

September 2014

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This is a monthly listing of selected academic activities and resources related to Mongolia. This list is based on information the ACMS has received and is presented as a service to its members. If you would like to submit information to be included in next month's issue please contact the ACMS at info@mongoliacenter.org and/or the editor, Marissa Smith, at msmith@mongoliacenter.org.

This publication is supported in part by memberships. Please consider becoming a member of the ACMS, or renewing your membership by visiting our website at mongoliacenter.org. Thank you!

Upcoming ACMS Sponsored Programs and Events

Speaker Series

The Speaker Series are formal presentations given by leading academics, experts and community leaders on a wide variety of topics related to Mongolia. Each session has a 30-45 minute formal lecture followed by a 30 minute Q&A session. All presentations are held in the American Corner presentation room of the Natsagdorj Library in Ulaanbaatar. We invite all researchers visiting Mongolia and who are interested in presenting to contact us at their earliest convenience.

Calls for Papers, Conferences, Workshops

Call for Papers

The Mongolia Society and The Mongolian Heritage Foundation of New York are organizing a one-day conference to celebrate the 130th anniversary of the Dilowa Khutughtu, on **Saturday, October 11, 2014**, at the Mongolian Mission to the United Nations in New York City. Please submit your abstract for consideration on any historical or contemporary Mongolian religious topic or on the Mongolian diaspora community around the world to The Mongolia Society office **no later than August 31st**. The abstract must contain the paper title, be no more than 300 words and have contact information, including email address. If your abstract is accepted, you will have 15 minutes to present your paper. After

the paper presentations, there will be an open discussion with the audience. You must be a Mongolia Society member to present a paper. To join the Society, please either contact the Society office or go to our website www.mongoliasociety.org Please submit your abstract to Susie Drost, The Mongolia Society, 322 Goodbody Hall, Indiana University, 1011 E. 3rd Street, Bloomington, IN 47405-7005; Telephone and Fax number: [812-855-4078](tel:812-855-4078); E-Mail: monsoc@indiana.edu; Web: www.mongoliasociety.org

The Central Eurasian Studies Society (CESS) invites panel and paper proposals for the Fifteenth Annual CESS Conference, **October 23-26, 2014**, in New York City. The event will be held at Columbia University, hosted by the [Harriman Institute](http://www.harrimaninstitute.org). Registration starts Thursday evening, October 23. Panels begin Friday morning, October 24, and continue through mid-day on Sunday, October 26. Panel and paper topics relating to all aspects of humanities and social science scholarship on Central Eurasia are welcome. The geographic domain of Central Eurasia extends from the Black Sea and Iranian Plateau to Mongolia and Siberia, including the Caucasus, Crimea, Middle Volga, Afghanistan, Tibet, Xinjiang, and Central and Inner Asia. Practitioners and scholars in all humanities and social science disciplines with an interest in Central Eurasia are encouraged to participate. The program will feature approximately 70 panels. There will also be supplementary events and a keynote speaker. **To submit a pre-organized panel or individual paper proposal, please login to the CESS Website** atwww.centraleurasia.org.

The CESS is also in need of chairs and discussants for the upcoming CESS Annual Conference. Please send an email (secretariat@centraleurasia.org) if you would like to participate in one of the panels. <http://centraleurasia.org/conferences/2014-annual-conference/>

Research Fellowships, Scholarships and Grants

The Slavic-Eurasian Research Center of Hokkaido University apologizes for the delay of call for the Center's Foreign Visiting Fellow Program of the next academic year. The delay was caused by Hokkaido University's attempt to restructure the whole foreign visitors system, which affected the SRC foreign visitors system as well. Hokkaido University decided to start a new foreign visitors system and the SRC finds it possible to run its foreign visitor program within the new University's system. Therefore, we are pleased to announce the thirty-seventh round of the SRC's Foreign Visitors Fellowship Program for 2015-2016. Because of the delay of start, the SRC urges all potential applicants to prepare necessary documents intensively, by **the deadline on September 20, 2014**. Foreign specialists in studies of the former Soviet and East European countries, who are interested in spending several months at the SRC during the academic year of 2015-2016 (June to March), may submit applications for this program.

