

VI - 73 E - 35. Book Review of China by Eleanor D. Breed substituting for Joseph Henry Jackson in Bookman's Notebook of the San Francisco Chronicle - December 14, 1946. Harley Farnsworth MacNair was general editor for China published by the University of California Press.

Bookman's Notebook

While Joseph Henry Jackson is on a short leave of absence his column will be conducted by guest reviewers. Today's guest is ELEANOR D. BREED.

China is overwhelming. It has so many people no one can compute them within a leeway of 50,000,000 or so. It has so long a history, so wide and varied a terrain, so confused and confusing a political situation, that one needs a library and a lifetime to learn of it.

One does need a library, and a lifetime is far too short if one seeks to become a thorough Sino-logue. But that ambition is for the few. For the many who want to read and learn of our trans-pacific neighbors, there is a one-volume library recently published by the University of California Press, titled simply "China" (1945) and edited by Harley Farnsworth MacNair.

First of A Series

This is the first peacetime publication in the United Nations series, of which Robert J. Kerner is the general editor. Its wartime predecessors have been "Belgium," "Czechoslovakia," "The Netherlands" and "Poland," with accounts of 11 other countries now in preparation. As Dr. Kerner expresses the aims: "The United Nations Series is dedicated to the task of mutual understanding among the Allies of the second World War and to the achievement of successful co-operation in the peace."

Because China, like other countries, can be understood only in the light of its past, Parts I and II consider background and historical and political development, carrying the reader from antiquity and the Oracle Bones of An-yang to China's international relations in the twentieth century. This covers 12 chapters and includes such authorities as Esson M. Gale of the University of Michigan, Paul Linebarger of Duke, Karl Wittfogel and Carrington Goodrich of Columbia, Ch'en Mengchia, and Teng Ssu-yu of the University of Chicago. Agnes Smedley has a chapter on "The Social Revolution" which will arouse some opposition among those whose thinking runs, "If it's Smedley, it must be wrong," though often they know the Northwest by hearsay, while she knows it firsthand. She makes one error, however, which makes one wonder what others lurk uncaught. Speaking of the foreign doctors in Yenan, she says they "included an American, Dr. Norman Bethune, known as Dr. Ma Hai-teh," and goes on to say that Dr. Bethune died at his post. It is

true that Dr. Bethune is dead, but Dr. Ma Hai-teh, the American who prefers to be known by his Chinese name, is another person and very much alive. Since this book went to press, Dr. Ma led a forum of American Marines in North China in a discussion of China's problems, political and otherwise.

The distinguished poet, philosopher and statesman, Hu Shih, leads off Part III (Philosophy and Religion) with a chapter on Chinese thought. "Approach every subject in the spirit of doubt; seek the truth; do not compromise. That has been the spirit of those Chinese thinkers who have kept the torch of intellectual freedom burning throughout the ages," writes Dr. Hu.

Following chapters on Confucianism, Neo-Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, Kenneth Scott Latourette considers Christianity in China, and Chan Wing-tsit of Dartmouth contributes an interesting summary of trends in contemporary philosophy.

Other names familiar to American readers appear in Part IV (The Arts, Literature and Education). They are Pearl Buck, Florence Ayscough, Alice Tisdale Hobart, Dryden Phelps, Henry Killam Murphy, and others less familiar, but of equal authority in their fields: Chiang Yee on art, Hsiung Shih-i on drama, Wang Chi-chen on traditional literature.

In Part V (Economics and Reconstruction), Chinese economists discuss problems of agriculture and international trade, and the book comes to its summing up in Part VI (Retrospect and Prospect), wherein David Nelson Rowe of Yale writes of "China Among the Nations." Stressing China's need for modernization as a basis for strength in the postwar period, he writes: "The question is: Will the peace provide sufficient guarantees of security for China to allow modernization to proceed normally and with only a moderate emphasis on preparation for military defense? Upon the answer depends the future of China, for it will determine the course of the nation's social and economic revolution during the next century. The course the revolution takes is of vital importance to world peace."

The general editor, the editor, the 33 experts who contributed chapters, and the University of California Press, are to be congratulated on compiling so distinguished a volume on so vast and ancient a country. They have made a valuable contribution to that mutual understanding set forth as an aim of the series. Under such blows as this one, the Orient's mystery is fading like last month's hit song, and a good thing, too.

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