pp., ISBN 9780804799553.**

Ten years after Dorothy Ko's study that shifted the understanding of footbinding fundamentally (Ko, 2007), Laurel Bossen and Hill Gates's ground-breaking research on footbinding will again change our knowledge of this practice for good. Through exploring the long-neglected subject of rural women's footbinding, Bossen and Gates argue that the reason for the demise of footbinding in village China is not because of fashion, beauty, sex, education or a political campaign. Instead, women stopped this practice because of industrialisation, which inevitably drove them out of the business of domestic, sedentary textile-production.

One of the most impressive aspects of this book is its methodology. Previous studies of footbinding predominantly relied on written evidence, such as the writing of elite men and women, foreign observers and researchers, local and foreign reformers, and governmental archives that recorded various anti-footbinding campaigns (Fan, 1997; Gao, 1995; Ko, 2007; Levy, 1966; Wang, 2000; Yang, 2012). In recognising the lack of information about rural women among this evidence, Bossen and Gates carried out empirical research in 16 counties in eight provinces in China. This painstaking research is built on data collection carried out on an unprecedented scale, obtaining information from 5,000 elderly women, and conducting surveys and interviews with 1,943 elderly women, most of whom had bound feet.

As anthropologists, Bossen and Gates present this book in an anthropological way, unlike other social and cultural historical works prior to it. The book devotes the entire second chapter to explaining their research methods and fieldwork process. Their field work stretched over a period of two decades, from 1991 to 2010. Geographically, their research sites include villages in Hebei,

Shandong, Anhui, Shanxi, Shaanxi, Yunnan, Guizhou and Sichuan provinces. The following three chapters are organised geographically, grouping women's experiences in three regions: north China, northwest China and southwest China. The structure within these three chapters is rather repetitive. For each research site, Bossen and Gates provide its social and economic history, geographical information, the work women did there, and a statistical analysis of the demise of foot-binding. The authors find positive correlations between the demise of footbinding and the local development of the textile industry, or industrial textile imports, in all of their research sites. Therefore, their data strongly supports their argument that footbinding disappeared because factories eliminated the economic benefits of women's hand labour.

The most surprising case is perhaps Ding county in Hebei province, which all historians specialising in modern China know as a place where modern mass education experiments took place. Bossen and Gates find that even in Ding county the real reason for the death of foot-binding was industrialisation, rather than education. The final chapter integrates their data across regions, and confirms the correlations between the demise of foot-binding and the cessation of women's participation in handwork for income across China. Generally speaking, the grounded data of this research has convincingly uncovered an important cause of foot-binding's disappearance that had long been neglected by historians, presumably due to lack of evidence. At times, however, one suspects that too much effort has been spent on analysing the statistical data. Although the authors conducted 1,943 interviews with women, analysis of these qualitative materials is rare throughout the book. Historians who expect to read rural women's life stories relating to footbinding would be disappointed.

Another significant contribution of this book is its inclusion of young girls in the history of the economy and labour in China. Textiles have long been one of the most important products in Chinese history, both for domestic usage and exports. However, previous economic histories of textiles have long neglected the importance of young girls in their production (Huang, 1985; 2011; Chao, 1977). By revealing women's extensive participation in production since the age of around seven, Bossen and Gates challenged the May Forth paradigm that condemned women for their unproductivity in Chinese history.

Although the book has convincingly proven that one of the definitive motives mothers had for ending the practice of binding their daughters' feet was the rise of the modern textile industry, the negative proposition raised by the authors, that mothers bound their daughters' feet because of the need of young girls' labour, is not self-evident. One of the three reasons why the relation between girl's hand labour and footbinding has been neglected by so many observers and scholars, Bossen and Gates points out, is that previous researchers were reluctant to believe that mothers would cripple their daughters in order to make them work (Bossen & Gates, 2017: 147). The authors attempt to explain this argument by suggesting that infant killing or the extreme disciplining of children are not uncommon in Chinese history or even today (Bossen & Gates, 2017: 12).

However, this could not explain the universality of foot-binding. After all, infant killing was not carried out in every single family, whereas footbinding was. This argument needs to be illustrated with further evidence, probably by using the first-hand narratives of women. The following questions are left unanswered: did mothers use footbinding as a tool to make their daughters work diligently, from a very young age, intentionally or subconsciously? Is it possible that mothers sincerely believed foot-binding was necessary for their daughters to enter into marriage, and that the usage of their labour was just a side product? Was it really necessary to keep girls working through this extreme method? How can we explain that some girls had their feet bound before or after the age of doing handwork, at the age of four, or fifteen?

