“zombies, shades of individual ancestors, dangerous female tree spirits, souls damned to hell, ghouls, ogres with magic powers,” “dwarf herdsmen” (p. 110) and so on, are misleading and quite distant from the Khmer concepts. The interested reader should look directly to the sources cited, particularly to the excellent work of anthropologist Ang Choulean.

Minor details aside, the book is an important addition to the historical literature on Cambodia. For academics in Khmer studies, the book introduces central concepts in Khmer history and reviews the literature in both French and English. It could serve well as a textbook for undergraduate Southeast Asian history courses. The book is far more sophisticated than Chandler’s (1988) _The Land and People of Cambodia_, which is an introduction to Khmer society pitched to the middle school or high school level, but it does not replace Chandler’s earlier (1983) _A History of Cambodia_.

At the same time, the book is well suited as background reading for non-specialists who are planning a visit to the Angkor Wat area. Any trip would be greatly enhanced by having first read this book—to gain a broader historical context, and to establish a sense of the lives of the people at all levels of society. Travellers should carry it with them, using it as a reference on a range of topics from the names of kings and art styles to the purpose of the great Barays and the stories of battles carved in the bas-reliefs.

Judy LEDGERWOOD
Northern Illinois University


The late Joseph Fletcher was a scholar remarkable for several reasons. A meticulous philologist capable of arduous labors in more than twenty languages, Fletcher became an historian of breathtaking vision whose research led him to see patterns and formulate problems in bold ways. Death in 1984 at the age of 49 robbed him of the opportunity to finish many of his projects in Chinese and Inner Asian history. His written legacy is composed of articles published in several Cambridge Histories and scattered in specialist publications on Asian and Middle Eastern topics published in Asia, Europe and North America. Because his essays are tucked away in journals not easily available, we are fortunate that his former student Bearice Forbes Manz has brought together ten previously published essays and one edited by Jonathan Lipman that is published for the first time. In essay collections, rarely is the whole greater than the sum of its parts. Usually the quality of the individual pieces and occasionally the convenience of having the essays available between two covers spurs the publication of an important scholar’s research papers. In this book, a special arithmetic is at work. Not only are the eleven chapters each a work of impressive scholarship, but together they form an intellectual enterprise of inspiring and surprising proportions.

The essays are printed according to date of first publication with original pagination retained to make citation to the originals convenient. Three of the essays demonstrate Fletcher’s prodigious erudition as a philologist of Mongolian, Oyirod and Chinese texts. Chapter One tracks sources for the nineteenth-century Mongolian chronicle, _Erdeni-yin erike_; chapter 3 presents the first specimen of Oyirod private correspondence to be published, and chapter 8 offers the biography of a Muslim noble residing in Beijing in the eighteenth century. In stark contrast to this painstaking and precise reconstruction work, Fletcher’s posthumously published essay on what he called “integrative history” asks the reader to consider parallel patterns of historical change—population growth, a quickening tempo of social change, the emergence of new cities and towns, the rise of urban commercial classes, religious revivals and missionary efforts, rural unrest, and the decline of nomadism—all of which affected societies across Eurasia between 1500 and 1800. Since Fletcher formulated these ideas in the mid and

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late 1970s, scholars have become increasingly fascinated with different kinds of global or world history beginning around 1500; some of Fletcher’s views either anticipate or confirm what other scholars have been saying, while some of his ideas derive from a more unique perspective and frame of reference as a specialist on Inner Asian History. This perspective is also reflected in his 1968 essay on five centuries of post-Ming Chinese-Central Asian relations, here chapter 2, which was an early critical assessment of Chinese views of their world order; Fletcher explained persuasively the ways in which Inner Asian groups did not necessarily believe the fiction of Chinese superiority that Chinese rulers habitually proposed for domestic consumption. Chinese relations with various Inner Asian groups in the Ming dynasty sometimes even demonstrated Chinese recognition of effective diplomatic equality.

Fletcher was able to adopt multiple frames of reference to view issues and problems already studied by others as well as open up virtually uncharted territories of research. One of the most important examples of his distinctive perspective, not merely on China but all sedentary Eurasian civilizations, comes in his studies of Mongolian history. In chapter 9, “The Mongols: Ecological and Social Perspectives,” a posthumously published conference paper, Fletcher tackles basic questions about the origins and limitations of Mongolian success. He shows the process of political mobilization that created large confederations for war-making. He argues that the Mongols were pushed to expand by climatic adversity in the grasslands and enabled to achieve success because of several factors: a bit of luck augmented by Chinggis Khan’s personality and abilities, in particular in arranging a succession that put power into the hands of capable leaders. Fletcher established these conclusions by following the Mongols across Eurasia where he discovered the major impact of Mongol political practices upon state building policies in the sedentary empires the Mongols conquered. The importance of Fletcher’s discoveries in this regard are difficult to exaggerate. By showing in chapter seven, entitled “Turco-Mongolian Nomadic Traditions in the Ottoman Empire”, the relevance of a Turco-Mongolian model with the personal military command of a supra-tribal leader over a nomadic nation to politics and government practices in the Ottoman empire, he staked out the first illustration of his argument about the impact of Turco-Mongolian political practices in agrarian empires. Scholarly efforts to treat the various Eurasian land empires as a common species of political form have not gone much beyond S.N. Eisenstadt’s classic The Political Systems of Empires of 1963. Fletcher, who taught a course on empires with Eisenstadt in the 1970s at Harvard, was in a unique intellectual position to construct an empirically based analysis of synthetic proportions to explain common elements he believed shared across empires. If the analysis of political systems of empires is to be taken seriously and achieve scholarly advance in the coming decade, Fletcher’s work can serve as a part of the platform upon which to create a framework for future study.

Fletcher’s study of the Mongols brought him into contact with Islam and the role of Muslim missionaries on the religion and politics of the world of Yemen in the Middle East to what became the northwest of China under the Ch’ing dynasty. Seen as a complex and little understood chapter of Chinese history, the integration of Muslim areas into the Ch’ing empire was simultaneously the expansion of the Muslim world through the Central Asia once dominated by Mongols and into the peripheries of the agrarian empire that was China. Fletcher’s most general statement on the Chinese northwest appeared as an introduction to an exhibition of photographs of a 1923 expedition, “A Brief History of the Chinese Northwestern Frontier,” in China’s Inner Asian Frontier: Photographs of the Wulsin Expedition to Northwest China in 1923, edited by M.E. Alonso. Though this piece is not included in this collection, four other pieces on Islamic influences in China together form the single most thoroughly examined topic area in this volume and they represent a significant component of the research efforts Fletcher was making at the end of his life. Forming chapters 4, 5, 6, and 11 they collectively display Fletcher’s wide-ranging gifts of philological skill and historical analysis. Chapter 4 begins Fletcher’s publications about the spread of Man Ming-hsin’s New Teaching into China. This movement became associated with various rebellions in 19th-century China and was a basic component to the challenges of Ch’ing rule over the northwest.