

NOTICES OF BOOKS

Louis M. J. Schram, C.I.C.M. *The Monguors of the Kansu-Tibetan Frontier*. Part III. *Records of the Monguor Clans. History of the Monguors in Huangchung and the Chronicles of the Lu Family*. Pp. 117. (Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, New Series—Volume 51, Part 3) Philadelphia, 1961.

This is the third and last part of Fr. Schram's invaluable monograph on the Monguor people of Kansu, of which Part I, *Origin, History and Social Organization*, appeared in 1954, and Part II, *Religious Life*, in 1957. The first half of the book, up to page 69, summarizes the history of Huangchung, that is, the area around Hsining where the Monguors live, and the second half consists of an annotated translation of the chronicles of the Lu clan, the only Monguor clan to have preserved the biographies and chronicles relating to its *t'u ssu*, or local chief. Necessarily the material of this volume duplicates much which has already been presented in the two earlier volumes, and it is instructive to read all three in conjunction, and also to re-read the lengthy introduction written for the first volume by Owen Lattimore.

In that introduction, Professor Lattimore wrote of the concept of the absorption of barbarian invaders by the superior culture of the Chinese. In the discussion of Chinese history, he said, no concept is more widely and indeed complacently accepted than this. It was the striking merit of Fr. Schram's first two volumes that they offered a first-hand interpretation of this process as he saw it during the course of many years spent in residence amongst the Monguors at a time when the process of disintegration of frontier society was in course of rapid acceleration. Like his co-missionary Fr. Antoine Mostaert, whose *Ordos Dictionary* shows what scientific profit the sympathetic mind can draw from daily personal contact, Fr. Schram was able to penetrate, observe and describe from his own experience the family, social and religious life of his neighbours and friends. His careful observations formed a field study documented by reference to printed sources and studies. The nature of the third volume precluded the pursuit of this admirable method. Fr. Schram's material here is the printed word, helped out by his own observations, and while the book presents much valuable material, a great deal of it indeed unique, this has been too often interpreted in a manner too naive to be truly satisfactory. At the risk of seeming unfair the reviewer would quote one such judgment from the last pages of the book: "We . . . close . . . with the list of the Monguor *t'u ssu* who died on the field of battle sacrificing their lives for the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties. This is the most glorious page in the history of the Monguors." With great respect I suggest that this is the language of the war-memorial rather than the monograph. Glory seems an irrelevant consideration in the critical study of this frontier people, who had been formed by the grouping of Mongol tribes with other indigenous elements in the course of the Mongol conquests of the thirteenth century, and who chose, as did many Mongols elsewhere whose history has been investigated by Fr. H. Serruys, to remain and submit to the Ming at the time of the expulsion of the Mongol dynasty.

Fr. Schram's work offers facts and source material vital to the study of China's frontier policy. It gives, for instance, the prime source, the chronicle of the Lu family, for the history of the *t'u ssu* institution which Fr. Schram analysed so ably in his first volume. There is an interesting account of the hereditary lama families who had been granted lands and titles as a reward from the emperor during the early years of the Ming dynasty, and who held these favours from father to son up till the troubles of 1723-4 when lamaism and imperial policy clashed disastrously for the former. But the interpretation of the facts cannot be considered definitive. Fr. Schram's deep personal sympathy with his subject, formed by many years friendship and coloured by the enforced sinification of the Monguors which he mentions as the latest news concerning them, a sympathy which was indispensable in his sociological investigations, seems more than once to have betrayed him into making value-judgments of historical data

which need rather more impartial criticism. The explanation offered in Part I that the policy of the Chinese towards the Monguors after 1368 was the traditional one of "using barbarian vassals along the frontier as a screen against more remote barbarians" (p. 49) would appear to be the correct starting point for considering the reasons for the continued loyalty to successive dynasties of these Chinese-appointed local chieftains. Self-identification of the upper class with the superior culture of China, and the realization that only in allegiance to the ruling dynasty, however effete at times, could this small group maintain itself against the recurrent danger of banditry from Tibetans, Mongols and Mohammedans, are surely factors to be taken into consideration. This question of loyalty to the dynasty needs deeper investigation, beyond the eulogistic statements of pages 51 and 53, and these pages of Fr. Schram's work must be read together with the more sober analysis of the functions of the Monguor *t'u ssu* as given in Part I, pp. 49 fol., in order to be correctly interpreted.