In addition, in challenging the idea that women bound their daughters' feet so they could get married in the future, this book has limited success. As a cause-effect study, this study only measures the relationship between female labour and foot-binding, without taking marriage as a variable. Therefore, it could not decide which reason is more significant.

Nevertheless, this book successfully demonstrates that in researching modern history, especially the history of those who could not speak for themselves, it is essential to use methods such as surveys or interviews, to provide a fuller picture. As quantitative data-driven research, this book also inspires historians working with words to pay serious attention to numbers.

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*Lin Jiao*  
*Beijing Foreign Studies University*

**Michelle Tien King (2014). *Between Birth and Death: Female Infanticide in Nineteenth-Century China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. xiii + 250 pp., ISBN 9780804785983.**

It seems obvious and trite to discuss female infanticide in China. Female infanticide has long been regarded as a product of backward cultural practices and gender inequities under an authoritarian, patriarchal regime bent on enacting and enforcing a "birth" sub-regime. Along with footbinding, female infanticide becomes a marker of traditional China's decadent culture and

regressive past. This perception of China is reinforced by first a single-child policy and then a prevalent desire to have even smaller, nuclear families in an increasingly affluent society, which have “amplified the effects of a long-standing societal preference for sons, derived from a traditional Confucian value system that still lingers in present form” (p.2).

The common perception of female infanticide as a uniquely Chinese feature is perplexing. As Michelle Tien King has observed, examples of infanticide abounded throughout the classical world and Western history. Her book aims to dismantle the historical fixture of a “naturalized and eternal relationship between female infanticide and Chinese culture and [to build] that association instead as a product of historical processes of the nineteenth century” (p.3). Looking at perceptions rather than practices of female infanticide, King examines male attitudes toward infanticide; men discussed female infanticide whose most intimate actors—mothers, midwives, mothers-in-law—were “almost never addressed in written sources” (p.3). She argues that we have anachronistically projected our understanding of female infanticide onto a complex set of conditions in late Qing China, where infanticide was a response to unwanted children—an undesirable yet unavoidable result of normal sex relations (p.7). Female infanticide had been a “local, moral, philanthropic issue”—a localized “vulgar custom” perceived by Chinese male elites—before it became a “cross-cultural, political, scientific issue of international concern” in the nineteenth century, after Western diplomats, missionaries, and travelers wrote about female infanticide in China and helped shape the worldwide perception of female infanticide as a “totemic marker of Chinese society” (p.10). Such writings dismissed more nuanced Chinese interpretations of female infanticide, perpetuating instead for their agendas a sense that female infanticide was, almost without censure, prevalent in China. Foreign religious missions organized humanitarian actions to rescue the unwanted Chinese children, but they met strong Chinese resistance, galvanized in the larger milieu of Chinese-foreign antagonism and geopolitics. The book is a history of silence, of the absent bodies of the ephemeral infant girls hijacked by both imperialistic and nationalistic discourses with global resonance in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

The book opens with the “infanticidal mother” woman Ye, a late imperial Chinese woman who described her own experience of infanticide. Ye chose to drown her own infant daughter given her helplessness and poverty. Late imperial Chinese morality books reveal that women killed their own daughters because they foresaw the “pains and miseries” the latter would have to suffer in a patriarchal world (p.45). Chapter two turns to elite men’s moral reform of their local communities. Female infanticide was a regionally specific custom, and scholars such as Yu Zhi (1809-1874) had tried to discourage it in their didactic writings and village lectures.

Chapter three is the beginning of what I see as part two of the book: the advent of self-taught foreign Sinologists and missionaries in China. While Chinese sources emphasize morality and local acts of philanthropy, Western sources were “exercises of ‘scientific’ investigation, with the general purpose of informing European and American audiences about the cultural mores of an exotic land.” Female infanticide was one of many Chinese cultural markers in the Western—predominantly British and French—“textual excursions to China” (pp.78-79). Western writers, most notably members of the Royal Asiatic Society, regarded female infanticide as a synecdoche of the entire Chinese civilization, passing off their judgmental observations as objective facts. The irony came when they deployed Chinese anti-infanticide moral tracts as evidence of the prevalence of female infanticide in China. Missionaries created data, illustrations, and tales to explain the extent of female infanticide in China to instill compassion and passion in the hearts of a Western audience, which would further their cause of proselytizing their religious and scientific ideas. Chapter four analyzes the sympathetic efforts at saving unwanted Chinese children by American and European Catholic schoolchildren, who had been exposed to the Western literature on Chinese infanticide. These schoolchildren became missionaries who aimed to “create an indigenous army of Christians to spread the message of salvation in China” by “saving, baptizing, and rearing unwanted Chinese children to adulthood” (p.118).

