

how our notions of value are shaped by these modes of production/reproduction” (p. 214).

In any case, we can all be glad that Fred Blake has given the subject of burning paper money the serious attention it deserves.

SUSAN NAQUIN
Princeton University

Visionary Journeys: Travel Writings from Early Medieval and Nineteenth-Century China. By Xiaofei Tian. Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011. Pp. xii + 381. \$39.95/£29.95.

In her new book Xiaofei Tian engages with a wide spectrum of aspects and effects of physical, intellectual, and emotional displacement, and patterns of encountering the foreign and the unknown in travelogues. As indicated in the title the book consists of two main parts: the first deals with the period of Northern and Southern Dynasties (317–589), the second with the late Qing dynasty. In terms of the introduction of foreign vocabulary into virtually all aspects of daily life in China, the considerable numbers of foreigners entering the country and living among the Chinese populace, and the quantity of foreign language works being translated into Chinese and received by readers in China, these two periods certainly share interesting features. And there is no doubt that due to the mobility of people, objects, and ideas leading to cultural challenges and exchanges, the Chinese environment witnessed major cultural changes during these two periods when significant foreign cultural aspects were appropriated. The author aims at linking the two parts through her understanding of early medieval travel literature and nineteenth-century travellers’ accounts of Europe and America not just as simple travelogues but as representations of encounters with a world previously unknown to the Chinese that lead to new modes of expanding horizons and absorption of foreign influences. This is to say that, according to Tian, modes of seeing the world established in early medieval times resurfaced in the nineteenth century and are therefore at the very centre of intercultural encounters and exchanges during the late Manchu period.

Tian’s investigation starts by exploring “the mind in its interaction with the physical world” (p. 21) and the perception of landscape by early medieval literati. Language and codes, belief and value systems that govern this interaction are put at the centre of her observations. Key elements such as the focused mind as a prerequisite for accessing landscape, metaphors of the dream, landscape as an em-

bodiment of the ultimate truth, transcendent perceptions of landscape, the proper mental state as a main criterion for the appreciation of landscape, different strands of thought about mind and locale etcetera are well exemplified through fine examples from literary sources of those periods. In this chapter Tian shows considerable intellectual rigour and provides fresh vistas based on her familiarity with and solid reading of the intellectual and literary products. What seems particularly noteworthy are the passages on the exchange between Kang Sengyuan 康僧淵 and Zhang Yi 張翼 on mind and locale, on spiritual journeys based on imagination and visualization that derive from intense desire and lead to a connection between the physical and the imagined locale often with a distinctly exotic character, and where a mythical geography is established through imagined nature in poetry.

The second chapter, titled “Journeys to Other Worlds,” deals with the desire to learn about unusual things in places afar and the relation between eyewitness accounts and knowledge about foreign lands gained from books and records. This is about broadening the horizon via information about cultural issues past or afar, and the perception of written records, including letters and correspondence, as sources of information about faraway places and the perceived need to evaluate received information against that which is seen by someone’s own eyes. Where temporal gaps are perceived as impossible to bridge, the differences between past/afar and present/near result in a primarily historical understanding of geography and in a geographically organized history. The exposition of travels thus turns into contemplation on antiquity, and travel by imagination emerges as preferable to physical travel. In this chapter the author discusses Xie Lingyun 謝靈運 and his nostalgia about the decline of his clan and the Eastern Jin, develops the dichotomy between hell and paradise in travel accounts as one of her central concepts, and provides the reader with valuable insights into the function of anecdotes in travel literature. It will however remain to be seen whether some of her statements on the characteristics of travel accounts (*ji* 記) and travel *fu* 賦 (poetic exposition) find wider approval (pp. 82–88). In addition, Tian shows how the famous travelogue by Faxian 法顯 embodies “a cultural narrative of going through hell to enter paradise” (p. 88). This discussion is certainly rich in detail, and the religious framework of this account, the “discovery of the past in the present” and its position in the wider discourse on centre and periphery provide ample room for further investigations. A particularly noteworthy part in this chapter takes Faxian’s narrative regarding a fan that he had seen at a monastery in Sri Lanka as a starting point to uncover points of reference in previous literary works that allow for a reading which places Faxian’s remark firmly in an excitingly wide context.

Within the heaven and hell paradigm that includes the perceptions of lost or gained paradise and the underworld perceived as the ultimate foreign country, the third

chapter provides a reading of Xie Lingyun as the “poet of purgatory.” Xie Lingyun, who travelled extensively during the last decade of his life, produced travel poems for an audience with a keen appetite for the exotic. Within the broad field of travel literature Tian offers more than just glimpses into perceptions of the inaccessible. We find Xie Lingyun as a traveller who takes pleasure and enjoyment from new scenery and shows spontaneity in his travelling. Given that the processes of travelling are reflected in historicized readings of the landscape, Tian makes full use of the fine web of textual references in Xie’s *œuvre* to establish historically contextualized and enlightening interpretations of his travel poems which create a fine climax of the first part of her book.