Fr. Schram's survey of the history of the Monguor clans in Huangchung goes considerably beyond its rather narrow subject, and is a comprehensive study of the Huangchung district from long before the emergence of the Mongols. Inevitably the history of China itself intrudes into these pages like a drama in which the Monguor *t'u ssu* appear from time to time in the role almost of optional walking-on parts, but it is difficult to see how the subject could have been managed otherwise, and the extracts from, and references to, the local annals of Hsining, Kansu and Liangchow prefecture forestall any objections to the inclusion of second-hand summaries of some periods of history. Fr. Schram pays particular attention to the Buddhist kingdom of Chiossulo, founded in Hsining in the early eleventh century. Recently Chiossulo has been proposed by Professor Ts. Damdinsuren as the historical reality of the mythical figure of Geser Khan, an identification not acceptable to all students of the Geser theme. Now Fr. Schram also mentions the monastery of *Ma-t'i ssu*, near where there is to be seen in a cave a large hoof print said to have been made by the horse of Geser Khan. Yet he offers no suggestion of any local belief in the identity of Chiossulo and Geser. This is admittedly negative evidence but must be taken into account in evaluating Damdinsuren's theory.

Taken together, these three volumes form one of the most valuable surveys of a Mongol people which we possess. All modern studies of Khalkha Mongolia have been coloured by the theories of Marx-Leninism, and it is due to the tireless and humane labours of learned missionaries, not only Fr. Schram but also his co-religionists like Frs. Mostaert, de Smedt, Schröder, Hermanns, Serruys, Kler, van Oost and others that scholars now dispose of such a quantity of unprejudiced source material for the study of the southern Mongols. The society which these missionaries knew is rapidly disappearing, and the opportunity for prolonged field-study which they so ably seized may never occur again. It may then be appropriate in reviewing the last volume of Fr. Schram's life work to thank in his person all those missionaries who in the last thirty years have immeasurably advanced our studies.

C. R. BAWDEN

Jerome Ch'ên. *Yuan Shih-k'ai 1859-1916. Brutus assumes the Purple*. London, Allen & Unwin, 8vo, 290 pp & Frontispiece.

Dr. Jerome Ch'ên's excellent work is according to the publisher's blurb "the first coherent and readable account of China's political, economic and military developments since 1895". And with Yuan Shih-k'ai as central figure until his death on June 6, 1916, this is in fact the case. To be just to the author, he did not intend to write a biography of the great man, as "biography in the modern sense did not, and still does not exist in China". Broadly speaking this is true, but I believe that quite a lot of trustworthy reports were and are in existence for a study of the man as such, quite distinct from his role as an individual politician, and of the type of politicians whom he represented. It was certainly possible at the time to pick out various traits of his character—e.g., his integrity as far as money was concerned, or his family life, etc., etc.—from

a knowledge of his life-long friends (whom the author mentions) viz., Hsü Shih-ch'ang, T'ang Shao-i, Chao Ping-chun, Chu Ch'i-ch'ien, Liang Shih-i, Yang Tu, etc. Of course, for the man in the street "he was the man who betrayed his sovereign, betrayed the throne and betrayed the republic—he was neither a chün-tzu nor a gentleman". On the other hand, high opinions about Yuan as expressed by his British friends, especially the British Ambassador, Sir John Jordan, were dictated by high political considerations.

The name of Yuan Shih-k'ai was familiar to me from correspondence with some of the members of the Reform movement before the critical period, i.e., before 1910. I had also the privilege of working in Leipzig¹ with that great man, Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei who later (1911) was a member of the delegation who induced Yuan to come to Nanking, and then became the Minister of Education in T'ang Shaoh-i's first cabinet and later President of the *Academia Sinica*. He was always friendly and obliging in scientific matters but hardly ever divulged anything political. But whilst in Peking in 1912 I had the good fortune to become acquainted with a man from the entourage of Yuan, and heard a lot from the lettré of the German Embassy. I was well informed by Dr. Arthur von Rosthorn, the last Austrian Ambassador (who after World War I became Professor of Chinese Language and History at the University of Vienna).² From none of those reports could I see Yuan as a "cruel, rapacious and unscrupulous man", and the personal opinion of him I had formed was confirmed by some personalities with whom I came in contact in Honan (1913) in spite of the fact that Yuan was supposed once to have been compelled to leave his home town in Honan on account of a "crime" he had committed. Yet undoubtedly, as a public figure and a politician Yuan is rightly painted as "the enemy of republicanism, and the destroyer of Parliament, who abused the Constitution and had some of his opponents murdered".

