

BOOK REVIEWS

BERGER, Patricia: *Empire of Emptiness. Buddhist Art and Political Authority in Qing China*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press 2003. 267 pp. ISBN 0-8248-2563-2, price 42 USD (hbk).

MILLWARD, James A. – DUNNELL, Ruth W. – ELLIOT, Mark C. – FORÊT, Philippe, eds.: *New Qing Imperial History. The Making of Inner Asian Empire at Qing Chengde*. London – New York: RoutledgeCurzon 2004. 245 pp. ISBN 0-415-32006-2, price 65 GBP (hbk).

Both volumes under review deal with the history of the Manchu Qing Dynasty and thus they continue in the research in the field of the so-called “new Qing history”, which started in the 1990s and attempts to revise the traditional Sinocentric approach to the history of the Qing while focusing on their relations primarily with Inner Asia and the influence of this comprehensive cultural, religious, political and economic contacts on the Qing dynastic project. The interest of a number of historians and scholars from other disciplines like religious studies, literary studies, anthropology, who have questioned long-held assumptions may also be illustrated by these two volumes which often deal with very similar matters, persons, images and places. However, they differ in their goals and approaches and in a way mutually complement each other.

Patricia Berger, an art historian, approaches the Qing dynasty through the visual world and imagery of the Qianlong emperor (r. 1736–1796) who is the central personage of her analysis. Making use of various paintings, calligraphy, poems and temples, P. Berger discusses the role of Tibetan Buddhism in the life of the Qianlong emperor, which is a topic already briefly mentioned by various authors and one can meet with divergent views: according to some authors Qianlong's commitment to Tibetan Buddhism was sincere, however others interpret it as a cynical manipulative strategy with the aim of promoting the submission of Mongols and Tibetans to the Qing rule. P. Berger does not aim to answer this question definitely, but she offers a vivid and detailed analysis of this issue and the personality of Qianlong. Qianlong, “the great masquerader” (p. 196), had – to a greater degree than other Qing emperors – consciously presented himself variously as a traditional Confucian ruler-sage, Mongolian khan or Buddhist *cakravartin* in order to govern the multiethnic, multireligious and culturally diverse Inner Asian empire which he helped to design. Therefore it is also difficult to produce a final judgement on his attitude to the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. However, Berger's study shows that Qianlong spent considerable amount of time and energy on studying Tibetan Buddhism and on founding various Buddhist temples in the Forbidden City and in the summer retreat of Chengde. The personality of his guru, and advisor on religious, artistic, political issues related to Tibet, the 3rd Jangkya Khutukhtu (*lcang skya*, Chin. *zhangjia*) Rol pa'i rdo rje (1717–1786) played a central role in shaping Qianlong's grasp of Tibetan Buddhist teachings and Tibetan affairs. The intimate relationship of these two outstanding personalities substantially shaped the Inner Asian policy of the Qing empire in the 18th century. Rol pa'i rdo rje also played a decisive role in the invitation

of the 6th Panchen Lama Blo bzang dpal ldan ye shes (1738-1780) to Chengde. His stay in China, meetings with the emperor and his unexpected death are described in the final chapter of the volume (pp. 167-197) where the author is making use of various portraits of the Panchen Lama, Qianlong's poetry, primary written sources and finally the emperor's epitaph in order to illustrate the complex historical, political and cultural context of this meeting. Relying on the visual sources of the period Patricia Berger has succeeded in providing a vivid, detailed and comprehensive picture of some crucial events of the Qianlong reign which we otherwise know only through the usually dry accounts in the Qing written sources. Her sympathetic portrayal of the fascinating world of Qianlong's words and images (with many reproductions and photographs included in the volume) is worth reading for all those interested in the Sino-Mongol and Sino-Tibetan relations, or the history of the 18th century China.

The collective volume entitled *New Qing Imperial History* approaches the topic from a different perspective: whereas P. Berger focuses on the person, the contributors of this volume concentrate on a place – namely the summer retreat Chengde (Jehol) which for them, with good reasons stated repeatedly in the volume, represents the microcosm of the diverse Qing empire or an artful stage where the emperors entertained their Inner Asian subjects (mainly Mongols and Tibetans). However, at the end of the day, the second volume also revolves around the personality of Qianlong who built in Chengde a number of Buddhist, Daoist and Confucian temples and other pavilions. The reign of Qianlong was the heyday of Chengde, later, in the early 19th century, the place was neglected by the Imperial court. As shown in the final essay by J. Hevia (pp. 210-215), this place was resurrected by the Chinese government in the 1990s as a kind of theme park which should manifest the ever-lasting harmony of relations between the Hans and Tibetans.

