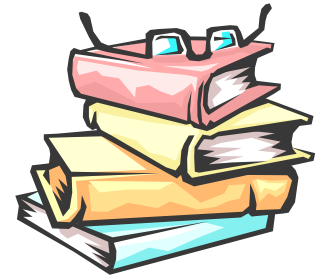


Reading Notes



- **Postcards from Tomorrow's Square: Reports from China** James Fallows
2008. *Vintage Books*, 262pp. \$14.95pb

Another look into the *huge, elusive country* that is China today, by an author whose essays on China appear regularly in *The Atlantic Monthly*. As recently reviewed in the NY Times, by the distinguished China historian Jonathan Spence, *POSTCARDS*, unlike other recent books using a lens of micro level details, Fallows writes across a board canvas. He recounts how efficiently and swiftly China is re-inventing itself, as it responds to the global and "multifaceted impact of modern technological and financial change". Spence has high praise for the way Fallow's insights on a myriad of topics are right on target. A key message of the book, urges the USA to "make itself open to the Chinese, to develop the areas where mutual collaboration is feasible and valuable... [for] "a meeting of minds from both societies is essential to the well-being of all"

- **China Witness: Voices From a Silent Generation** Xinran.
Pantheon Books, 435pp. *translated from Chinese, Illustrated.* \$28.95

- **The Vagrants** Yiyun LI. *Random House*, 337pp. \$25.00

These two books offer contrasting views to *POSTCARDS* presenting detailed portraits of daily life in China during the three decades of cruel repression and suffering (prelude to, and the aftermath of) the Cultural Revolution. While *VAGRANTS* begins with the DENG era, the so called '*spring equinox*' in China, it looks backward in a stark, neorealist recounting in grim detail, of the inhumane daily life experiences of rural migrants in a so called 'nowhere' town 700 miles from Beijing.

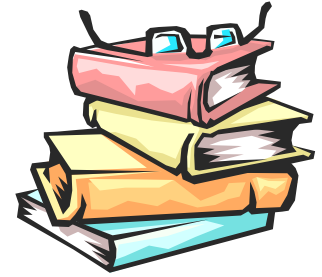
Although *CHINA WITNESS* begins with the *idealistic* early MAO years, and goes through the dark decades too, it resolves itself in stories from the 'openness and reform' era initiated by DENG XiaoPeng in 1979, sort of Chinese version of 'The Greatest Generation' by Tom Brokaw. In this it is a far more inspiring work, which shows how "*China's masses clung to scraps of individuality amid deadening conformity of the Communist system.*"

Both these authors are younger Chinese woman, writing from the West. They give evidence of the Chinese peoples' willingness to confront their history and learn from it, using stones from the rubble as the foundation for a new and more hopeful China of tomorrow.

- **Collections of Oracle Bones Inscriptions** Jean Lefevre, SJ.
New Series 97. Taiwan: Taipei Ricci Institute, 2008. 593pp. hc \$43.00 [surface postage inc.]

This work, by a world renowned expert in this field, is an analytical catalogue of 412 oracular inscriptions; widely recognized as the most complete repertory of sources related to origins of Chinese writing. [Further info: alexmchentw@yahoo.tw]

Reading Notes



- ***Peace Studies in the Chinese Century: International Perspectives.*** Alan Hunter, (Ed), 2006. Burlington VT: Asagate Publishing Co. 219pp. Index
An anthology of papers presented at China's first International Conference on Peace Studies – [a relatively new field of study in China] - held at Nanjing in 2005. The book is organized around three themes: macro-analysis of peace studies; international perspectives; and Chinese perspectives on and tradition about peace. Five of the chapters by Chinese scholars compare and contrast peace and conflict studies with Western views.

- ***Salt and Light: Lives of Faith That Shaped Modern China.*** Carol Lee Hamrin, (Ed),2008. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2008. 240 pp. Notes. Selected chronology 1828-1990 Index. Available at orders@wipfandstock.com
Part of a series on *Studies in Chinese Christianity*, the book presents life stories of Chinese Christians (five women and five men) - who promoted China's nation building and moral progress in the early 20th century. Photos and lively anecdotes reveal the strong character of these modernizers who, motivated by faith, introduce practical social reforms in education, medicine, journalism and diplomacy, thereby contributing to the up-building of civil society in China. These narratives also serve to show 'the human face of China's emergence in the world', and strengthen the claims that [Protestant] Christianity in China is 'profoundly and thoroughly Chinese'.

- ***Factory Girls: From Village to City in Changing China*** Leslie T. Chang.
New York, NY Doubleday-Spiegel & Grau. 2008 420p.
Although the author is a former WSJ China correspondent – the book is not about the business of China as the global factory producing every conceivable consumer commodity. Rather, as noted in the NY Times review, it is "an exceptionally vivid and compassionate depiction of the day-to-day dramas, and the fears and aspirations of the real people who are empowering China's economic boom". In the voices of two women we hear the story of more than 130 million migrant workers - [easily half of whom are female] - whose very lives, literally and figuratively, become raw material for the products that ceaselessly roll out from manufacturing boomtowns all over China .

Also briefly noted:

- ***Contextualization of Christianity in China: An Evaluation in Modern Perspective***
Peter WANG Chen-Main,(Ed).2007 St. Agustin, Germany. Institute Momumenta Serica.316pp. Pb Papers of an International Symposium held at Leiden Univ. 2002.

