# INTRODUCTION

This volume brings together the work of an international group of scholars whose interests converge on Xinjiang, in China's northwest. Most contributors, though not necessarily all, would define themselves as historians of this large and complicated region. Although the field of Xinjiang studies, and Chinese frontier studies more generally, is already well furnished with edited compilations, there are still relatively few with such a strong disciplinary focus on historical questions. We hope that it may serve as a worthy follow-up to an earlier publication of the Toyo Bunko, *Studies on Xinjiang Historical Sources in 17–20th Centuries* (2010), which marked a moment of stock-taking in the expansion of available source materials for the study of Xinjiang.[1] The present volume can be seen as building on the momentum that was already present at that earlier meeting, sharing its interest in identifying and rendering accessible new types of sources, and seeking to incorporate these into wider thematic discussions that extend beyond the bounds of Xinjiang and China.

This volume is being published at a time in which, at least in the English-speaking world, the growing interest in this region is being consolidated with the publication of a series of new monographs.[2] Indeed, internationally and across the disciplines, the amount of publishing on Xinjiang is now more than any single scholar can keep up with. In the eyes of some, it is possible to speak of a new "wave" in Xinjiang studies.[3] A variety of scholarly trends have contributed to building and maintaining this interest in Xinjiang, and the growth of a scholarly community around it. To mention only a few of these: a renewed focus on the workings of empire and the social dynamics of imperial crossroads; a widening lens of Islamic studies; and the interest in interconnections and commonalities across the socialist bloc. Obviously, the ongoing debate surrounding Xinjiang's political status, a debate that often invokes historical arguments, is also in part responsible for maintaining interest in the field. Despite limitations on research inside Xinjiang itself, the ease of access to sources has greatly increased in comparison with even a decade ago. We are just now beginning to approach a position to reflect on the implications of major recent breakthroughs on this front (e.g. the opening of the Soviet and the Qing Dynasty Manchu archives). Yet at the same time, extensive publishing of source

[1] J. Millward, Y. Shinmen, and J. Sugawara, eds. *Studies on Xinjiang Historical Sources in 17–20th Centuries* (Tokyo: Toyo Bunko, 2010).

[2] To cite only the work of scholars not represented in this volume: J. Jacobs, *Xinjiang and the Modern Chinese State* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2016); T. Cliff, *Oil and Water: Being Han in Xinjiang* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016); K. Terayama, *Sutārin to Shinkyō: 1931–1949 nen* (Tokyo: Shakai hyōron sha, 2015).

[3] P. Perdue, "Xinjiang Studies: The Third Wave," *Cross Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review* 21 (2016): 137–56.

materials in China, and industrious scholars working in a range of archives elsewhere, have continued to widen the methodological possibilities of the field.

Each in their own way, the chapters in this volume reflect these trends. They span a chronological range of some three hundred years, from the mid-17th to the mid-20th century. The earliest is Rian Thum's study of the final phase of Islamic rule in Xinjiang, a period of transition from the Moghul Chaghatayid dynasty to the chaotic early 18th century (sometimes referred to as the "khoja period"). The volume ends with Joshua Freeman's analysis of the growth of Uyghur-language print media in Xinjiang in the 1930s and 1940s. In any work dedicated to the history of "Xinjiang," such periodization is probably to be expected. It reflects the fact that it is only with the waning of Chinggisid dominance across Central Asia that polities that map roughly onto the boundaries of today's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region start to come into focus. The bulk of the book therefore dwells in the Qing and Republican periods, which is an accurate reflection of the focus of historical research on Xinjiang today. Most scholars continue to approach Xinjiang as an extension of the study of Chinese history, a field that only involves Xinjiang from the 18th century onwards; practically speaking, it is also in these periods that students entering the field can formulate topics with confidence of finding sufficient materials for dissertation-length research. Clearly, the volume's chronological focus highlights two directions for future work; first, to test the extent to which our analysis of Qing Xinjiang may be deepened through grounding it in historical trends from earlier periods; and second, to apply techniques of multi-archival and multi-lingual research, that have been employed in the study of Qing and Republican Xinjiang, to the analysis of post-1949 Xinjiang.

