

WOLFRAM EBERHARD: China und seine westlichen Nachbarn. Beiträge zur mittelalterlichen und neueren Geschichte Zentralasiens. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft. 1978. VIII, 347 pages, DM 90.-

This collection contains articles by Wolfram Eberhard which for the most part date from his time as Professor in Ankara during the Second World War; several of them were first published in Turkish. The first part, entitled "China und Zentralasien", covers the major aspects of the relations between China and Inner Asia: firstly, studies of the diplomatic contacts, the realities of which were and still are secondly, somewhat blurred by the Chinese concept of 'world order' and the so-called 'tribute system'; Chinese travels in Central Asia and reports on them; and thirdly, individual ethnic groups ("Römische Soldaten als Verbündete der Hsiung-nu"). Others deal more with intellectual and religious history, e.g. the efforts of the Ch'ing government to propagate elements of Confucianism among the Turkish peoples of Central Asia. One welcomes especially the inclusion of the methodologically very important article "China unter der Herrschaft von Fremden", outlining a problem which still awaits a thorough treatment. This part also includes studies of certain elements of material culture, in particular those concerning the horse and its function within the society.

The second part is more concerned with studies of the peoples and cultures of Central Asia based in Chinese sources: besides extensive research on the old Central and Western Asian peoples, one Article on the Kay ("Sinologische Bemerkungen über den Stamm der Kay") deserves special mention. There are also some essays on Buddhism in the area. The third part concludes with some notes on Western minorities inside China. These include some significant comments on three important works: A. Mostaert's *Folklore Ordos*, F.D. Lessing's *Yung-Ho-Kung*, and the collection "Ethnographische Beiträge aus der Ch'inghai Provinz (China), zusammengestellt von Ch'inghai-Missionaren anlässlich des 75-jährigen Jubiläums der Gesellschaft des Göttlichen Wortes". Finally, there is an article on "Die Maio-tse-Alben des Leipziger Völkermuseums".

As Eberhard explains in his preface, the volume mainly reflects the Turkish intention at the time to obtain a more objective picture of the Turks of Central Asia by way of a critical investigation of foreign, i.e. Chinese, sources. From our point of view the volume has another special value. It provides us with a glance into the workshop of the great ethnologist-historian and sinologist W. Eberhard. Besides sketches which were made in close connection with his major works on the peoples of Central Asia according to the Chinese sources, there are several other short but stimulating articles on various subjects. It is these sketches which show what a variety of possibilities offers itself when one leaves the beaten track and poses certain questions anew. At a time when often the mere amassing of materials seems to be the ultimate goal of re-

search, this is a salutary reminder.

Erhard Rosner

WILHELM THIEMANN: China. Photographische Aufzeichnungen aus den Jahren 1929-1936. München: Simon und Magiera, 1982. 100 pages, DM 18.-

The book contains 180 black and white photos. They were taken by a German engineer and merchant during his seven years stay in China (1929-1936).

The pictures dominate the book. The onlookers get the full impact of the photos. Our eyes are not distracted. They are not lead to lengthy comments. On the contrary, they can concentrate and rest on the photos and can discover details. One gets a feeling of the atmosphere which was present when these pictures were taken.

What do we see? Besides some landscapes and historical buildings we see people: Women, men, old, young, some rich, most of them not rich at all. The photos are close-ups. We see Chinese people in their environment, the workplace, the houses where they found shelter. The faces show scepticism, harm, joy and endurance.

The topics are street scenes, work (or rather toil), traffic, refugees, foreign presence, children, families, religion, countryside, peasants, urban life, trade and commerce, poverty, housing conditions and entertainment.

Where were the photos taken? Mostly in central and northern coastal regions and the Yangtse valley: Shanghai, Hangzhou, Shaoxing, Suzhou, Wuxi, Nanking, Taiyuan, Tientsin, Peking, Harbin.

All the photos are accompanied by the date and the name of the location plus a concise explanation containing an average of about three words. The quality of the photos is excellent. Precisely because they are not polished by technical perfection, the subjects are more present; in a timeless way immediate. They quite often enable us to have a poignant look at life in China. The direction the country was to take is not evident or visible, and nevertheless the photos are documents of a time of radical change.

The book is highly recommendable for those who have never been to China and equally for those who have already visited the People's Republic. It provides significant glimpses on historical conditions, thus enabling us to compare and to locate things in their proper context. Those who have been to China will appreciate the selection as all photos were taken at places now open to foreign tourists.

Werner Pfennig