Chapter five examines the change in perception of female infanticide from a local custom to a “transgression against the nation’s population, robbing it of potentially productive female citizens and threatening China’s survival on the world stage” (p.150). Foreign orphanages vied with the Chinese for the right to

save Chinese children. The competition extended to labor, land, and other resources at the provincial and prefectural levels. After the Tianjin Massacre in 1870, Chinese villagers grew suspicious of foreign intentions of rescuing and caring for unwanted children. Chinese and foreigners accused each other of infanticide, and King argues that the Tianjin Massacre articulated the issue of unwanted Chinese children as one “requiring a particular *Chinese* solution” (pp.158-159). As a result of exposure to Western “secular” ideas and shifting geopolitics, husbands, not wives alone, were now blamed for committing infanticide. Physical brutality rather than karmic retribution was emphasized. As China became republican, female infanticide became highly politicized, and was at once an issue of women, population, and nation building. The book concludes with an analysis of the One-Child policy in light of the nineteenth-century experiences of female infanticide in China.

The book has explained how female infanticide was problematized as a uniquely Chinese phenomenon. It has successfully reconciled empirical data comprised of multiple and sometimes divergent strands. Highly readable, it deserves to be read by both specialists and students of cross-cultural exchanges and late imperial Chinese society.

*Ying-kit Chan*  
*Princeton University*

**Lawton Robert Burns and Gordon G. Liu (eds.) (2017). *China's Healthcare System and Reform*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 458 pp., ISBN (hardback) 978-1-107-16459-8; ISBN (paperback) 978-1-316-61646-8.**

Lawton Robert Burns and Gordon G. Liu's edited book *China's Healthcare System and Reform* aims to make sense of one of the biggest healthcare systems in the world. At first glance, the scope of the book's theme appears alarmingly broad. However, the collection of expert essays constructs a comprehensive analysis of the development of the Chinese healthcare system and its reforms. All contributors are professionals in their own fields, and it is a breath of fresh air to collect their expertise into one comprehensive package.

*China's Healthcare System and Reform* provides a complete review of China's healthcare system and policy reforms in the context of the global economy. Previously, articles focusing on the Chinese healthcare system (e.g. Yip et al., 2012; Hougaard et al., 2011; Gong et al., 2012; Liu, 2004) have been published in various journals (e.g. *The Lancet*, *Applied Health Economics and Health Policy*, *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*). Thus, *China's Healthcare System and Reform* is an essential manual for anyone interested in the Chinese healthcare system. Students, researchers, practitioners and policy-makers benefit from this thorough collection of essays.

There are several ways to analyse the healthcare system as is explained in the first chapter. It is extremely important to describe these methods as there are so many operators in the field of healthcare. The book's 16 chapters cover the payers, the providers, and the producers (e.g. manufacturers) in China's system. Expectations can be extremely high or unreal even, when a new colossal book is published. However, *China's Healthcare System and Reform* meets all expectations. It provides a remarkable feat in collecting in one place the key elements of change and reforms on one of the most massive healthcare systems in the world.

The book provides a detailed analysis of the historical development of China's healthcare system, the current state of its broad reforms, and the uneasy balance between China's market-driven approach and governmental regulation. Most importantly, it devotes considerable attention to major problems confronting China, including chronic illness (non-communicable diseases), public health, long-term care and economic security for the elderly. In addition to that, two important themes emerge from the essays: the urgent need for reforms but also the concerns about rising costs in the healthcare system.

The book's structure is very logical and easy to follow. Part one explains the analytic framework, history and how the public health system is connected to the infrastructure. Part two introduces healthcare reform in quite a detailed manner. This is followed by part three's information on healthcare providers and part four's overview and analysis on insurers and reimbursement. The final part, part five, introduces various kinds of product manufacturers.

One of the strengths of this book are the numerous charts, pictures and tables that are used throughout the book but especially in part five, “Product Manufacturers”. *China’s Healthcare System and Reform* is easy to use as a manual that provides adequate information on two key elements, evolution and reform. The use of many government sources (e.g. State Council, China Food and Drug Administration, National Health Insurance Administration) is also very interesting, because the Chinese curtain of secrecy can sometimes prevent researchers from acquiring information (see for example: chapter eight, “China’s Hospital Sector”; the eleventh chapter, “Health Insurance in China”; and the fourteenth chapter, “China’s Pharmaceutical Sector”). The book is very technical and at some points it would have been interesting to hear how the patients, actual users, of the healthcare system feel. However, the aim of the book is to introduce the healthcare organization and not to analyse how patients feel about the system.

