

further the diversity and adaptability of "traditional" therapeutic beliefs and the synthetic nature and experimental basis of modern folk medical systems or to have dealt more extensively with local variations among a limited number of closely related groups. The author himself suggests this approach in the introductory chapter where he refers to

the need to understand the shaping of folk medical traditions by internal and external forces.

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RASSENGESCHICHTE DER MENSCHHEIT. ASIEN III: OSTASIEN. Edited by Ilse Schwidetzky. München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag. 1984. 144 pp., figures, tables, plates. DM 98,-(paper).

The terms "race" and "racial history" are awkward and embarrassing, tied as they are to old-fashioned typological thinking. But it is one of the main tasks of physical (or "biological," if you will) anthropology to provide an accounting of how and why the peoples of the world differ in basic biological aspects. Consequently, volumes that deal with these matters are of basic importance to our field, whatever their title may be. The slim volume under review is the tenth in a series founded by the late Karl Saller and is continued under the editorship of Ilse Schwidetzky who is widely honored as the doyenne of German-speaking physical anthropologists.

The series so far includes five volumes on Europe, three on Asia (with this volume being the third of these), one on Africa, and a miscellaneous volume on Australia, Southeast Asia, India, and the Gypsies. The perspective obviously is a thoroughly Eurocentric one, and some of that even carries over into aspects of the treatment in areas far removed from Europe. Inevitably also, with a great multitude of variously trained contributors, the presentations are of very uneven caliber, and the treatment of the subject matter is frequently not comparable.

The present volume, *Asien III: Ostasien* (Asia III: East Asia), is no exception. It consists of five separate papers of very different length and scope. The last two chapters, "Racial History of Taiwan," by C.K. Chai, and "Racial History of Nepal," by M.K. Bhasin and I. Schwidetzky, deal with areas that are peripheral to the core of East Asia. Each presents a thorough and admirable survey of

anthropometric and serological data in approximately 20 pages; each makes brief bows to the possibility of natural selection while assuming the validity of racial typologizing without second thoughts; and each operates in the almost complete absence of any perspective from archaeology.

In the case of the chapter by Bhasin and Schwidetzky, this was unavoidable because, basically, there is no published archaeology for Nepal. For Taiwan, however, there is a respectable series of ethnographic accounts of the peoples whose roots predate the Chinese influx, and there is a substantial and growing treatment of the archaeological record—none of which is mentioned. From the narrowly Sinocentric cultural-historical orientation displayed, it would appear that the author is unaware of the contributions that ethnology and archaeology have already made to our understanding of the Taiwanese situation.

As it should be, however, the main focus of the volume is on China, with brief recognition granted to Mongolia, the now-non-existent "Manchuria," and to Korea. The two short chapters by K.C. Chang ("Prehistory of China," 20 pages), and W.W. Howells ("Prehistoric Human Remains From China," 10 pages) were able summaries when they were written in 1982, but they were out of date by the time of publication in 1984. Both repeat the then-current view that the *erectus* incisors from Yuanmou in Yunnan are 1.7 million years old, but the paleomagnetic reassessment published in 1983 shows that they are no more than 0.5 million years. Chang also accepts the old and outmoded picture of a Pleistocene with only four major glaciations, and he assumes that the record at Zhoukoudian indicates the human control of fire in the Middle Pleistocene—a view that has since been subjected to a well-deserved critique.

The central piece of the volume, comprising more than half of its total pages, is the chapter by G.T. Bowles, "China, Mongolia, Korea," and it seems to be an amalgam of all the ills that can befall a student of mainland Asia, especially where the focus is on China. Bowles has spent well over half a century either in or involved with eastern Asia, and his book, *The People of Asia* (1977), is the only recent attempt to deal with the physical anthropology of the area as a whole. From the nature of this chapter, however, it would appear that Asia has mastered its student rather than the other way around.

Nearly 40 pages, or slightly over half, of Bowles' chapter deals with the sociopolitical history of his area. Hundreds of names, places, and events are recounted; but the dates are often left vague, and sources are often not cited. It seems almost churlish to be critical of so much effort expended and so much material covered, but it would appear that the main difficulty arose as the result of an inability to decide on the most useful approach. While Bowles concludes that his chapter is an "abridged comparison and review," it is neither complete and well-documented enough to satisfy the full requirements of historical scholarship nor condensed and summarized enough to be of much relevance to the last 30 pages, in which he presents succinct data on anthropometry, serology, and genetics.

Alas also, it is weak on recent archaeological work and some basic aspects of history. For example, he has confused the first historic emperor of China, Qin Shih Huang, who founded the Qin Dynasty in 221 B.C., with the celebrated "Yellow Emperor," Huang Di, of more than 2,000 years earlier, a mistake he would not have made had he been aware

of Chang's chapter at the beginning of the volume. His treatment of the Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties also shows that he is unfamiliar with the voluminous and crucial works that Chang had previously published, for example, *Shang Civilization* (1980).

Finally, indicative of Bowles' troubles in general, he loses his battle with the problem of Romanizing the Chinese language. After boldly declaring that he will use the official Chinese *pinyin* Romanization, he immediately qualifies this, saying that "for the convenience of western readers" he will continue to preserve the "older spellings of dynasties." The result, predictably, is chaos. Not only does he fail to follow his own policy with consistency, but he gets the *pinyin* wrong in some crucial instances (he never does get Shaanxi right), and winds up with an idiosyncratic mixture of *pinyin* and Wade-Giles in others.

To be sure, there is no set policy for the volume as a whole. Chai uses Wade-Giles throughout. Chang uses *pinyin* (for the first time in his long and productive career) except for his maps, which are in Wade-Giles when they are not in Chinese characters. Howells tries to use *pinyin* but occasionally gets caught in the Wade-Giles references taken from older publications.

In a way, this vexing problem is perhaps symptomatic of the volume as a whole. In every respect, it is a mix of the old and the new, often out of date, incomplete, uncoordinated, and ultimately disappointing.

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MOBILIZING AGAINST AIDS. THE UNFINISHED STORY OF A VIRUS. By the National Academy of Sciences. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1986. x + 212 pp., appendices, glossary, index. \$7.95 (paper).

This book is based primarily on the presentations of a number of distinguished scientists involved in various aspects of AIDS research, given at the annual meeting of the Institute of Medicine held at Washington,

D.C. on October 16, 1985. It is a nontechnical summary of what is known and what has been done to combat the epidemic up to about October 1985, written by NAS staff writer, Eve K. Nichols. The rapidly changing incidence and mortality data have been updated through April 1986, the time of publication. It is a fascinating introduction to the growing amount of information on the acquired immune deficiency syndrome epidemic, and it is a reasonably up-to-date summary of cur-