



HIMALAYA, the Journal of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies

Volume 36 | Number 1

Article 27

May 2016

Review of 'A Historical Atlas of Tibet' by Karl E. Ryavec

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Recommended Citation

Jahoda, Christian (2016) "Review of 'A Historical Atlas of Tibet' by Karl E. Ryavec," *HIMALAYA, the Journal of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies*: Vol. 36 : No. 1 , Article 27.

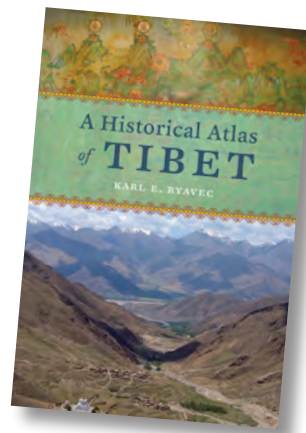
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A Historical Atlas of Tibet.

By Karl E. Ryavec. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015. xvii + 202 pages. ISBN: 9780226732442.

Reviewed by Christian Jahoda

In *A Historical Atlas of Tibet*, Karl E. Ryavec, who is known for his contributions on the cultural and historical geography of Tibet and Inner Asia and for pioneering maps of early Buddhist sites in Western Tibet, “attempts to map the historical growth and spread of Tibetan civilization across the Tibetan Plateau and bordering hill regions, from prehistorical times to the annexation of the last Tibetan state by China in the 1950s” (p. 4). The historical information compiled in this atlas is presented in a series of 49 maps (all in colour), which are followed by short explanatory text sections, each concluding with a list of sources consulted in making the map(s) and accompanied by historical photographs of individual sites and/or motifs.

An introductory chapter provides an overview of macro and core regions of Tibet, trade patterns, and ‘Tibetic’ languages (the latter being based on data yet to be published in a forthcoming work by Nicolas Tournadre and Hiroyuki Suzuki). This is followed by the four main parts into which this atlas is divided: Part 1 is dedicated to the pre-historic and ancient periods, circa 30,000

BCE to 600 CE; Part 2 comprises the Imperial Period, circa 600-900 CE; Part 3 has 18 maps, making it the most comprehensive section, and is entitled the Period of Disunion, circa 900-1642 CE; Part 4, the Ganden Podrang Period (also referred to as the ‘Kingdom of the Dalai Lamas’), stretches from 1642 to 1911 CE. A final concluding chapter deals with the present from circa 2000 and contains information on natural resources, main land-cover patterns, territorial administrative systems, and the Tibetan population.

What makes this book so valuable and unique is, first, the fact that the focus is on Tibet as a cultural and linguistic realm in its own right. Second, it is neither reduced to the confines of the Tibet Autonomous Region in the PR China nor to Tibetan-speaking populations in adjacent Chinese territories (that is, in addition to TAR, Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan, and Yunnan), but includes areas and sites in northwestern India, northern China, Mongolia, and Beijing. Third, the author’s methodological approach, basing the maps for the whole historical period largely on a database of religious sites (approximately 2,925 Buddhist and Bonpo temples and monasteries), is comprehensible on account of the interrelationships between densities of temples and monasteries and socio-economic patterns, such as forms of land use, trade routes, etc.; this is a remarkable feat given the comparatively scarce

and not easily available or usable data for areas or sites that were not or were only peripherally under the control of religious authorities. Fourth, the maps offer an unprecedented opportunity to study the development of certain macro-regions, particularly in terms of their religious and political affiliations, over more or less long historical periods; they also allow to some degree comparative studies of them.

Of particularly impressive quality are the maps that show historical information of smaller regions in greater detail, such as the West Tibetan border area (Map 18: “Religious and cultural sites founded in the core region of the Guge Kingdom, circa 10th–14th centuries,” p. 75). In this case the combination of Rinchen Zangpo’s twenty-one foundations in minor places and a wider range of early Buddhist temples and monasteries paired with information on the development of school affiliation up to the 13th/14th centuries and a chronology of the kings of Guge brings a new — specifically multidimensional and dynamic — perspective to a key period in the history of Western Tibet.

This historical atlas of Tibet will certainly be a useful reference work for students and scholars working on the historical geography of Tibet and/or any of its macro-regions. The usability of this atlas certainly benefits from the “phonetic

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Christian Jahoda on *A Historical Atlas of Tibet*.

Romanization” which is observed in this volume for rendering Tibetan words and place-names.

Unfortunately the publisher’s proofreading is responsible for a number of flaws throughout the text sections of the book, such as wrong transliterations of Tibetan names (for example, *gRong* for *rong*, valley, p. 8), (partly recurring) inaccurate bibliographical entries (including omission of German umlauts), or inconsistencies with regard to historical information (for example, in the case of the Great Translator Rinchen Zangpo, 958–1055) or spelling of names (Sibkyi Pass but Sibkye Village, p. 74–5). These deficiencies should be remedied in a second edition of this work. In addition, a glossary of words and names in Tibetan, Mongolian, Chinese, and other languages would increase the usability of this atlas for advanced students and scholars from one of the related area studies.

It is to be hoped that in the future this pioneering work will inspire others, ideally a larger team composed of scholars from various disciplines (including archaeology, Chinese studies, geography, history, linguistics, Mongolian studies, etc.) to start a mapping project of historical Tibet and its border regions (including Ladakh, Zaskar, and Kinnaur in northwestern India as well as Mustang and other areas of Nepal) on a bigger collaborative scale.

The constantly growing amount of historical source materials and digital data available, on the one hand, and demand, on the other, would certainly make this a legitimate enterprise.

Christian Jahoda is a social anthropologist specializing in Tibetan society. He is the author of Socio-economic Organisation in a Border Area of Tibetan Culture: Tabo, Spiti Valley, Himachal Pradesh, India (Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, 2015).

Contemporary Pakistani Fiction in English: Idea, Nation, State.

By Cara Cilano. London: Routledge, 2013. 263 pages. ISBN 9780415682763.

Reviewed by Dinesh Kafli

Cara Cilano’s *Contemporary Pakistani Fiction in English* delineates Pakistan’s arduous evolution from an idea to a turbulent state through a critical analysis of the Anglophone fiction coming out of the country from Partition to the present. Focusing on the concepts of idea, nation, and state, she explores the possibilities of multiple alternative constructions of the nation through an individual sense of belonging rather than dwelling upon the perceived failure of the idea of Pakistan. By her own account, her attempt is to explore “how literary texts imaginatively probe the past, convey the present and project a future in terms that facilitate a sense of collective belonging” (p. 1). This is a remarkable endeavor that celebrates the popular construction of many ‘Pakistans’ by accommodating multiple national identities, thereby subverting the dominant narrative of the nation.

The book is divided into four parts, comprising seven chapters. In the first part, titled “Idea to Nation,” Cilano deals with fictional texts representing the 1947 partition of India and the 1971 partition of Pakistan. Questioning the popular