In conclusion, this massive information package gives an extensive overview of the complexity of the Chinese healthcare system. It offers a comprehensive look at one of the world’s largest healthcare systems, its background and future. I truly hope this book inspires and encourages future researchers to take on the task to further study the Chinese healthcare system.

The editors, Burns and Liu, are experts in their field of study. This gives the book its professional feeling. Lawton Robert Burns is a James Joo-Jin Kim professor in the Health Care Management Department at the Wharton School. He is also the Co-director of the Roy and Diana Vagelos Program in Life Sciences and Management at the University of Pennsylvania. He has authored and co-authored many textbooks, scientific articles and publications.

Gordon G. Liu is a PKU Yangtze River Scholar Professor of Economics at the Peking University National School of Development, and director of the PKU China Center for Health Economic Research. In addition to that, he is a member of China’s State Council Health Reform Expert Advisory Committee. He has served as an associate editor for many academic journals.

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*Pia Eskelinen*  
*University of Turku*

**Steve Lau and John De Lucy (eds.) (2017). *Chinese Labour Corps: Photographs from the WJ Hawkings Collection*. Myosotis Books. 96 pp., ISBN-10: 1999806603.**

This new work, published in English, French and Mandarin, draws upon recently-discovered photographic evidence to cast a fresh light upon the work and role of the Chinese Labour Corps (CLC) on the Western Front during the First World War. At its core lie the photographs taken by William James Hawkings in China and France between 1917 and 1919 and rediscovered by his grandson, John De Lucy, in 2014. These images formed the core of *A Good Reputation Endures Forever*—the first UK exhibition to focus exclusively on the volunteers of the CLC—and now, thanks to the efforts of John De Lucy and Steve Lau, highlights from the collection are available to a wider audience.

William James Hawkings was born in Somerset in 1883, and moved to China in 1908 to work for the British American Tobacco Company. A fluent Chinese speaker, he travelled to the CLC recruitment centre in Weihaiwei in early 1917,

and was appointed Superintendent of Number 4 Party CLC. He arrived in France in August 1917, and was posted to Calais with No. 12 Company CLC to work in the busy docks. In late 1917 W.J. Hawkings travelled to China to collect more recruits, returning to France seven months later. He subsequently served with No. 103 Skilled Trades Company at Noyelles-sur-Mer, prior to taking over command of the No. 30 Unskilled Labour Corps at Bourbourg. He was demobilised in August 1919 and returned to China in early 1920. Throughout his time with the CLC, Hawkings used his camera to record the lives of the men under his command. His ability fully to engage with his subjects—and their obvious ease with their chronicler—allowed him to capture a series of images of military life that are remarkable for their informality and humanity.

The photographs have been arranged to cast a light on various core aspects of the experiences of the 96,000 Chinese volunteers who served under British command during the Great War. They thus reflect the lives of an extraordinary group of Chinese working men during a period of tumultuous change. At the outbreak of the First World War, China was in the process of transforming from Empire to Republic. The Chinese government was keen to develop its place on the world stage, and saw support for the Allies as a route to both recovering German possessions in Shandong Province and countering the increasing influence of Japan in the region. By mid-1916 Britain was suffering from an acute shortage of labour, as the nation struggled to deal with the losses incurred on the Western Front. Many jobs at home were taken over by women, but the British government was eager to find a means of releasing the numerous troops employed on vital labour duties behind the front lines to serve in the trenches.

The recruitment of Chinese workers offered a solution to this problem. It also offered the Chinese government an opportunity to align itself with the Allied cause. From early 1917, large numbers of Chinese labourers were hired in the north of the country to serve with the British army. Recruitment centred on Weihaiwei in Shandong Province. The region's poverty and the relatively high wages offered by British recruiters ensured that there was no shortage of volunteers.

It is within this contextual landscape that the images captured by Hawkings are firmly located. The bulk of the book's narrative takes the form of quotes

from contemporary letters, newspaper reports, diaries and other written sources, whilst all of the photographic captions reproduce Hawkings's own descriptions. Thus armed, the reader is taken on an astonishing visual journey from Weihaiwei to the CLC's main camp at Noyelles-sur-Mer in Northern France.

The arrangement of the book is essentially thematic, commencing with an outline of Hawkings's life and then moving on to explore the experiences of the men who served under his command in a range of settings: recruitment and transport, military life, working life, off-duty life, and finally sickness and death. Photographs taken at the point of embarkation reflect the mixed emotions of smartly-uniformed young men setting off on an epic journey to the battlefields of France and Flanders. In marked contrast, many of the images of CLC members at work capture the ill-concealed anxiety on the faces of men engaged in the perilous processing of unexploded munitions.

