

descended into chaos and conflict. In fact, with the exception of the civil war in Tajikistan (the peace treaty signed in 1997 is still holding) the transition from Soviet republic to independent statehood has been remarkably orderly. The changes that have taken place over the past seventeen-odd years are enormous. Certainly these states have many problems, some inherited, some of their own making. Yet they have also initiated serious and innovative measures to address these problems. Inevitably, they have not always been successful. They are, after all, following new and untried paths. However, in all these states there is a sense of direction and purpose. They are not looking for “mentors” or “patrons”, but partners with whom they can co-operate on a basis of equality and mutual benefit. If the West (governments, business corporations, non-governmental organizations and so on) wishes to engage with these states, a sober, nuanced understanding of regional developments is essential. Surely it is time to relegate “orientalist” interpretations to the realm of historiography.

Shirin Akiner

EAST ASIA

CHEN JINHUA:

Philosopher, Practitioner, Politician: The Many Lives of Fazang (643–712).

(Sinica Leidensia.) xviii, 542 pp. Leiden: Brill, 2007. €139.

ISBN 978 90 0415613 5.

doi:10.1017/S0041977X09000688

Fazang is one of the leading intellectual and religious figures of medieval China; the Buddhist monk is credited with the *de facto* founding of the Huayan school, reputedly the most philosophical tradition of Chinese Buddhism. Its abstruse insight into the interpenetration of the existing world, phenomenal or noumenal, and its elaborate explanation have been its main hallmark for centuries in East Asia, and have attracted a great deal of attention from the West. It is little wonder that scholarly publications on this tradition have focused on discovering various aspects of this unfathomable world view, overshadowing the exploration of the historical background which is in fact wedded to the development of Huayan ideas. Chen Jinhua’s new book attempts to remedy this situation, and not only does it explore several aspects of Fazang’s life which were previously unexplored, but it also challenges many old concepts suggested by historical sources.

The conventional view of Fazang is well stated by Ming-wood Liu in his PhD thesis (“The teaching of Fa-tsang: an examination of Buddhist metaphysics”, University of California, 1974), which includes the most detailed treatment of Fazang’s biography prior to the book under review. “The image we have of him is that of a highly intelligent and erudite monk, who spent most of his life diligently translating and commenting on religious texts, as well as composing original treatises of his own. Like most famous Buddhist masters of his time, he apparently saw little contradiction between the other-worldly ideal of Buddhism and the wealth and prestige associated with mundane existence; and even though there was no indication that he had ever actively gone out to court favour, he obviously

had no objection to the attention and the honor that were showered on him most of his life, and would willingly offer his service to rulers if called upon to do so." (Lui, pp. 11–12).

Chen Jinhua reads the same biographies of the Huayan monk yet he has a more sophisticated and complex, sometimes even astonishing image of him: "He was a brilliant man who assumed an enormous variety of roles that were open to religious men and women in medieval China: philosopher, translator, mystic, showman, inventor and promoter of technology, practitioner (at some level) of body cultivation and Daoist flavoured rituals, and, importantly, an intense reader of Confucian texts who could integrate those Chinese traditions into his Buddhist-dominated discourses. On a more intimate level, he was a loving son and a caring brother who spent much energy taking care of his parents in illness and shrewdly used his secular power to promote the interests of his family." (p. 327).

In order to reconstruct a genuine picture of Fazang, Chen has taken great care to retrieve reliable historical materials from available sources and to place the data in the context of East Asian history and Buddhism. In so doing he translates a great many historical sources which will be appreciated by those who are interested in original documents. Some scholars doubt that Buddhist biographical works provide any reliable historical information on monks, as they depict religious ideals rather than real humans. However, Chen certainly believes that using critical methods on the text itself, and the data transmitted by text, can or could lead to knowledge about historical figures. He finds, or at least suspects, hidden links with other historical events, leading political or Buddhist figures, even if sources do not directly indicate such a relationship. He very clearly shows how strong a connection among Chinese, Japanese and Korean Buddhism existed during the Tang dynasty. He investigates not only what is stated in the biographies, but also what is missing or omitted from the text, and the reason for omission. For example, Chen calls into question the fact that Fazang received full ordination, as earlier sources do not mention this ritual, and do not provide the number of years he was a monk, which is usually recorded in biographies. He points out that his disciples and followers might have felt ashamed about the lack of this important ritual in the Buddhist career of their prestigious master. This pious feeling finally resulted in interpolating the event of his full ordination in later sources.

