
A collection of papers entitled *Boundaries in China*, featuring on its front cover a map, might easily raise certain expectations in a prospective reader. Personally, I would expect first of all to find one or more articles in which the traditional notions of "boundary" would be dealt with in a philological fashion; I would also expect to find one or more studies in which the modern transformation of these notions is scrutinized. Next I would expect some articles dealing with the ways in which boundaries were and are established in Chinese society—between different plots of land, between a community and surrounding nature, and between the empire and the outer world, by political authorities and by ritual specialists. And finally I would expect a number of papers discussing the various ways in which the notion of "boundary" and the various ways of mapping out space have been adapted as a metaphor in other fields of human endeavour. However, such an approach is not the modern style of scholarship.

The editor confesses that "the collection originated five years ago, with a distinctly inarticulate thought over a cafeteria meal at Kennedy International Airport, at 6:30 am" (p. 5) and describes the resulting volume in the following terms: "This volume contains nine essays on very disparate topics in the study of the cultures of China, from the third century BCE to the present. The nine authors, though specialists in sinology, represent disciplines such as art history and literary criticism that are often treated by academic institutions as quite separate. ... Indeed, the unity of this collection is an elusive quantity, as suggested by the design on the cover—which (perversely) is intended to signify an absence, rather than a presence, of writing upon boundaries defined in any administrative or concrete sense" (p. 1). And indeed, only once in his long "Introduction" (pp. 1–55) does the editor venture into a discussion of one of the many Chinese terms for boundary, i.e. jie, limiting himself to quoting some modern dictionaries, and invoking *Mathews' Chinese-English Dictionary* as an authority (p. 20, note 22). So much for old-fashioned philology in the exciting world of interdisciplinary, cross-cultural criticism!

The only contribution in this volume that starts out by examining the Chinese term for boundary that is relevant to its topic is
the article by Wu Hung, "Beyond the 'Great Boundary': Funerary Narrative in the Cangshan Tomb" (pp. 81–104). Prof. Wu discusses the paintings in a second century BCE tomb from Cangshan county in Shandong province, unearthed in 1973 and remarkable for the fact that it contained a long inscription in verse, explaining the "entire architectural/pictorial program" of the grave. A discussion of this grave is preceded by an analysis of the term da xian (great boundary) as a metaphor for death in Han times. The author shows that the term can stand for the definitive end of one's life, denote the borderline between life and afterlife, or refer to a zone that has to be crossed by the soul of the deceased upon death in order to reach a heavenly existence. The pictorial reliefs in the Cangshan grave display a narrative quality as they portray the various stages the soul has to pass through on its journey from life on earth to life eternal.

As making distinctions and categorizing experience is a universal phenomenon, there is no subject that could not have been included in this volume. This does not imply that the volume under review is not a useful addition to the literature on China. The quality of the individual papers easily makes up for any lack of coherence. The volume contains among others a competent summary of the political thought of Qin times by Robin D.S. Yates, "Body, Space, Time and Bureaucracy: Boundary Creation and Control Mechanisms in Early China" (pp. 56–80) and an instructive report by a social anthropologist, Anna Anagnost, on the circumstances of doing fieldwork in the PRC in the nineties, "Who Is Speaking Here? Discursive Boundaries and Representation in Post-Mao China" (257–279): while interviewing workers on changing labour conditions, she eventually finds out that her informants have already gone through a number of Party-led movements for rewriting their own history, making it impossible for her to distinguish between their personal voices and the voice of orthodoxy.

Four papers in this volume deal with Chinese literature. Pauline Yu, in her fine contribution "The Chinese Poetic Canon and its Boundaries" (pp. 105–123), pursues her study of canon formation in traditional Chinese literature; she discusses the influential anthologies of Tang poetry in their chronological sequence (ending with the Tangshi sanbaishou of the mid-eighteenth century) and highlights the role of Yan Yu in establishing the status of High Tang poetry. Dorothy Ko, in her essay "Lady Scholars at the