It is, however, the photographs of CLC volunteers at leisure that are perhaps the most astonishing. Here, within the mundane surroundings of camp life, Hawkings has captured something special. Unlike so many official images of the war, his photographs appear to be populated by real people with whom the viewer can immediately connect. The excitement of receiving mail from home is evident in one group shot, just as the pride of a horticulturalist shines through in a photograph of a labourer tending the perfectly laid-out hospital garden at Noyelles-sur-Mer. Elsewhere, a portrait of a man with his pet songbird conveys a special sense of intimacy; and the supreme confidence of a naked young man posing shamelessly for the camera whilst waiting to shower serves as a reminder of the universal and timeless optimism of youth.

But such optimism was often misplaced, and Hawkings did not hesitate to chronicle the sacrifices of the CLC workers. Although members of the Chinese Labour Corps did not serve on the front line, some 3,000 lost their lives whilst serving in France and Flanders. Their role in maintaining Britain's military infrastructure made them prime targets for German artillery and aircraft, whilst their dangerous work with munitions and explosives also led to many casualties. Others died in industrial accidents, but the biggest killer was disease, particularly the deadly influenza epidemic of 1918-19.

Given this context, it is unsurprising that many of the images reproduced reflect upon sickness and death. The work undertaken by the British medical staff based at Noyelles-sur-Mer is chronicled, with particular emphasis being given to the strict regime of inspection and treatment undertaken to minimise the risk of the spread of trachoma and conjunctivitis amongst the closely-packed CLC workers based there. Moreover, in these images we also find reminders that not all of the Chinese volunteers based there were drawn from the labouring classes. Here we also see the faces of young members of China's intellectual elite—many linked to the YMCA—who had travelled to France to evangelise and to educate their fellow countrymen.

But if these photographs are enlightening, it is a group of images recording the funeral of a CLC member that engenders the greatest emotional impact. As we look upon the funeral party escorting their dead companion's Union Jack-draped coffin to his final resting place, we witness both British and Chinese warriors walking—albeit momentarily—in step.

The story of Chinese labour during the Great War has long been ignored by scholars and historians. Some recent works have gone some way towards casting a fresh light upon this shamefully neglected story, but it is through works such as this that we are perhaps best able to breathe fresh life into the stories of those who travelled so far to serve in a foreign war. The time has come to remember the “forgotten of the forgotten”.

*Craig Barclay and Rachel Barclay*  
*Durham University*

**Kristin Stapleton (2016). *Fact in Fiction: 1920s China and Ba Jin's Family*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. 296 pp., ISBN 978-1503601062.**

There are few resources amongst contemporary Chinese literary criticism that manage to weave such insightful literary readings and incisive historical research as Kristin Stapleton's *Fact in Fiction: 1920s China and Ba Jin's Family*. The book accomplishes three feats, as set out by Stapleton in her introductory

chapter, simultaneously incorporating a history of twentieth-century Chengdu (and its relevance to the developments in China during this period, more broadly) alongside the author's biography of Ba Jin's formative years in the city and the historiographical context of his novel *Family*. Such an undertaking by a less skilled author would have, perhaps, produced a work which simplifies the rich historical underpinnings of Ba Jin's *Family* to supplementary readings of the novel, coupled with incidental evidence of the political and social machinations of the city in which its author grew up. Not so under Stapleton's careful guidance. By reading the social and economic development of early twentieth-century Chengdu as much as its fictional counterpart in Ba Jin's *Turbulent Stream* trilogy, Stapleton provides a perceptive reading of *Family* which invites the reader to consider how fiction can enrich and enliven our understanding of history.

*Fact in Fiction* is divided into seven chapters which each shine a light on the various social, economic and political contexts of 1920s Chengdu. The book organizes its chapters thematically, centring around topical discussions of "patriarchy and the 'Confucian' family, militarist politics and Chinese cities, the nature of the revolutions in cultural values and social structure during the early twentieth century, and their effects on Chinese families and on Chinese cities" (p.7). This thematic approach allows Stapleton the flexibility to manoeuvre her discussions across the broad timeframe of early twentieth-century China, whilst remaining faithful to the book's primary focus on the historical record of Ba Jin's youth, the period in which *Family* is set, and the social and political situation of 1920s Chengdu.

