

## REVIEWS

numbers – an objective that was never realised because of the sense of ownership that regiments had of them.

The success of this book derives from the richness of the contextual detail the author provides. It is in this respect that it offers an entirely new and valuable explanation of its subject. There were times in my reading of it when I was unsure whether its central topic was being obscured by the quantity of information about military strategy and background that surrounded it, but it was repeatedly clear that the story of signalling instruments hardly stands if stripped from the strategic functions they served. As such, and for this branch of military music, James Tanner has provided an important lesson about historical method.

The book is rich in primary source quotations; it is well-written and referenced and exudes a sense of expertise throughout. There is a lot more to be written about military music, but it will be challenging to significantly advance the area that Tanner has covered. A greater challenge is to integrate books such as this into wider narratives of military, cultural and musical history, but with work of this quality it will surely happen.

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**Mao Haijian (edited by Joseph Lawson), *The Qing Empire and the Opium War: The Collapse of the Heavenly Dynasty*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016. Notes. Index. Cloth. xix+pp.549. ISBN 978-110-845-541-1. Hardback. PRICE £89.99.**

In the early nineteenth century, the British opium trade in China began to take off. In the 1830s, the ruling Qing dynasty became increasingly alarmed at the spread of the drug and banned its sale, ordering crates of opium to be thrown into the sea. Britain responded swiftly, sending gunboats to China, and within three years, the Qing forces had been defeated. In 1842, the two sides signed the Treaty of Nanjing, the first of the notorious 'unequal treaties' that for many Chinese marked the beginning of a 'century of humiliation' in the face of imperialist invasions.

When it was first published in Chinese in 1995, *The Qing Empire and the Opium War* was a sensation in the Chinese academic world. Mao, then a rising academic star, refused to accept the conventional wisdom of Chinese scholarship on the war, and instead wrote a provocative, revisionist study that has become one of the most important books ever published on this topic.

The book is structured in eight chapters. It begins with an account of the military power of the Qing dynasty, then covers the outbreak of the 'unexpected war' between the British and the Chinese. There are then detailed accounts of the desperate attempts at the Chinese court to veer between 'suppression' of the British incursion and the 'conciliation' of the intruders. Two chapters then deal in detail with the military developments of the war itself. The next two chapters cover the negotiations which followed the collapse of the Qing defence, and the final chapter covers the legacy of the Opium War.

In 1995, the book's interpretation stood in clear contrast to previous existing Chinese scholarship on the first Opium War. Mao, like earlier scholars, places primary blame for the war on the actions of the British imperialist invaders. However, unlike them, he does not share the almost parodic Chinese conventional account of two of the major actors in the crisis. The Qing official Kišan (Qishan), who negotiated with the British, is conventionally regarded as a near-traitor who showed weakness in offering concessions to the British. In contrast, the Qing's Opium Commissioner, Lin Zexu has become regarded as the archetype of the upright official, who stood up for the Qing's values in the face of the foreigners. In Mao's account, neither of these caricatures stands up. During one particularly critical moment, the Battle of Humen in January 1841, the Daoguang emperor refused to believe that the Qing army could have been so weak as to be defeated, and disregarded 'Kišan's frank admission that the Qing forces were no match for the British' (p. 212). In contrast, Lin Zexu gave an overly romantic account of the first battle of Chuanbi on 3 November 1840, a disastrous defeat for the Qing navy. 'There was a lot of flourish to Lin's report,' Mao says drily, but the losing Chinese admiral was really 'a heroic warrior fit for the Middle Ages but out of place on a modern battlefield' (p. 118). Mao argues that the more realistic view of Qing officials such Kišan should be given more weight in understanding quite how underpowered the dynasty was in trying to oppose the British. 'Judgments of particular individuals – whether Kišan, Lin Zexu, or anyone else – are less important than the underlying patterns of history and the nature of history itself' (p. 24). Both figures are reinterpreted in a wider framework in which the empire as a whole was simply unable to stand up to the impact of British political and technological power. The author clearly regards this question as having contemporary significance. 'Has the gap between China and the West shrunk in the last 150 years,' Mao asks in his conclusion (p. 513), 'or grown'?

The book is richly researched in both Chinese and English sources, with the former materials including an immense range of court memorials annotated by the emperor. The long and complex text has been outstandingly translated by Joseph Lawson, Craig Smith and Peter Lavelle, and has a fine introduction from Julia Lovell, author of the

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excellent *The Opium War* (2011). It sheds light on questions of empire, the role of technology in war, as well as providing a classic example of how scholarship in China can be written to the highest international standards.

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**Etsuko Takushi Crissey, translated by Steve Rabson, *Okinawa's GI Brides: Their Lives in America*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2017. Bibliography, Notes, Tables, Photographs, pp.140. ISBN 978-082-485-648-9. Hardback. Price US\$45.00.**

Etsuko Takushi Crissey's *Okinawa's GI Brides: Their Lives in America* is based on her *Okinawa: Umi o wattata beihei hanayome-tachi* (Okinawa: The G.I. Brides Who Crossed the Ocean) published in 2000. A former Okinawa Times editor and reporter, Crissey allowed her vocation to shape the book's Japanese language edition. Through the lens of the trained reporter, Crissey offered revealing, vivid narratives of Okinawan women who wed US servicemen and moved to America. The text made an obvious effort to reach a wide Japanese audience, but Crissey also dedicated her work to Okinawan-born women who became 'GI brides'.

Now, almost twenty years since her 2000 book's publication, comes Crissey's *Okinawa's GI Brides*, in a translation by Steve Rabson that features significant revisions. There is clearer organization, updated primary source material (e.g., follow-up interviews), new tables, more explanatory notes, and bibliographies. These additions raise Okinawa's GI Brides above expectations for translated works. In its English edition, Crissey's book is more valuable as a reference source for general readers and for specialist audiences whose interests centre on immigration, US political relations and military history, gender, interracial marriages and families, and ethnic identity.

A large body of scholarship on Japanese war brides in history, sociology, anthropology and psychology has taken shape over the past few decades. Of these works, the most similar to Crissey's text is *Japanese War Brides in American: An Oral History* (2010). Both books use life narratives of women who married American GIs and migrated to the US as primary sources. Although the Japanese war bride narrative is often situated in post-World War II mainland Japan, Okinawan brides are often placed under the umbrella of 'Japanese war brides'. Crissey shows how the term is problematic: 'marriage between Okinawan women and American GIs have continued to this day' (p. 2) because US military bases and personnel remain in Okinawa. Indeed, 74 percent of all US military bases in Japan are in Okinawa, which comprises 0.6 percent of the