The second part “Encountering the World” starts out with valuable observation on the Europe and America that nineteenth-century Chinese travellers encountered. As for the literary side of the chosen material, Tian sets out to argue that “poetry played a special role in articulating the experience of the Other for nineteenth-century Chinese writers” (p. 157), a point that is reiterated again in the last subchapters of this part. This second part begins with chapter four, “The Rhetorical Schemata of Seeing,” where the author examines the travel accounts by Bin Chun 斌椿 and Zhang Deyi 張德彝 who were sent overseas in the 1860s. Bin Chun was the first emissary sent to Europe by the Qing administration. Zhang Deyi, a young language student trained at the Tongwenguan 同文館, started his career as an interpreter. He was sent on numerous extended trips overseas and later appointed Minister to Great Britain. Intercultural encounters prompt a number of interesting questions and Tian is certainly right in describing the nineteenth-century Chinese travel accounts as a “metaphorically ‘colonialist’ discourse that commits acts of violence to the encountered world by imposing on it their own conceptual categories and system of classification” (p. 158). Indeed, her readings and analysis of the given material show plenty of evidence of dehumanisation of the Other, the strange, and the exotic. Where it comes to negotiating cultural differences, much emphasis is put on the differences whereas the reduction of differences which, in some models, only happens at a later stage of intercultural exchanges, does not appear at the centre of nineteenth century’s observers. What is striking is the bias and limitations of the observers, the selectiveness of their perception, and the exaggerations for sensational effects that we encounter in these early travel accounts. Observers see what they wish to see; their reports reflect expectations of the target audience.

One of the perhaps most eye-catching examples of a colonial discourse in these travel accounts is found in the eroticization of the Other, a phenomenon that, as Tian shows convincingly, is by no means restricted to the Western colonial discourse. In this context London as an eroticized space and the eroticized representations of women in Zhang’s poems stand for the moral degradation of the Other. Expressed by

means of traditional imagery in descriptions of women, the perceived decadence of the other society is depicted in the representations of females.

Ever since the expansion of the Chinese empire during the Han periods, the description of the Other and the unknown presented authors with considerable linguistic challenges. As Tian argues, the inadequacy of conceptual categories and of the language to describe fundamentally foreign cultures was certainly not a new phenomenon during the nineteenth century, and the use of Buddhist terms which provided familiar images of unfamiliarity and strangeness was one of the established ways of emphasising the exotic nature of the unknown. Another technique of linking perceptions of alienness with familiar categories was by means of allusion and reference to terminology and compositional features attested in the literary tradition (*Shiji* 史記, *Zuo zhuan* 左傳, *Laozi* 老子, *Zhuangzi* 莊子, etc.) and its celebrated representatives such as Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 whose description of Yongzhou 永州 stood as a source of inspiration for Bin Chun's description of Singapore (p. 176). With regard to limitations of the language the inspired transliteration of the word "queen" as *kuiyin* 魁陰 (leader of *yin*) (p. 200) seems a particularly striking example of inspired word creations. Where Tian's discussion touches upon those who wrote about places they never visited and thereby provided the world with often well-received accounts of imagined travels in the European tradition, one feels reminded of the brilliant impostor who styled himself George Psalmanazar and his *Historical and Geographical Description of Formosa, an Island Subject to the Emperor of Japan* (1704) which was widely acclaimed in the eighteenth century. However, Tian's interpretations of travel accounts are not only based on ample reference to the tradition from which they derive and to which they refer but also bring into focus the self-positioning of the observer *vis-à-vis* the Other, a discourse that "brought the Chinese travelers unwittingly close to the discourse of colonialism" (p. 183). With regard to her critical approach to the source material, the author has done an excellent job by pointing the reader to textual revisions of given accounts (p. 188) and to silent changes made by editors in reproductions of texts which allow insights into sensibilities in publishing practices and conventions. Clearly, the way in which travellers such as Bin Chun and Zhang Deyi marvel at the splendour of European cities (Paris and London) is somewhat reminiscent of Marco Polo's descriptions of wonders of the East. And as in so many travel accounts, the limitations of the observer and the selective nature of perceptions sometimes create rather entertaining and "comical cultural misunderstandings" (p. 205). However, the author also addresses the problem of the privileged environment in which early Chinese travellers encountered the foreign lands, a fact that is reflected in their perceptions of the posh and upper-class lifestyle which eclipses a good deal of the darker sides of the societies and countries described in their travelogues.