At the forefront of Stapleton's inquiry throughout, however, is the novel *Family*; although she also offers incidental analysis of its sequels *Spring* (*Chun* 春) and *Autumn* (*Qiu* 秋)—published in 1938 and 1940, respectively—which constitute Ba Jin's *Turbulent Stream* trilogy (of which *Family* is the first part) and which, she emphasizes, "[have] played a major role in shaping how China's history in the first few decades of the twentieth century has been understood, both in China and abroad" (p.2). Consequently, Stapleton employs the use of characters from the trilogy as her starting points for each chapter, analysing how "Ba Jin's description of him, her, or them corresponds to what the historical record tells us about real people in similar situations" (p.14). Overall, this

approach works well and it provides Stapleton a rich canvas of characters whose stories throughout *Family* she uses to underpin the thematic discussions within the book.

Chapter one, entitled, “Mingfeng: The Life of a Slave Girl”, for example, deals not with the most powerful of *Family*’s characters, but “with the most vulnerable members of the traditional household structure, slave girls” (p.17). Whilst Stapleton concedes that “evidence to document the lives of slave girls in China in the first decades of the twentieth century is hard to come by” (p.18), her exposition of Mingfeng among the other characters illustrated by Ba Jin is convincingly coupled with historiographic evidence to suggest why slave girls’ status had changed so little in the first half of the twentieth century; despite Ba Jin’s sympathetic portrayal of Mingfeng in *Family*. Stapleton provides a translated “Slave Girl Contract from Chengdu, 1919” to evidence the legal apparatus for the ownership of slave girls in the city and notes that, although Ba Jin’s “position in the social order was far removed from theirs” (p.18), there were many slave girls in Chengdu in the early 1920s whose experience and status, she argues, would likely have been reflective of their fictional portrayal in *Family*. It would be easy to criticize Stapleton for assuming that Ba Jin’s worldview—particularly in relation to chapter one’s concluding discussion of the “liberation” of slave girls in the May Fourth era—was reflective of the wider political and economic reforms sweeping China between the 1910s and 1940s. Indeed, as she argues throughout the book, Stapleton asserts that Ba Jin was “unusual ... in Chengdu in the 1910s and 1920s” (p.56) being, himself, in many ways, a pre-emptive “[advocate] of social change in China” and “[calling] for the abolition of slave girl status and concubinage” (p.44). Not content with unravelling the legal and social context of slave girls in early twentieth-century Chengdu, Stapleton concludes her analysis of Mingfeng by considering the city from a slave girl’s perspective, providing an insightful analysis of the experience of slave girls in Chengdu, as well as the experience of slave girls from various locations traversing the threshold of rural China to the city, more widely.

The book’s successive chapters (two-seven) successfully chart the development of Chengdu alongside their fictional counterparts in *Family*, whose professions or public profiles Stapleton employs in detailing the various social and economic contexts of the novel. While chapter two and three’s discussions

of “Chengdu’s Gentry” and “The Chengdu Economy”, respectively, undoubtedly provide a significant contribution to our understanding of how Ba Jin’s work reflects the early social and economic development of Chengdu, Stapleton’s insights into the lives of everyday citizens in chapters four-six provide her greatest contribution to debates around the lived experience of individuals during the May Fourth era. Moreover, her contribution (as in chapter one) to historical debates on Gender Studies in China—as exemplified by chapter six’s exploration of “Chengdu and the ‘New Woman’”—helps shed light on why, as a result of its “stifling conservatism”, eastern cities like Shanghai, Guangzhou, and even Beijing, “became magnets that attracted many revolutionary youth away from interior cities like Chengdu” (p.183). Stapleton’s approach in this effort to unravel women’s experience in early twentieth-century Chengdu is akin to Leta Hong Fincher’s *Leftover Women: The Resurgence of Gender Inequality in China* (2014), whose comparable use of personal stories to illustrate the challenges faced by women in contemporary China suggest that more research is needed to bridge the gap between the new conceptions of women’s education and roles in society in the late 1910s and early 1920s, and the experience of women in China today.

In *Fact in Fiction*, Stapleton has undoubtedly succeeded in producing a highly detailed and rich study of how the social and political situation in 1920s Chengdu intersects with *Family* as fiction. If there is one criticism that might be levelled about sections of the book, it is that Stapleton’s keen enthusiasm for the social and economic development of Chengdu as a growing city in early twentieth-century China does, at times, overshadow her astute analysis of *Family*. Chapter three’s lengthy exploration of the 1909 Chengdu census, for example—while no doubt an invaluable resource for social anthropologists of early twentieth-century China—loses its focal character, Gao Juejin’s, experience of 1920s Chengdu amongst Stapleton’s intricately detailed description of the city which, she concedes, Ba Jin “based ... pretty much entirely on his memories of his childhood and stories he heard from others” (p.88). Stapleton can be forgiven such indulgences, however, as the chapters which focus more prominently on her literary analysis of Ba Jin’s work (notably chapters one, two and six) are instructive illustrations of how to read literary sources whilst also considering their motivation and historical context.