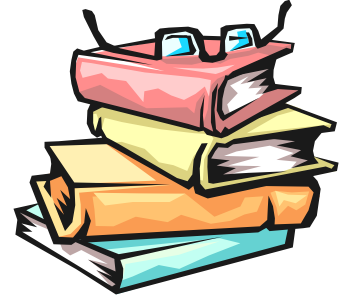
- ***China Rising: Peace, Power and Order in East Asia.*** David C. Kang
New York NY 2007. New York NY: Columbia University Press. 296 pp. hc
The author takes issue with the view that a rising China will be a destabilizing force in the region; and calls for new understanding and sound US policy in this region.

Reading Notes

Guide to the Catholic Church in China 2008

Editor: Jean Charbonnier, MEP Singapore: China Catholic Communication
Email mail@zhonglian.org. Limited copies also available from USCCB
chinabur@shu.edu US\$35.00 [inc. postage]

Most comprehensive Guide (bi-lingual listings) By Provinces/Dioceses/Parishes/
Religious Congregations and names of Bishops/Clergy/Major Religious Superiors.
Extensive supplemental references on International Church and Research
Organizations concerned with China. A chronology of World and Chinese History and
history of Christianity in China [618-2007] Bibliography on China Church 2001-07.



Venture Into the Unknown: Loretto in China 1920-1998

Patricia Jean Manion S.L. St.Louis, MO: Independent Publishing Co. [2006] \$20.00 PB

This is the story of a valiant group of women religious from the USA, who against all odds bore witness to the Gospel in early 20th century China – set in the context of the historical drama of wars and civil chaos in greater China at the time. Historical surveys have elsewhere documented the details of this context, but this account humanizes and personalizes it is the lives of these stalwart women missionaries.

Not to be missed is the moving Epilogue recounting the story of Sr. *Isobel Huang S.C.* – the last Loretto Sister in China, who persevered until her death in Wuhan 1998 – personifying the full flowering of the seeds sown by the Loretto Mission in China, watered by many trials and tribulations.

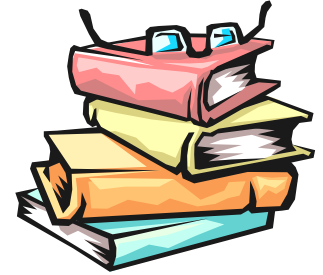
Annotated Bibliography of Christianity in China. Compiled by *China Academic Consortium*, and available on the web at www.errchina.com/cac/html (scroll down to annotated Bibliography). It list some 300 titles published in China by secular publishers from 1985 to the present – covering 21 categories, each with a Chinese summary and English translation. The bibliography introduces Christianity as a cultural and historical force, as well as basic (Protestant) Christian theology. It is based on writings of Chinese scholars in philosophy, literature and history.

What they're Reading in China. Since Chinese Premier *Wen Jiabao* claimed last November to have read *Marcus Aurelius' Meditations* nearly 100 times, the Roman Emperor's 1,800-year-old treatise on Stoic Philosophy has become a hit in China, reaching No. 5 on China Book International's best-seller list. A tome extolling the importance of virtue may seem an unlikely *must-read* amid the country's go-go economic boom, but it suggests many are looking for deeper meaning in their lives – and getting frustrated with China's wide wealth gap.

International Religious Freedom Report 2008:

US State Dept. Segments on PR China, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan and Tibet.
Available on web: <<http://www.state.gov/g/DRL/RLS/IRF>
2008>

Reading Notes



- ***Contextualization of Christianity in China: An Evaluation in Modern Perspective.*** Edited by Peter Chen-Main Wang. Institut Monumenta Serica, Sankt Augustin. 316 pp. Euro 40. The papers of the International Symposium on the "Contextualization of Christianity in China: An Evaluation in Modern Perspective" held in Leiden University in 2002. It delves into a diverse number of topics such as Sinology, history, theology, missiology, philosophy, and political science.
- ***The Bible Diary.*** Claretian Publications, 2008. 448 pp. Father Pedro Chi-kin, co-organizer of *The Bible Diary*, hopes that his book will encourage Chinese Catholics to read the Bible. The Diary, which contains a calendar, daily scriptural readings, reflections, and prayers meant to integrate faith and life, is compiled from reflections made by Catholics from mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan. The passages are taken from the Chinese edition of the Bible published by *Studium Biblicum Franciscum* in Hong Kong.
- ***Introducing Asian American theologies.*** Jonathan Y. Tan Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, Inc. 2008 212 pp. \$24. pb. Acclaimed as a lucid, concise and helpful summary, the work surveys the theological landscape of Asian American Christians in all major denominations: Catholic, Protestant and independent. It also serves to introduce into wider theological discourse, the histories and experiences of a rapidly growing segment of US churches.
- ***China's New Rulers: The Secret Files.*** Andrew J. Nathan and Bruce Gilley. New York Review Books, 2002. 237 pp. \$21.95. Offers comprehensive profiles of China's present top leaders, technocrats who rule by consensus and pragmatism and excel at staying in power by giving people what they need and want in the way of consumer products, entertainment and minimal interference as long as the people do not criticize them.
- ***China's Brave Leaders—and Other Tales for Global Times.*** Jeffrey Wasserstrom. Indiana University Press, 2007. 210 pp. \$21.95. This book is described as "a playful look at serious issues, provided by a scholar who devotes his working life to teaching about China." The serious issues examined include all industrial societies under the general heading of "tales for global times;" and address the homogenization of cultures, ecological degradation, rapacious capitalism, patriotism, nationalism, and the erosion of human freedom through censorship and surveillance.