

In effect, the focus on publicly posted texts makes this a study of state-Uyghur relations, leavened occasionally with indirect evidence of consumption habits, in the form of advertisements. De Jong is well aware of the implications of such a distinctive source base, and he provides insightful reflections on the evidentiary value of the collected documents, based in his own ethnographic experience in Xinjiang. He notes, for example, the fact that many government texts are virtually ignored by their intended Uyghur audience, as well as the counter-intuitive educational power of some texts, as in the case of prohibitions on certain kinds of religious practices, prohibitions that actually serve to teach readers about purportedly subversive possibilities they could not have otherwise imagined.

The translations are literal yet readable, conveying accurately the ponderousness of official-ese and the hyperbole of consumer-oriented advertisements. De Jong's frequent citations of foreign political and activist organizations as sources of factual information about Chinese policy, most notably citations of the Falun Gong-associated Epoch Times, add little to the informational breadth of the analytical section while undermining the objectivity and caution that otherwise pervades the book. Ultimately, however, he hews closely to the evidence of the texts he has reproduced and translated, texts that paint a disturbing portrait of the early stage of China's turn to a racially targeted micro-management of Uyghur thought and action.

The situation in Xinjiang has changed so dramatically in the last few years that De Jong's book is already very much a historical work, though its sources were collected in their own time. At the moment, research that involves personal interaction with Uyghurs inside Xinjiang is all but impossible to carry out ethically, as conversations with foreign scholars and journalists put Uyghurs at risk of arbitrary imprisonment. *Uyghur Texts in Context* demonstrates the value of an alternative form of on-the-ground field research. The documents De Jong has collected speak to issues that are widely known to Uyghurs but rarely discussed openly—who would dare publicly mention, for example, Hizb ut-Tahrir? And it shows how valuable public texts have been all along, documenting the spiraling expansion of totalitarian policies in Xinjiang. As scholars and journalists grapple with the emergence of open cultural reengineering and mass, extrajudicial interment in Xinjiang, De Jong's crucial insight—that a massive archive of state control of its minority subjects has been hiding in plain sight—will provide indispensable documentation of the policies that led to the tragedies of the present.

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Mao's Cultural Army: Drama Troupes in China's Rural Revolution. By BRIAN JAMES DEMARE. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. xii, 258 pp. ISBN: 9781107076327 (cloth, also available in paper and as e-book). doi:10.1017/S0021911818002681

Brian James DeMare's *Mao's Cultural Army* is a very welcome addition to the expanding scholarship that is deepening our understanding of the early decades of China's socialist revolution. Spanning from the late 1920s launch of the Red Drama movement to the troupe rectification and registration drives of the early 1950s, DeMare's study covers an important, yet understudied, period of contemporary

Chinese theater history—a time when drama did not just represent tumultuous events like war and class struggle but participated directly in them. Because of this historical context, DeMare's book is about drama troupes but is anything but conventional theater history. Instead, he shows us that to study theater in this time in China is to study the very process of revolution.

The central argument of DeMare's book is that theater played a fundamental role in bringing about the transformation of rural China at the heart of the Chinese revolution. Borrowing a Geertzian model of cultural representations as simultaneously reflections of and guidebooks for reality (the well-known “models of and models for” concept), DeMare argues convincingly that drama troupes helped realize China's socialist revolution by teaching rural communities how to become revolutionary agents in real life. It was through the new words, characters, conflicts, and storylines that they encountered in drama that China's rural residents learned to see themselves in new ways and to change their communities. DeMare repeats this argument in various ways throughout the book, but it is most powerful in his treatment of land reform opera, when dramatists achieved what he calls “the tight synchronization between cultural and political performances” (p. 193). Through his in-depth accounts of the activities of rural drama troupes, DeMare shows how, just as military-affiliated drama troupes were often called upon to assist in combat operations, cultural teams active during land reform also took part directly in the political work of organizing village struggle sessions and redistributing land. Because participation in land reform provided subject matter for new plays, political action and dramatic creation were mutually reinforcing.