Thus, while *Fact in Fiction: 1920s China and Ba Jin's Family* should be read by anyone with an interest in Ba Jin, his *Turbulent Stream* trilogy or the development of Chengdu in the early twentieth century, Stapleton's methodological analysis and engaging exploration of Chengdu's rich history *vis-à-vis* Ba Jin's *Family* should be considered a mandatory resource to any literary historian who wishes to produce a work of equal quality and insight.

*Ronald Torrance*  
*University of Strathclyde*

**Bret Hinsch (2016). *Women in Imperial China*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. xiv + 255 pp., ISBN 978-1-4422-7165-4.**

The vast scope of Chinese women's history throughout its two millennia-long imperial period invites sustained scholarly attention to their status, position, image, and a wide range of gender-related issues. Whereas recent years have witnessed an increasing interest in examining historical Chinese women in different dynasties, Bret Hinsch's new book offers a succinct, yet eloquent survey of womanhood in the shifting contexts of Chinese history, from remote antiquity to the end of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911).

The core of the study consists of seven chapters, appended by a brief conclusion that summarises the main arguments put forth in the volume. The chapters proceed, in a chronological order, to examine Chinese women's achievements, failures, restraints, and struggles. Instead of a mere outline of historic figures and events, Hinsch selects the most representative figures and events, including the warrior empress Fu Hao (d. ca 1200 BC), the only female emperor Wu Zetian (r. 690-705), the powerful empress dowager Cixi (1835-1908), and many other ordinary women who are less well-known. Based on this examination, he focuses on the different ways people in each period constructed female identity, and how different people accepted or contested it. Moreover, he traces the transformation of female social roles and the changing mechanics men deployed to control women, as well as the factual and imaginative tools women used to thrive in spite of the limits they faced.

Covering such a large time-span within merely 200 pages is certainly not an easy task, and Hinsch is fully aware that such an approach runs the risk of being “not only futile and boring but even counterproductive” (p.xiii), but he masterfully solves the problem by highlighting some of the most important themes that characterised each period. By situating Chinese women in larger historic trends in economics, social structure, thought, and other important topics, it enables a more comprehensive understanding of the evolution and transformation of womanhood throughout imperial China.

Although recent studies on Chinese women in particular dynasties or time periods are abundant, Hinsch’s volume invites readers to reconsider some of the established views about the history of Chinese women. Women’s personal freedom in imperial China, for instance, has been conventionally seen as subjected to a rigid patriarchal authority both in society and the family. Patriarchy is normally understood as male domination. However, Hinsch reveals that women often helped uphold patriarchal norms, and savvy women even realised that they could employ male-dominated institutions to obtain substantial advantages. Furthermore, Hinsch aptly points out that although Confucianism clearly distinguishes men from women and thus creates a defined social inequality, it also provides each sex with space to flourish. This perennial emphasis on separating the sexes kept women from attending schools or serving in public office, but such a parallel female realm also “fostered the development of spaces where women could act with a degree of autonomy” (p.204). Some even turned patriarchal ideas such as patrilinealism and filial piety to their advantage, as both Wu Zetian and Cixi have demonstrated. Because customs such as foot binding, reclusion, and widow chastity that favoured men also provided women with tangible benefits, they “often collaborated with men to construct and maintain patriarchal customs” (p.207).

Throughout the volume, Hinsch makes strenuous efforts in illustrating an extremely diversified picture of women in Chinese history, paying particular attention to the considerable change and development relating to gender and womanhood across the long sweep of China’s history. Hinsch’s keen observation of the different lives of women in the north and the south during the Northern and Southern dynasties (420–589) is refreshing and compelling. In particular, he examines how the Xianbei people “selected and modified Chinese

customs to suit their particular circumstances” and how the different lives of women in the north and the south “reflected the cultural division of these two eras” (p.63). Yet critical readers may expect a more elaborate analysis of women in the Khitan Liao (907-1125) and the Jurchen Jin (1115-1234), two non-Chinese neighbours to the Chinese Song in the south. Were the lives of Khitan and Jurchen women the same as their Chinese contemporaries? To what extent did ethnicity impact womanhood? How did the different acceptance of Confucian norms influence gender roles and identity? All these questions remain unanswered. Moreover, the period of the paramount Mongol Yuan dynasty (1368-1644) is neglected, leaving a major gap in Hinsch’s otherwise enormously cogent discussion of the formative impact of earlier times on later eras.

This minor cavil aside, *Women in Imperial China* is a lucid, sharply-observed study that displays the impressive lives and achievements of women through China’s long history. At a time of a continuous revival of interest in Chinese women, Bret Hinsch’s new book is a fitting addition to the growing body of scholarship on women in traditional China and will surely attract academic professionals, students, and general readers.

