

Fu Jen which aimed to provide academic training in Sinology for future missionaries, and he was instrumental in setting up academic co-operations with some of the leading Chinese academics at Fu Jen (and beyond) including scholars such as Chen Yuan (1880–1971) and Shen Jianshi (1887–1947). Biallas' own academic contributions testify to his meticulous approach and solid reception of traditional as well as contemporary Chinese scholarship. In addition to a monograph on Confucius (1928), most of his Sinological work focuses on the *Chuci* (Songs of Chu) and remains highly laudable. It is, however, most unfortunate that the whereabouts of unfinished drafts of his work on a wider variety of topics remain unknown.

The second part of Kollár's book presents documents relevant to the life and work of Biallas and, most importantly, copies of his correspondence, which is divided into letters by and to Biallas as well as letters relating to him. This previously unpublished material provides valuable insights into the work of a man whose dedication to his tasks as a missionary and scholar is highly instructive. Among many other highly interesting topics this part offers minute planning outlines and proposals for the envisaged Institute of Oriental Studies at Fu Jen, curricula, and evaluations of Western and Chinese academics under consideration for joining that institute. The around 300 transcribed letters are well edited and presented with concise annotations.

The book is complemented by copies of documents relating to the life of Biallas, photographs, a bibliography and short biographies of persons mentioned in the letters, which serve as convenient points of reference for the reader. Chinese names of persons and place names are provided in an appendix. Given the number of names appearing in the letters, this reader would have appreciated an overall index so as to facilitate the use of this rich compilation for later reference purposes.

This documentation on the life and work of Franz Xaver Biallas, based on his correspondence and correspondence about him, unearths and makes available an abundance of highly valuable information on more than one individual and the Steyler Mission. It sheds light on the complex relationship between missionary activities and academia as well as on the wider environment in which Sinology and the China-mission interacted during the first half of the twentieth century. It is highly recommended for anyone interested in missionary studies or the history of Sinology.

Bernhard Fuehrer

MARA PATESSIO:

Women and Public Life in Early Meiji Japan: The Development of the Feminist Movement.

(Michigan Monograph Series in Japanese Studies, 71.) viii, 232 pp. Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2011. \$65. ISBN 978 1 929280 66 7.

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Women in Public Life in Early Meiji Japan is an informative study on the “necessary precondition” for the emergence of a feminist movement in modern Japan (p. 31). Clearly written and well organized, this book will appeal to students and scholars

interested in the historical experience of Japanese women in the late nineteenth century.

The strength and appeal of this work is the extensive archival research undertaken by Patessio across three countries (United Kingdom, USA and Japan). Patessio's labour in the archive allows her to piece together a unique and novel thesis: national and international axes of learning and exchange provided the impetus for women to form new social networks that transgressed established class, race and spatial boundaries. Patessio argues that these new networks of female association, a vital conduit for the "dissemination of female constituted knowledge" (pp. 109–10), had a historically unique productive quality. "Female constituted knowledge" enlarged the sphere of competence available to women in public life, whilst simultaneously empowering them with a voice to challenge existing social norms and legislation.

The power of these networks lies in their ability to form public opinion (p. 11). According to Patessio, the networks of female association were a space of freedom. They formed autonomously and spontaneously due to two distinct historical factors: changing attitudes in education and the development of print journalism in Japan. After the Meiji restoration, the education of women became a national issue linked with the survival of Japan. Consequently, young women from patriotic families – particularly from the former samurai strata – took up educational opportunities offered to them by Western Christian missionaries or newly formed girls' schools (*jōgakko*), established by private benefactors and the fledgling Meiji state. On graduation, many of the young women found employment as teachers. The associations and friendships the young women made outside their family became networks that "could be exploited when information regarding women's activities was to be circulated" (p. 54) and the means to "voice their opinions and ambitions" (p. 52). Print journalism also provided Meiji women with the potential to build horizontal solidarities between women from different regions. Meiji women utilized newspapers and magazines, and organized public speeches – which were reported in detail in print media – to "define their own vision of the Japanese imagined community and their own idea of nationalistic Japanese women" (p. 175).

