

In contrast, the illustrated descriptions of the physical formats of Dunhaung documents and of paper, ink and writing implements, including how they were made, is consistent with co-author Helman-Ważny's thorough work elsewhere.

In spite of the authors' hopeful praise for their template, the conclusions of this study are so preliminary that it did not seem fair to present them earlier in this review. The authors confess that the study of so few manuscripts shows "the wisdom of refraining from gross generalizations about the features of early Tibetan writing" since "very few features are shared by all of the documents in our sample." (p. 162) However, they were able "to date the *Rāmāyaṇa*, version E (and version C), to the late Guiyijun period and to provenance the paper of the pothī-format 'Chronicle Fragments' from central Tibet, and to effectively date it to the Tibetan imperial period" (p. 171). As for dating their principle manuscript, "we cannot fix the *Old Tibetan Chronicle* in time" although the ratio of separated to attached 'i "aligns it with late Guiyijun writings" (pp. 162–3). As for scribes and schools, the authors claim their methods "constitute a powerful tool" which will "soon allow us to assign date ranges" (p. 173). Lastly, since *Rāmāyaṇa* A and the *Old Tibetan Chronicle* appear to be written in the same scribal hand, our authors make a leap to "we catch a glimpse of a creative intelligence that leads us to wonder if our scribe was not also making his own contributions to a narrative already adorned with popular motifs." (p. 169)

Overall, this unevenly argued book stands in sharp contrast to any of the codicological studies in Orna Almogí (ed.), *Tibetan Manuscript and Xylograph Traditions* (Hamburg, 2016) where the precise applications of various methods, including digital, produce more exemplary contributions to our understanding of Tibetan manuscripts.

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SOUTHEAST ASIA

SU LIN LEWIS:

*Cities in Motion: Urban Life and Cosmopolitanism in Southeast Asia, 1920–1940.*

(Asian Connections.) xii, 309 pp. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016. £72.

ISBN 978 1 107 10833 2.

doi:10.1017/S0041977X18000769

In *Cities in Motion*, Su Lin Lewis provides a comparative analysis of cosmopolitanism in three Southeast Asian port cities, Bangkok, Rangoon and Penang. The focus on port cities serves as an appropriate frame of reference for two reasons: first, it helps to construct an alternative analytical framework to studies that employ nation-state based models; and second, ports, as Lewis argues, were sites within which cosmopolitan civic societies emerged due to their multi-ethnic composition. Lewis convincingly demonstrates that Rangoon, Penang, and Bangkok had much in common due to direct connections among the three port cities and because of similar conditions in respect to geopolitics and multi-ethnic populations. Yet differences persisted particularly in encountering European Imperialism. Thus, Lewis not only offers new perspectives on key Southeast Asian port cities, but also a

methodological approach for examining maritime connections across the South China Sea and the Bay of Bengal regions.

The book consists of six chapters in addition to an introduction and a brief concluding section. Although it covers only two decades, 1920 to 1940, Lewis provides detailed history of the earlier periods as well. While the chapter titles seem randomly selected, the book is structured through the use of four recurring themes: regional and global connections; the concept of cosmopolitanism; the rise of the middle class, described as self-consciously modern and progressive through its cross-cultural interaction and shared experiences of exclusion through governmental restrictions; and the “Youth” (p. 16), focussing on exchange students and upcoming fashions through popular culture. These issues are discussed using earlier studies on the three Southeast Asian port cities as well as on ports elsewhere in Asia, including Bombay, Shanghai and Hong Kong. In addition, Lewis consults archival material and oral histories from the Oral History Archive of Singapore, and also incorporates her own interviews with ten individuals (p. 275).

Lewis approaches the port city as an arena of experiences and negotiations between three binary oppositions, i.e. the global and the local, rule and public, and the young and the old. Furthermore, Lewis emphasizes the multi-ethnic and multi-religious make-up of port cities and describes them as places of racial and economic inequality as well as of social and political change. However, the key concept in her study relates to cosmopolitanism. Drawing primarily from the work of Robbins and Cheah, *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation* (Minneapolis, 1998), Lewis employs cosmopolitanism as an analytic tool in order to avoid static notions of cultural identities and instead focuses on the movements of people. She views cosmopolitanism as a practice and a progress, and as a “humanist counterpart to globalisation” (p. 7). The characteristics of a port city, Lewis concludes, makes it into a “node” (ibid.) and therefore an appropriate site to “ground” cosmopolitanism (ibid.).