The rubric for the December 2015 conference in Tokyo was "Xinjiang in the Context of Central Eurasian Transformations."[4] The volume has therefore set itself two broad goals: positioning Xinjiang in this wider Central Eurasian context, and in doing so identifying key dynamics of change and transformation. Most contributions have sought a connective approach to the Eurasian context, rather than comparative (with the exception of Rune Steenberg's analysis of kinship in Europe and Xinjiang). In a region typically characterized by Silk Road connectivity, there is of course no great novelty in highlighting Xinjiang's trans-regional ties. At the same time, the volume begins precisely at the point at which these ties are thought to diminish. How should we think about connectivity through the transition to Qing rule and since then? Some contributions emphasize links with Xinjiang's neighbors, and continuities with earlier periods in which Xinjiang was oriented towards the Islamic world. In

[4] T. Onuma, "Kokusai gakujutsu kaigi 'Xinjiang in the Context of Central Eurasian Trasformations' sanka hōkoku." *Nic-chū-kan shūen iki no shūkyō bunka* 2 (2016): 67–72; Y. Shinmen, "Kokusai gakujutsu kaigi 'Xinjiang in the Context of Central Eurasian Trasformations' sanka hōkoku." *Nihon Chūō Ajia gakkai hō* 12 (2016): 72–8.

some respects, even the encroachment of the Russian Empire was felt primarily through the intensification of existing trans-Eurasian Muslim trading networks. This is reflected in Shinmen Yasushi's study of the Russian Muslim commercial enterprises (the Yanghang), and David Brophy's discussion of Tatar writing on Xinjiang. At the same time, the volume does not shy away from the acts of hard boundary-making that this history is also witness to. As both Onuma Takahiro and Noda Jin discuss, the transformation of Xinjiang into a frontier region of two non-Muslim empires involved deliberate restrictions on existing forms of mobility, and acts of state-to-state negotiation to resolve ambiguous loyalties.

Set against this broad backdrop, we have organized the volume according to three sections, which each reflect one aspect of the transformations that interest us. The first section is "Trans-regional Ties, Trade, and Diplomacy." Here our authors trace the rise (and fall) of links to India, Transoxiana, as well as Muslim regions of Russia, touching also on questions of state-building and Beijing's policies towards Xinjiang's non-Chinese populations. Thum's contribution, a rare study to concentrate on Moghul-Mughal ties, points to the significance of the Tarim Basin's links across the Himalayas to Muslim India, which was "perhaps even the predominant influence" on the region up until ca. 1700. These ties were particularly significant at the level of the court, and among Sufi networks. He not only mobilizes evidence from chronicles and travelogues, but also provides a close study of Chaghatayid numismatics, and reflections on the circulation of texts, to argue that these ties were not on a downward trajectory at the end of the Chaghatayid period, but were in fact growing. Continuing this discussion of links with Islamic neighbors is Onuma Takahiro's study of the Altishahri merchantry. For a region identified as a hub of caravan trade, we know surprisingly little about Kashgar's native merchantry and its long-distance networks. He begins with a close reading of pre-Qing sources to explore the relationship between local politics and trading activities in the Tarim Basin, emphasizing the point that oasis authorities treated the right to form and dispatch caravans as itself a marketable commodity. On this basis, he follows the fate of long-distance trade with western Turkistan in the wake of the Qing conquest of the 1750s. Qing policies, while receptive to incoming caravan trade by "Andijanis" (i.e. from the Ferghana Valley), served to restrict the outward mobility of Altishahri merchants. Onuma here draws on a case study of the Qianlong emperor's decision to prohibit Altishahri trade with the Kazakhs, to reconstruct the political considerations that lay behind such policies: he shows that just as Qing officials sought to channel Kazakh trade towards military logistics, the policy also suited the interests of local Muslim *beg*s in maintaining their traditional control of trading privileges. Noda Jin's chapter brings forward his close analysis of the triangular relationship between Russia, the Qing, and the Kazakhs into the second half of the 18th century.[5] In the mid-19th century the

[5] J. Noda, *The Kazakh Khanates between the Russian and Qing Empires: Central Eurasian*

Russian and Qing empires sought to give clarity to ambiguous subject status of the Kazakh populations, but this effort was complicated for two reasons. One of these was political: the disruptive Muslim rebellion, and the Russian occupation of Ili. The second was theoretical: the varying conceptualizations of territoriality and "subjection" that existed among the three parties. The outcome of these ongoing negotiations was a new hybrid form of judicial case handling, the International Assembly Court (Ru. *mezhdunarodnyi s"ezd*, Ch. *siyazi*). As this study shows, efforts to confine loyalty and mobility to fixed political boundaries failed to fully achieve the desired transformation. The section ends with Shinmen's detailed study of Ürümchi's development as a major regional city, from its founding as a garrison town in the mid-18th century. Moving south from the Chinese city center, Shinmen leads us through a succession of Hui, Tatar, and Uyghur districts, highlighting the role of Russian Muslims from the late-19th century onwards in expanding commercial activities in the provincial capital.