Despite its subject matter, *Women and Public Life in Early Meiji Japan* has little to say about the institutions and material conditions that informed and shaped feminist politics and action. Patessio takes the shift from social relations determined by familial status to those arising from the choices and interests of individuals as the marker of progress and modernity. She subscribes to the naïve position that voluntarism provides the motor for "progress" in history, which effectively reduces female political agency and resistance to claims for equality with men, across time. The result is that feminist agency is reduced to a reactive, docile force in history that can only find voice and political significance in already existing male-driven nationalist discourses crystallized around national security and competition with the West. Patessio does admit that there is a "feminist nationalism". However, she forgoes the opportunity to explain how the feminist ingenuity of the women she investigates challenges existing masculine constructs of nation, solidarity and the common good. Her silence begs the following questions: did these proto-feminist associations see their role as critiquing the Meiji state or enhancing it? And just as importantly, how were nationalism and civic freedom linked?

Women and Public Life in Early Meiji Japan is also weak around issues of class differences between women. Patessio follows the widespread tendency in Japanese historiography to see modernization as the downward diffusion of patterns of domesticity and womanhood from the former samurai strata to the rest of Japan. Her position is that modern Japanese womanhood was obtained by a singular route, constructed around the general doctrine of "good wife, wise mother" (*ryōsai kenbo*).

The work of Fujime Yuki, however, has challenged this narrative. In Fujime's account, Japanese womanhood crystallizes around the disparity between middle-class and lower-class women. Her position is that the first generation of upper-to-middle-class feminist activists was not a universally progressive force; they were blind to their complicity in amplifying state control targeting lower-class women, particularly in their draconian efforts to prohibit all forms of prostitution. Fujime's argument runs counter to Patessio's thesis. She sees upper-to-middle-class feminist activists as agents of social control rather than freedom. Others have argued that one of the reasons why the women of upper-to-middle-class associations such as the Japanese Woman's Christian Temperance Union (JWCTU) gained access to a public life and a degree of independence outside of the family was due to their eagerness to undertake corrective work to reintegrate the gendered poor to the discipline of the factory and the virtues of domestic life. While some may disagree about the significance of these concerns, thorough scholarship should attempt to assess their persuasiveness and meet their challenge. For this reader at least, *Women and Public Life in Early Meiji Japan* would have been a stronger and more interesting book if the competing historical explanations into the nature of the JWCTU – one of the first female organizations to become politically active – were addressed head on, rather than deftly side-stepped.

Despite the above reservations, historians interested in the experience of women in the early Meiji period will benefit enormously from reading *Women and Public Life in Early Meiji Japan*.

Bill Mihalopoulos

AFRICA

MARKUS V. HOEHNE and VIRGINIA LULING (eds):

Milk and Peace, Drought and War: Somali Culture, Society and Politics. Essays in Honour of I. M. Lewis.

xiv, 437 pp. London: Hurst & Company, 2010. ISBN 978 1 84904 045 7.
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This volume offers, in the main, a retrospective look into the enduring work of I. M. Lewis, the doyen of Somali studies. The book consists of eight parts containing twenty essays: "The colonial period and today" (two essays), "Clan politics, pastoral economy and change" (four), "Islam" (two), "Spirit possession" (two), "Poetry" (four), "Cultural variations" (two), "Language" (two) and "Conclusion" (two). The introduction, "Lewis and the remaining challenges in Somali studies", frames and contextualizes Lewis' eminence as the "founding father of Somali studies". It is clear from the section titles that Lewis' work encompasses all aspects of Somali studies, yet the editors quite perceptively mention the elusive nature of the subject that Lewis and other scholars attempt to limn and categorize. Put differently, Somali affairs still present a conundrum to the totalizing analyses elaborated by area specialists. Lewis' work is no exception.

The Festschrift celebrates Lewis' long and illustrious career. The introduction mentions Lewis' propagation of what the editors call the "clan paradigm" and the