The title of the book suggests that Fazang's philosophy will also be discussed, but Chen is more interested in deciding, based primarily on historical sources, whether the Treatise on Golden Lion and the construction of the mirror hall can actually be related to Empress Wu. With regard to his religious practice, we might expect a study of Huayan Buddhism, for example ocean reflecting *samādhi*, but instead we learn that Fazang was an esoteric practitioner who prayed and staged esoteric rituals for rain, snow and the victory of the imperial army over the Khitan rebels. He applied Daoist ritual while throwing the *dhārani* text into the water, and he was searching for other Daoist practices. Last but not least, he was an adroit magic showman who staged destroying his liver in order to raise funds. This is a very new and astonishing insight into the religious practice of Fazang, but the author's intention clearly was to emphasize that Fazang's charisma and esoteric knowledge played an essential role in his becoming an important figure in the political life of his days, exerting influence on Empress Wu and the court.

Chen's book is an important contribution to the study of Chinese Buddhist historiography and Huayan studies in particular. Its strength lies in the material Chen has gathered together and the method he has applied, which could inspire other scholars to read their sources more carefully and to look for further links. At the same time we have to bear in mind that Fazang wrote several works that also

have to be studied if we are to understand his philosophy and religious practice, as writing a commentary to a sūtra, the speech of Buddha itself can and must be regarded as a religious practice.

Imre Hamar

GRAHAM PECK:

Two Kinds of Time.

xxvi, 725 pp. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008. £16.99.

ISBN 978 0 295 98852 8.

doi:10.1017/S0041977X0900069X

By comparison with contemporary conflicts elsewhere, such as the much briefer Spanish Civil War, the dozen or so years of constant warfare in China that preceded the revolution in 1949 produced very little writing by British observers that has stood the test of time, though much American reporting on China now regarded as classic, such as that by Edgar Snow, Jack Belden, and Theodore H. White and Annalee Jacoby, did appear in British editions as a new China was slowly and painfully born, and the works of the first two had their status confirmed by Penguin reprints here during the era of the Vietnam War and the Cultural Revolution. That era also saw in America the reprinting in 1967 of an edition of Graham Peck's *Two Kinds of Time*, graced like Snow's republished *Red Star Over China* with a preface by John K. Fairbank, who had been at one point a recipient of Peck's hospitality during his own wartime travels in China. American friends, however, soon discouraged me in those days from seeking out the 1967 reprint, in that by cutting out the second half of the original it excluded most of Peck's trenchant analysis of the roots of America's failed policy in pre-Communist China. It was no doubt this trenchancy that ensured the republication of Peck's work in full in Beijing in 2004 as part of the Foreign Language Press series "Light on China", though that stout hardback, while preserving Peck's characteristic illustrations, was completely reset and so ended up – if only a little longer – with new pagination.

By contrast, this affordable reprinting in paperback from the University of Washington now restores the full original edition produced by Houghton Mifflin in Boston in 1950 unaltered, save for the addition of a useful introduction by Robert A. Kapp demonstrating how a generation younger than that of Fairbank has come to appreciate this extraordinarily vivid and telling portrait of the "baseline" from which the post-1949 regime has now brought China through to the end of six decades of turbulent transformation. Peck's style here is every bit as vibrant as in his earlier *Through China's Wall*, which was published not only in Boston but also in London by Collins in 1941, an arresting mixture of predictable Yankee impatience with the Chinese lack of get up and go, far less predictably overborne by a generous helping of humour and of profound compassion. In this later work the humour inevitably becomes a little bleaker as the madness of conflict unwinds interminably, but Peck is always readable – and for those who want to know how it was then, will probably always be read. Congratulations, then, to Robert A. Kapp and to the publishers on bringing this remarkable work in its original form to a new twenty-first century readership.

T. H. Barrett