Mao's Cultural Army is thoroughly researched and commands a vast array of previously unexamined sources. It also demonstrates a thorough knowledge of and engagement with the secondary scholarship on wartime history and rural China. What I enjoyed most is the way DeMare deploys his material to center obscure people—from child actors who are lost en route while serving in battlefield performance teams to peasant cultural activists who transform the stories of their local communities into land reform drama scripts. More so than theater per se, one has the sense that DeMare's true passion in writing this book is for telling the stories of rural communities and low-level cultural workers, whom he affectionately calls “the rank and file” (p. 220). This is a true social history, as he is interested in how average people participated in drama as a revolutionary activity, whether they were actors in a little-known amateur drama troupe in rural Hubei or audience members who traveled hours to see a theatrical production in a Shanxi village. He also shows limitations on the impact of revolutionary drama, one of which was audience reception. The agency of rural audiences, especially their ability to influence theatrical repertoires, is a point DeMare drives home effectively throughout the book. Regardless of how powerful revolutionary theater was in launching Mao's revolution or how hard Chinese Communist Party leaders worked to guide theatrical practice, he shows that rural audiences continued to be discerning and often stubborn critics who never hesitated to make their cultural demands known. Rural audiences' unwavering love for traditional local opera repertoire proved a formidable obstacle in party efforts to promote modern shows.

Each chapter of *Mao's Cultural Army* is packed with insightful analyses specific to the historical period, place, or events examined. Through DeMare's engaging and often witty prose, one gets a sense not only of the larger picture of drama in China's revolution but also of important regional and local variations. The only disappointment for me in reading this book was what came across as a generally cynical tone about some of the book's core themes. While DeMare expresses deep respect for the bravery of the Red Army ensembles and the ingenuity involved in making rural theater work with limited

resources, he shows much more ambivalence, at times even disdain, for the larger projects of land reform, revolutionary narratives, and folk-inspired modern theater. Given that these are in fact a main focus of the book, it is unfortunate that DeMare often appears to have little esteem for their value as serious political and artistic endeavors, at least in my reading. Beyond this minor issue, *Mao's Cultural Army* is an important and highly original work that makes a major contribution to twentieth-century Chinese studies. I recommend it enthusiastically to all those interested in modern Chinese history; Chinese theater; and the intersections of cultural work, art, and political activism.

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Gender, Power, and Talent: The Journey of Daoist Priestesses in Tang China. By JINHUA JIA. New York: Columbia University Press, 2018. xxxvi, 324 pp. ISBN: 9780231184441 (cloth, also available as e-book).
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Gender, Power, and Talent is a richly detailed and sophisticated sinological study of Daoist priestesses in the Tang dynasty (618–907). Jinhua Jia not only breaks new ground in the study of women in Daoism, but also advances an emerging gender-critical approach combined with religious and literary studies. In this way, Jia's work represents a new model for the academic study of Daoism, one in which Chinese studies, Daoist studies, and gender studies infuse and cross-pollinate each other.

Generally speaking, Jia's pioneering work is noteworthy for a number of reasons. First, it explores the relatively under-researched history of female participation in the Daoist tradition as well as the experience of Daoist women. In the process, the book addresses the ways in which women embraced clerical and monastic identity as their career and vocation, including as a path to personal fulfillment, gender empowerment, and social participation. Jia points out that "[t]he emergence of Daoist priestesses in the Tang as a distinct religio-social group was unprecedented in the history of Chinese women" (p. xvii). Second, this is the first publication to focus solely on Tang Daoist priestesses in concert with a gender-critical framework. Along these lines, Jia draws attention to these women's Daoist religious identity as a source of empowerment and as an emancipatory remodeling of more conventional Chinese gender constructions and roles. This aspect of the book challenges received, albeit specialist, views of certain Daoist priestesses as "licentious courtesans" (pp. xxi, xxvi), partially due to their supposedly audacious aspiration for self-determination and independence. Finally, *Gender, Power, and Talent* engages a wealth of new material for the study of Chinese religiosity in general and Daoist views, practices, and experiences in particular. Jia groups these into three types of sources, namely, epitaphic and monastic inscriptions; Dunhuang manuscripts, records from official histories, essays and poems by literati, anecdotal narratives, and local and monastic gazetteers; and the Daoist priestesses' own poetry, essays, books, and even artistic works.

The specific contributions of this profound study are too numerous to document in such a short review. Here a few abridged notes must suffice. I especially appreciate Jia's discussion of Daoist priestesses as a gendered religio-social group (chapter 1), one in which the women in question had a relatively elevated social status and sense of