The volume is divided into four parts. The first part (pp. 13-52) provides an introduction to the three crucial aspects of the volume: E. S. Rawski offers a brief historical background of Qing history with special stress on Inner Asia, D. S. Lopez, Jr. successfully sketches the history of Buddhism in Tibet and its doctrines and finally A. Chayet deals with the architecture of the Chengde compound. Her insightful analysis of the architectural style of the buildings which show strong Tibetan influence (according to her we may speak of a "Jehol style") also mentions the apparent divergence between the Chengde temples of Putuozongcheng miao and Xumifushou miao and their Tibetan models: the Potala palace in Lhasa and the Bkra shis lhun po monastery in Gzhis ka rtse for which she suggests the plausible explanation that they were modelled not upon the real buildings but their depiction on various paintings circulating in China. The second part (pp. 53-106) of the publication under review approaches Chengde from various angles. Van J. Symons discusses the annual trips to Chengde in the broader context of the discourse on touring in Qing emperorship. Especially the table (p. 57) showing the whereabouts of the Qianlong emperor in 1780 is very illustrative as it helps the reader to locate the place of Chengde in the "migration cycle" of the Imperial court in the 18th century. M. C. Elliot and Ning Chia in their contributions point to the fact that Chengde was originally a part of the Mulan hunting ground by the Kangxi emperor. They mention not only the broad context of the role of hunting in Inner Asian and Chinese history, but discuss the fact that hunting in Mulan was the stage where the Manchu elite could (and indeed should as stressed by the Jiaqing emperor in 1807) assert and preserve their specific Inner Asian identity. Renqiu Yu briefly describes the settings of the Imperial banquets in the Wanshu yuan in Chengde (depicted in the painting *Ceremonial Banquet in the Garden of the Ten Thousand Trees* which is discussed in other contribu-

tion). J. A. Millward's approach resembles the method used by P. Berger, he also starts his analysis from the painting Hall of Ten Thousand Dharmas Joining into One (Chin. *Wanfaguiyi dian*, the painting is also discussed in Berger's book, see pp. 14-23) depicting the official reception of leaders of the branch of Torghut Mongols (also known as Kalmuks, Kalmyks) who submitted to Qianlong on 27 October 1771. Starting with this painting he offers an overview of the Mongolian history with special reference to China from the 13th century onwards while he focuses mainly on the Qing period and the case of the Torghuts who were later resettled in northern Xinjiang.

In the third part of the publication (pp. 107-164) suitably entitled "The emperor's many faces" J. A. Adler discusses one of the roles of the Qianlong emperor, namely the role of Confucian ruler-sage in order to legitimize the Manchu conquest in the eyes of the Han literati and officials. Here a contribution on Qianlong's attitudes to Daoism would enrich the picture. E. Benard offers a brief overview of the Qianlong's involvement with Tibetan Buddhism while pointing to the relationship with the 3rd Jangkya Khutukhtu, the 6th Panchen lama, his portraits as bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, and the Tibetan Buddhist imagery of his tomb. D. Sommer deals with the French Jesuit Artist Jean-Denis Attiret (1702-1768) who in 1754 was commissioned by Qianlong to prepare the painting Ceremonial Banquet in the Garden of the Ten Thousand Trees in Chengde. The Jesuit presence in Chengde illustrates another aspect of the rich cultural diversity to be encountered there. In the final contribution of the third part P. Zarrow presents multilingual (Chinese, Manchu, Mongol, Tibetan and Uyghur) stele inscriptions in Chengde (most of them written by Qianlong) and offers a few translations from Chinese. The fourth part of the publication (pp. 165-206) consists of various texts written by the Qing emperors, a Jesuit missionary and a Tibetan lama, all related to Chengde, "the third-rate city" as stated by the Jesuit missionary Jean-Joseph-Marie Amiot in a letter. The Tibetan account on the meetings between the Sixth Panchen Lama and the Qianlong emperor offers an interesting 18th century "outer" perspective on Chengde and emperor. It would certainly be useful to locate similar text in Mongolian sources in order to include another Inner Asian perspective of Chengde. It was a good idea of the editors to include these translations in the volume as they further help the reader to grasp the grandeur of Chengde and its imperial inhabitants.

The volume under review represents a fresh approach not only to the Qing history, but to the history of China as such. The focus on Chengde which is approached from various perspectives by numerous authors (and most of them treat their respective subjects in a readable and concise form) provides a fascinating account of the place and the people. It elucidates the world of 18th century China not only to the interested scholar but it certainly might be also used in education for Sinology students.

Martin Slobodnik

KINDOPP, Jason – HAMRIN, Carol Lee, eds.: *God and Caesar in China. Policy Implications of Church-State Tensions*. Washington: Brookings Institution Press 2004. 200 pp. ISBN 0 8157 4937 6 (pbk), price 19,95 USD.

The publication under review attempts to analyse an important issue of contemporary China, namely the intricate relations between the state and religious institutions. According to Jason Kindopp, the co-editor of the volume, "China is approaching