*Hang Lin*  
*Hangzhou Normal University*

**James C.S. Lin and Xiuzhen Li (2018). *China’s First Emperor and the Terracotta Warriors*. Liverpool: National Museums Liverpool. 152 pp., ISBN 978-1-902700-59-5.**

In February 2018 a new exhibition entitled *China’s First Emperor and the Terracotta Warriors* opened at the World Museum, in Liverpool. Organised in collaboration with the Shaanxi Provincial Cultural Relics Bureau and Shaanxi History Museum, this did not of course represent the first visit of the Terracotta Army to these shores. In terms of public engagement, however, it was undoubtedly a major coup for Liverpool: a small selection of the figures drew some 225,000 visitors to the City Arts Centre in Edinburgh in 1985; whilst the British Museum’s blockbuster 2007-8 exhibition attracted crowds that had not

been seen since the ground-breaking Tutankhamun exhibition in 1980. The Liverpool exhibition showcased some 180 items, over half of which had not previously been seen in the UK. Given the range of material on display and the undoubted widespread popular interest in Qin Shi Huang's Terracotta Army, it is accordingly not surprising that National Museums Liverpool took the decision to produce a new publication to accompany the exhibition.

*China's First Emperor and the Terracotta Warriors* is divided into five individually credited chapters, each of which effectively represents a stand-alone essay. The first of these, authored by James C.S. Lin of the Ashmolean Museum, sets the exhibition within its wider historical context by providing a whistle-stop tour of early Chinese history from the Neolithic to the Zhou. This is followed by a similarly pithy introduction to the Warring States Period and the rise of the Qin, also authored by Lin. Both of these essays have undoubtedly been written with a general audience very much in mind. They are engaging, easy to follow, and benefit from the well-judged selection of supporting maps and images.

The third chapter is authored by Xiuzhen Li of the Qin Shi Huang's Mausoleum Site Museum. An expert on the First Emperor's tomb complex, Li is well-qualified to provide an overview of Qin Shi Huang's origins, achievements, palaces and peregrinations. The chapter concludes with an account of the First Emperor's death, providing a neat segue into Li's next contribution, which is entitled "The Terracotta Warriors". At some 40 pages in length, this is by far the most substantial section of the volume. The chapter's title is arguably a little misleading, as its focus extends well beyond the emperor's sculpted guardians. Rather, Li first focuses on exploring the location of his tomb through the lenses of both landscape and geomancy, before going on to discuss the logistics of construction and the nature of the layout of the wider tomb complex. Only then does discussion turn to the Terracotta Warriors and the other grave goods recovered from the site. Here Li plays to her strengths, and the section focusing upon the production of the figures and their weapons draws upon recent international research undertaken by the Qin Shi Huang's Mausoleum Site Museum in collaboration with UCL's Institute of Archaeology.

Thus far, the volume has covered much the same ground as previously covered by Jane Portal in *The First Emperor: China's Terracotta Army* (2007) and Liu Yang in *China's Terracotta Warriors: The First Emperor's Legacy* (2013). The final chapter, however, moves into fresh territory by taking up the story after the fall of the Qin. Here, James C.S. Lin turns the spotlight onto the Han, exploring both the Han royal tombs constructed to the north of the old capital Chang'an and the royal tombs of Eastern China. A judicious choice of imagery captures both the painstaking process of archaeological excavation and the vast and diverse range of animal figures that populated the breath-taking underground "cities" of the Western Han rulers. Less familiar to European eyes than the Qin warriors, these miniature sculptures are nonetheless mesmerising and serve as a poignant reminder of the Han belief in an afterlife as a continuation of the mortal world.

But after so long spent exploring China's tombs, it is perhaps with some relief that the reader emerges once again into the light, for the final chapter is not entirely dedicated to the afterlife. Rather, it seems timely and appropriate that the volume should end with a nod to the "Belt and Road"; using archaeological evidence to stress the importance of the land and sea links that connected Han China both to the rest of Asia and to the West.

In conclusion, *China's First Emperor and the Terracotta Warriors* seeks neither to serve as an exhibition catalogue, nor as a scholarly resource. Rather, it is a book that is unashamedly targeted at the non-specialist museum-goer. But, if we are seeking to expand public understanding and appreciation of Chinese history, such popularism is in itself no bad thing. Lin and Li have written an excellent and highly accessible introduction to the topic, and both the authors and their editor (Karen Miller) are to be heartily congratulated upon creating such a lively and readable text.

*Craig Barclay*  
*Durham University*