The second section of the volume turns to a subject less commonly addressed in the historical literature on Xinjiang and the Uyghurs: kinship and the family. Drawing on anthropological fieldwork in Kashgar, as well as historical literature on kinship across Eurasia, Rune Steenberg here puts forward an original hypothesis on the development of kinship and marriage among the Uyghurs in the last two hundred years, which he describes as the "shift from vertically to horizontally oriented kinship." His work reminds us of the intimate link between forms of kinship and the wider political economy. Bureaucracy, in the form of the Qing *beg* system, reduced the significance of heredity in oasis society, and increased the importance of the marriage alliance as a family strategy. Moving from this focus on marriage, Ablet Kamalov turns our attention to a different form of kinship-making, one that sits somewhere between notions of adoption and slavery. This chapter adds valuable documentary evidence to what is still a very thin source base for the study of social history in Xinjiang. Through an analysis of a set of contracts, Kamalov sheds light on a form of bondage in the Tarim Basin, an institution he refers to as *balilik*, in which children were entrusted to a new household for a fee (with the sale concealed as a "loan"), with the expectation of a period of service until adulthood. Kamalov provides not only the contracts by which such deals were negotiated, but also the voice of one of the adoptees themselves, describing a complaint against his adoptive mother Gulshada, a wealthy woman from the Khotan oasis. Although the complaint was resolved, during the CCP's political campaigns of the 1950s these contracts were confiscated and cited as evidence of class exploitation. Couched in formulaic Islamic legal language, these texts therefore not only speak to the nature of the household economy in the Tarim Basin, but give a rare insight into the period of socialist construction in Xinjiang.

*International Relations during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

The studies in the third and final section of the volume each focus on a text, or genre of text, which mark turning points in the written representation of Xinjiang, or the circulation of information about the region. Matthew Mosca examines the composition and reception of what was undoubtedly the most widely read Chinese-language work on Xinjiang during the Qing. Circulating with various titles, the work of the low-ranking Manchu official Cišii (Qi-shi-yi) was for most Qing readers the only account available of the empire's new frontier. Mosca shows how its reception as a "pseudo-gazetteer" of the Western Regions (*Xiyu*) put it in a precarious position, widely cited but also vulnerable to criticism, which eventually diminished its status in the 19th century. The focus of David Brophy's chapter is a work that was equally ground-breaking in its time, Gabdulgaziz Munasib's *Taranchi Girl* (1918), a tragic romance set in the frontier town of Ghulja in the late Qing. Brophy describes this Tatar work as "the first fictional representation of social life in Xinjiang," that is to say, Xinjiang's first novel. Coming from the pen of a young Tatar author, it provides insight into the place of Xinjiang and its peoples within Russian Muslim discourse. Although the very existence of such authors and texts is sometimes treated as evidence of the transmission of the Russian Muslim reformism to Xinjiang, Brophy reads Munasib's novel as a critical, indeed pessimistic, portrayal of the possibility of Jadidist cultural reform among the Muslims of Xinjiang. Josh Freeman's study of newspapers in Republican Xinjiang rounds out this section, providing an analysis of one of the major cultural shifts involved in Xinjiang's Soviet-inspired modernization of the late 1930s. Drawing on a wide range of previously unstudied Uyghur-language periodicals, Freeman charts the transition from disparate early experiments in local publishing to the centralization of this form of mass culture in the hands of Ürümchi officials, and asks how we should think about the circulation and consumption of print culture in an authoritarian context.

No edited collection can ever hope to provide comprehensive coverage of the history of a region as diverse as this, but we feel that this volume does justice to some of the major recent themes in the historiography of Xinjiang, drawing on the various scholarly fields that impinge upon it. We hope therefore that it will be of interest to established scholars from a range of backgrounds, as well as new researchers beginning to take an interest in the study of Xinjiang. Some of the chapters may well come to serve as reference points for the source materials they have utilized, others for the new arguments that they put forward. In any case, they will hopefully provide inspiration for ongoing work that will continue the various lines of analysis presented herein.

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