

(perhaps that was the tribute he had to pay to his sociological supervisors?).

Taken as a whole, Chan's book forms an interesting, predominantly socio-historical study of how a society grew and of the forces that directed this growth. Certain economic factors probably played a more important role than Chan might be willing to admit - capital accumulation, interest rates, rates of return, various push factors on the China mainland, etc. - but that kind of criticism may not be fair. Some remarks, however, cause mild doubts: in its early days the Tung Wah Hospital certainly had many useful functions but to say that it was a "substitute for institutions of ... labour market control" (which function it only acquired a little later) sounds a bit risky to me [p. 101]). The list of references and the index are reliable, although additions could be made to the bibliography, in particular as far as the literature on the coolies and the economy of early Hong Kong is concerned.

Chan's book adds to our understanding of Hong Kong's past but it does not revolutionize this understanding. It is, in essence, a well-researched and fair approach to a touchy question and ought to be read by those interested in this subject matter.

Roderich Ptak

WOLFGANG BAUER, *Das Antlitz Chinas. Die autobiographische Selbstdarstellung in der chinesischen Literatur von ihren Anfängen bis heute.* München, Wien: Hanser, 1990. 928 pages, DM 128.- (ISBN 3-446-15221-0)

For the German-speaking public this voluminous book on Chinese autobiographics by the Munich sinologist W. Bauer is a pioneer work, consisting of a large number of original sources in translation taken from all periods of China's history and arranged primarily chronologically. The bulk of Bauer's materials is taken from an immense Chinese collection by the otherwise unknown Guo Dengfeng, first published in 1936. The work thus serves as an anthology for the general reader interested in Chinese intellectual history as well as in comparison of autobiographical genres in the European and Chinese traditions.

Furthermore, the author attempts to interpret his sources thoroughly, i.e. to outline the historical development of autobiographical writing in China, to establish criteria of formal classification within the genre, and

to sketch the general historical and social background of his sources. At times, though, he does this somewhat summarily, since he had to keep in mind that the general reader would need information of a kind that in many a case seems superfluous to the specialist.

The author's attitude towards his sources, his way of dealing with the chosen materials, is less that of an analyst carefully dissecting the objects of his study than that of an artist basing his judgments on empathy. Thus the reader should not expect a stringent sociological analysis; he would only be disappointed at being confronted with a more literary treatment of the subject. Finally, although the book may be categorized as "*Geistesgeschichte*" it does not represent an "*histoire mentale*" in the strict sense of the French historical school (Braudel, Duby, Le Goff etc.). But - as a Chinese Buddhist priest put it in answering a Jesuit challenge some three centuries ago - "there are thousands of ways of attaining truth".

The author first attempts to clarify the earliest terminology of the Ego concept as well as the relationship between individual and society in China. He then proceeds to the discussion of true autobiographical writing, beginning with Sima Qian and ending with Wang Meng. Bauer also considers literary forms which are not autobiographical in the strict sense of the word, but nonetheless had some bearing on the development of the latter. The work is supplied with copious annotations and several appendices including a lengthy bibliography and a list of Chinese characters, all of them prerequisites for making use of its vast materials.

Many an objection might be raised against Bauer's interpretations either because some of his judgments are too summary, or because he does not discuss problems at full length as e.g. in the case of Ouyang Xiu's criticism of Feng Dao's brash opportunism as seen in the latter's autobiography. Although Bauer would not accept Ouyang's verdict, he does not take his argument to pieces, but instead tries to defend Feng on the basis of empathy, leaving the reader somewhat dissatisfied as to his reason.

Some readers may miss important and illustrious personages who indeed left autobiographical writings, but were not incorporated in this study. Again, others may be irritated by generalizing and partly misleading chapter headings that tend to create and promote inapt clichés. Nonetheless, Bauer has attempted to smooth paths in hitherto untrodden terrain and - at least for a German-speaking public - has produced a highly interesting anthology which could form a sound basis for subsequent studies. The real value of Bauer's work cannot be fully discerned

by just reading the book; it will be revealed only after a time-consuming process of working with it.

*Armin Sievers*

DIETER KUHN, *Status and Ritus. Das China der Aristokraten von den Anfängen bis zum 10. Jahrhundert nach Christus*. Heidelberg: edition forum, 1991. 753 S., 28 Karten, 53 Abb., DM 128.- (ISBN 3-927943-03-7)

Das Buch hält mehr, als es verspricht. Es behandelt nicht nur die chinesische Oberschicht, die sich und ihre soziale Umwelt "von den Anfängen bis ins 10. Jahrhundert nach Christus" in der Tat durch Status und Ritus definierte. Neben Kaisern und Kaiserinnen, Aristokraten, Generälen, Usurpatoren, Beamten, Gelehrten, Dichtern und Kaufleuten dreht es sich auch um Bauern, Handwerker, Mönche, Einsiedler und Sklaven. Das Buch ist vielmehr, um es mit den einleitenden Worten des Autors zu sagen, "ein Entwurf für eine Geschichte Chinas, in dem die politischen Ereignisse, die gesellschaftlichen Veränderungen, die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung und die geistesgeschichtlichen Strömungen im Rahmen ihrer für das Gesamtverständnis der Geschichte Chinas bedeutungsvollen Wechselwirkung ... dargestellt werden" (S. 15). Ein anspruchsvolles Unterfangen - und es gelingt! Die Abhandlung eines so langen Zeitraumes von zwei Jahrtausenden - in der längst mit Detailfragen befaßten Sinologie immer äußerst kritisch beäugt - hat den Vorteil, daß durch den Epochenvergleich strukturgeschichtliche Einschnitte markant hervortreten, d.h. zugleich die Besonderheit der jeweiligen Epoche besonders augenfällig wird. Außerdem entpuppen sich im Überblick langsame und zunächst unauffällige Wandlungen unter Umständen als gesamtgeschichtlich relevante und tiefgreifende Veränderung.

Der dem Buch zugrundegelegte Ansatz bedingt verschiedene Perspektiven, die dem Werk eine gewisse Mehrdimensionalität verleihen: Indem Kuhn immer wieder zentrale bzw. strittige Fragen der Sinologie anschneidet und mehrere Interpretationen diskutiert, ist das Buch zugleich eine kleine Einführung in die mit China befaßte Wissenschaftsgeschichte. Darüber hinaus hält es sich durchaus nicht bloß in längst vergangenen Zeiten auf, sondern stellt immer wieder den Bezug zur Gegenwart her, sei es z.B. über politisch hochaktuelle Geschichtsbetrach-