In order to trace the development of cosmopolitan ideas and practices, Lewis explores the role of media (including newspapers, films, radio), its spread, as well as the development of more efficient rail, shipping, and communication systems that enabled rapid circulations of people, knowledge and ideas. Due to the spread of knowledge and English-medium education, a middle-class emerged in British-colonial Penang and Rangoon, as well as in Siamese-ruled Bangkok, mainly during the 1920s and 30s (p. 152). This bi- and often even multi-lingual middle-class is described as “rooted cosmopolitans” (p. 14), by which Lewis implies the transmitters of information, ideas, and values from and to the port cities. English served as the *lingua franca* for Asians with different language backgrounds who were involved in these transmissions. She argues that through English-medium newspapers, a sense of nationalism vis-à-vis the colonial rulers was invented. English also served as a *lingua franca* for multi-ethnic sport teams, exchange students, Rotary clubs, all of which similarly resulted in the circulation of knowledge. Additionally, as Lewis explains, the circulation of films, books and music in the 1920s and 30s led to the spread of “cosmopolitan” ideas triggering debates on gender, race and class (p. 246). Lewis’ study, in fact, continues into the 1940s, which is discussed in the epilogue of the book addressing the dramatic changes caused by the Second World War and surging ethnic nationalism (p. 267).

The spread of English among middle-class Asians of different linguistic backgrounds, Lewis notes, invented “overlapping notions of community” (p. 15). Moving beyond Benedict Anderson’s emphasis on “imagined communities”, she underscores the *experience* of the everyday multi-ethnic encounters of the middle class (p. 29) and stresses the point that the communities were therefore “not

imagined, but *built*" (p. 11, original emphasis). While English-medium education is a noteworthy aspect accentuated in Lewis' book, she successfully avoids overstating the agency of 'Westernised' schooling by focusing on the role of Asians in shaping the educational system, for example as teachers, scholars, and literati educated in Asia as well as in the "West" (p. 182).

The use of terminology is one of the very few shortcomings of this book. The term "modern", for example, is not explicitly defined and employed rather inconsistently, e.g. referring to self-descriptions as "modern" (p. 247), "modern Asian cities" (p. 23), "colonial modernity" (p. 151) or a "modern, liberal society" (ibid.), in all of which cases the term modern bears different notions. Similarly, while a variety of examples are given for the concept of cosmopolitanism, the author's definition is not clearly applied in all cases. Nevertheless, this book is a solid contribution to the study of port cities and the history of Southeast Asia. Especially through what Lewis calls "acts of post-colonial forgetting" (p. 3), in which national narratives centre on ethnics, the study of ports provides alternative narratives of the past, which is demonstrated vividly in this book. Instead of a nation-based history, that even manifests in the way the index to the book is organized, her argument follows a comparative approach, focussing on "urban intellectual formation" (p. 21), connections, and networks. Additionally, the inclusion of Bangkok as a non-colonial example enables Lewis to expand her argument of the cosmopolitan port city beyond the colonial and post-colonial framework.

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## EAST ASIA

YURI PINES:

*Shang Yang, The Book of Lord Shang: Apologetics of State Power in Early China.*

(Translations from the Asian Classics.) viii, 351 pp. New York: Columbia University Press, 2017. \$60. ISBN 978 0 23117988 1. doi:10.1017/S0041977X18000915

Throughout the last two decades, Yuri Pines has enriched the early China field with a constant stream of important publications on the history of thought and politics. After a number of articles on the Qin, and on the Legalist classic *Book of Lord Shang*, he has now published a fine translation and study of this work, which sets out principles germane to the formation of the early imperial political system. Reflecting the fierce interstate competition leading up to the unification of the realm under the First Emperor, the statecraft of Shang Yang, the Lord of Shang, helped to set Qin on a path to ruthless efficiency, promoting a twin focus on food production and the strengthening of the military as well as the thorough mobilization and bureaucratic control of the population.

Compared to the later writings of the great systematizer of Legalist thought, Han Fei, the work attributed to Shang Yang has attracted less attention, possibly because its "blatant and provocative style" (p. vii), its "alienating rhetoric" (p. 90), and Shang Yang's "perceived immorality" (p. 100) were shunned as an embarrassment by those appealing to more refined sensibilities; perhaps because of the *Book's* limited