Chapter five, “Poetry and Experience in the Nineteenth Century,” starts out from a parallel prose composition by Lin Qian 林鍼, a translator from Fujian, who visited America between 1847 and 1849. The author’s main interest here is on “an implicit assumption about the nature of poetry and poetic language as demonstrated in the critique of traditional poetic form” (p. 217). She embarks on a short discussion of the *fu* genre and argues “that the genre of classical *shi* poetry shows an elasticity of functionality that can shed light on the nature of poetry in general” (p. 218). Much of this chapter is about the intertextual relation between the short poems and fairly extensive explanatory notes. The interplay between the poetic and prosaic in travel accounts, a composition technique that Tian traces back to Xie Lingyun, is then discussed with reference to Zhang Zuyi’s 張祖翼 observations on tap water and “machine factories” in London. The multi-layered analysis of these pieces is again skilfully contextualized and points of reference in the Chinese literary tradition are explored in great detail. By uncovering nuances Tian guides the reader to a deeper understanding of the text material, though in some cases, such as her reading of the passages on *qingqing* 請請 as an “‘invitation’ to the Qing troops to conquer England” (p. 224), one wonders whether she falls victim to overinterpretation. In the following subchapters the author analyses allusions in a song on Java by You Tong 尤侗 and issues of familiarization in poems on Scotland by Wang Tao 王韜. Through the analysis of compositional and rhetorical techniques in this chapter the author aims at establishing a close link with the first part of her book. Poetry by Huang Zunxian 黃遵憲 (and others) serves as the textual basis from which she establishes a sophisticated network of allusions that position nineteenth-century travel accounts in relation to the tradition and as part of the wider Chinese poetic tradition.

Two appendices complement Tian’s book. Appendix I provides a translation *in extenso* of Xie Lingyun’s “Zhuanzheng fu” 撰征賦 (*Fu* on My Journey), and appendix II gives a sketch of the travels to the underworld by a young man recorded in *Mingxiangji* 冥祥記, which is preserved in *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記, and *Youminglu* 幽冥錄. The two main parts provide the reader with fine examples of thick readings and textual analysis. In her “Interlude” the author cursorily refers to an aesthetic of ugliness and the lack of ugly landscape in Chinese travelogues, and there are a few random notes on the *Hongloumeng* 紅樓夢 and the Daguanyuan 大觀園. If the interlude is supposed to somewhat bring together the two parts of this book, this short section simply does not seem to work and must be identified as a significant weakness of this book which seems to be patched together from two detailed studies. Although they come within the same book cover, the two main parts essentially remain two self-standing articles on related topics. If there is something that brings together the two parts of this book, it has to be the subchapter on contending voices at the end of the second part which can perhaps be described as the culmination

of Tian's arguments. Nevertheless, the book provides stimulating insights into the reception of the Other and a compelling case against the general perception of nineteenth-century China as an isolated identity.

There is no doubt that Xiaofei Tian's *Visionary Journeys* is well researched and highly thought-provoking. There are however a few minor points that need mentioning: In her dealing with a reference to *Lunyu* 論語 15.6 Tian gives reference to an exploration recorded in Zhu Xi's 朱熹 commentary (p. 65f). Given that the allusion relates to Sun Chuo 孫綽, who himself was an authority on the *Lunyu*, the short gloss in Huang Kan's 皇侃 *Lunyu yishu* 論語義疏 (see *juan* 8, p. 4a in the Kaitokudō 懷德堂 redaction) is not only closer in time but also far more relevant for our understanding of the concept of "seeing" (*jian* 見) in the given context. I presume the place repeatedly referred to by Tian as Leon is in fact the French town Lyon (pp. 178, 206f, and elsewhere), the correct name of the "House of Parliaments" in London is "Houses of Parliament," and the official English name of Beijing Daxue is Peking University (p. 187, n. 60). Generally speaking the translations are reliable and read well but on a few occasions, such as the translation of *turen* 土人 (locals, natives) as "autochthones" (p. 174), the author opts for somewhat debatable solutions. In cases such as the declaration that "[t]his is the closest the Chinese ever come to the concept of 'noble savage'" (p. 181) where Tian gives in to the temptation of making catchy statements, one would have hoped for more substantiated arguments. And finally, one may not entirely agree with some of the findings of Wolfgang Bauer in his *China und die Hoffnung auf Glück*, available in English under the title *China and the Search for Happiness*,¹ but Bauer's study includes a number of highly relevant insights that touch directly upon issues discussed in *Visionary Journeys* and would have been of benefit for Xiaofei Tian's encounter with the travelogues of those two periods.

BERNHARD FUEHRER
SOAS, University of London

¹ Wolfgang Bauer, *China and the Search for Happiness: Recurring Themes in Four Thousand Years of Chinese Cultural History*, trans. Michael Shaw (New York: Seabury Press, 1976).