As already stated, what Dr. Ch'ên really presents is a chapter of history seen and commented upon in relation to Yuan Shih-k'ai, starting from his humble beginning in Honan (1859), through his military career in Korea (1882-1895), his creation of a good army (1895-1899), his part in the suppression of the Boxers as Governor of Shantung (1899-1901), as Viceroy of the important Chihli province (1901-1907) to his Eclipse (1908-1911), as President (1912-1913), as the "Strong Man" (1913-1915), and as the Emperor, the founder in 1916 of a new dynasty with the reign title of Hung Hsien which lasted only three months before his downfall. All this is reported in an exemplary and unbiased way. Dr. Ch'ên is perfectly right that we must re-examine and analyse the period before judging the man. After appraising the views of non-communist and communist writers Dr. Ch'ên does not consider the opinions as convincing. "In the first place none of these have defined their criteria of judgment. It may be answered that the non-communist historians use the Confucian moral standards to appraise Yuan Shih-k'ai, whereas the communists simply apply their Marxian yardsticks. But it may pertinently be asked: Can such criteria be applied justifiably in that particular period and against its specific background? In other words should one judge an historical figure according to contemporaneous or present-day standards? In the second place, none of them has taken the trouble to demonstrate Yuan's mistakes by pointing out a better, wiser, and at the same time, more realistic alternative. Without this, criticism becomes purely destructive and is as unconvincing as the resort to indignation."

The *Bibliography* both of the Chinese and of the Western world is virtually complete. But I miss especially two books by Albert Maybon, *La Politique Chinoise 1898-1908* and *La République Chinoise, avec une Préface de Stéphen Pichon*, Paris 1914, because M. Stéphen Pichon, the eminent French diplomat, later Foreign Minister, was one of the best connoisseurs of the political situation in the Far East, especially China, of that period. He summarized the situation in the Preface of the later mentioned book as follows: "Ainsi se caractérisent, en résumé, à travers des conflits et des vicissitudes, relatés par M. Maybon, les deux forces qui s'opposent dans la République

¹ Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei was while in Leipzig advising on the scientific material found by Sven Hedin, later published by A. Conrady in *Die chinesischen Handschriften und Kleinfunde Sven Hedins in Lou-lan*, Stockholm, 1920.

² Volume VIII of the Old Series of *Asia Major* was dedicated to Professor von Rosthorn on his 70th birthday.

Chinoise. Si l'on veut simplifier la formule, ce qui n'est pas toujours, je le reconnais, le moyen de la rendre tout à fait exacte, on peut dire que la démocratie représentée par Sun Yat-sen et ses partisans, se trouve en face du mandarinat et de la bourgeoisie, représentés par Yuan Che-k'ai". This early summary agrees with an analysis of this period and the role Yuan Shih-k'ai was destined to play. Both Yuan and Dr. Sun undoubtedly had the grandeur of China at heart. Both had their own version of how to accomplish their aims. And perhaps Dr. Sun Yat-sen himself gave the right answer to the question of how to accomplish these.

In Peking in 1912 at the invitation of Yuan who appointed him in September to take full charge of railway construction, Sun advised Yuan when bidding him farewell, "to train a million soldiers, while he himself would try to build some twenty thousand *li* of railway". Dr. Sun dreamed his dreams and at that time very few believed they might come true. His series of five year plans for the development of China are well known and so are his planned crossing of the Gobi desert and his proposals for railway construction throughout High Asia.¹ Today his dreams are a reality.²

The *Frontispiece* of the book is a reproduction of a gold medallion commemorating the founding of the Hung Hsien Empire with Yuan's portrait. I may be permitted to conclude this review of Dr. Ch'ên's book with a reproduction of a memorial to the foundation of the Republic of China (中華民國). It is the obverse and reverse of a memorial dollar (*i yüan*) issued by the then Provisional Government in Nanking. Dr. Sun Yat-sen—as you will remember—was sworn in on January 1, 1912, as the first President. But it was only in February when Dr. Sun resigned and nominated Yuan Shih-k'ai as the new Provisional President of the Republic and this was sanctioned by the Senate on February 15, 1912.

Exactly fifty years have passed since the foundation of the Republic of China but this commemorative coin given to me at the time will always remain one of my greatest treasures.

B. SCHINDLER



Obverse and reverse of a commemorative dollar issued in 1912 as a memorial to the foundation of the Republic of China.

¹ See Sun Yat-sen, *The International Development of China*, 2nd ed., London, 1921, a work which is now very scarce.

² To mention only one of the great changes which seems a miracle. Lanchow, the capital of Kansu had a population of hardly more than 50,000 in 1912, and in 1956 the population was already more than 500,000. Today it is the centre of a gigantic railway system with one line going to the great steel centre of Paotow in Mongolia and the other to the Yümen, once a strategic place in the desert, today China's new petroleum centre, a future second Baku.