Applicants should choose their period of stay at the SRC: Within the period from June 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016, applicants will be able to name their preferred period longer than two months. After the selection process, the SRC reserves the right to ask nominated applicants to change the period of stay at the Center. Visit: <http://src->

h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/fvfp/index1.html

The Department of History at the **University of Pittsburgh** seeks applicants for a tenure-stream assistant professor, beginning fall 2015, pending budgetary approval. We invite applications from candidates working in the area of **modern Eurasian history** (18th–20th century), in particular the history of Russia and its Eurasian borderlands (Caucasus, Central Asia, East Asia). Individuals with interests in political, social, economic, and cultural history and who are able to conduct their research in both Russian and another Eurasian language are encouraged to apply. The successful candidate will teach introductory and upper-level undergraduate courses, normally including one writing seminar annually, and should be ready to participate in our dynamic program of graduate teaching and research, which is built around cross-regional thematic collaboration. We encourage applicants to demonstrate how their research and teaching will contribute to one or more of our transnational thematic fields: Atlantic History, Power and Inequality, Texts and Contexts, and World History (<http://www.history.pitt.edu/graduate/transnational-thematic-history.php>). The appointee will join a department committed to excellence in teaching as well as research in a university with great strength in international and area studies. Send letter of application, CV, a single well-selected journal article or book/dissertation chapter, and three letters of recommendation to Chair, Eurasian Search Committee, Department of History, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 15260. Applications must be postmarked by October 15, 2014. The University of Pittsburgh is an Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity employer. Women and members of minority groups under-represented in academia are especially encouraged to apply. Contact: Chair, Eurasian Search Committee; Department of History University of Pittsburgh; Pittsburgh, PA 15260. Visit: <http://www.history.pitt.edu/graduate/transnational-thematic-history.php>

Resources

Dissertation Reviews now includes a section on Inner and Central Asia: <http://dissertationreviews.org/archives/category/review/innercentralasia>

Asian Highlands Research Network [AH-RN] is a scholarly discussion group associated with the journal Asian Highlands Perspectives. This group focuses on the Tibetan Plateau and surrounding regions, including the Southeast Asian Massif, Himalayan Massif, the Extended Eastern Himalayas, the Mongolian Plateau, and other contiguous areas. We aim to promote exploration of cross-regional commonalities in history, culture, language, and socio-political context not served by current academic forums. AH-RN will be of interest to Sinologists, Tibetologists, Mongolists, and South and Southeast Asianists. We welcome group members to share information about events and publications related to the study of the Asian Highlands.

Services: timely and exclusive reviews of new books in the field; semi-regular roundup of new open access publications; announcements of new publications from Asian Highlands Perspectives.

AH-RN is a private group. To join, please contact: Gerald.Roche[at]ymail.com.

For more on Asian Highlands Perspectives:

<http://www.plateauculture.org/asian-highlands-perspectives>

<http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/asianhighlandsperspectives>

TheDukha Ethnoarchaeological Project. The primary goal of the DukhaEthnoarchaeological Project is the development of spatial theory of human behavior for application to archaeological problems. Visit the website at:<https://sites.google.com/site/dukhaethnoarch/> .

Asian Politics and History Association. Asian Politics and History Association is a non-political, non-profit academic society organized by scholars of Asian studies. Established in 2011 in Hong Kong, APHA currently has members from Asian-Pacific, European and North American countries. APHA supports the Journal of Asian Politics & History, an academic journal published twice a year beginning in October 2012. Visit the website at:<http://www.aphahk.org>.

Juniper: Online Database for Mongolian and Siberian Studies. This new French scientific tool is created at the initiative of the Centre for Mongolian and Siberian EPHE. It aims to bring together texts (native), images and multimedia on the peoples of Mongolia and Siberia. Several galleries of images are presented, including collections of old prints and a new series of old photographs of the Tuvan National Museum. Sheets populations gather essential information and links to documents relating to the peoples of Northern Asia. Subject files (kinship, Personalia, shamanism and soon others) allow you to browse the data according to thematic itineraries. The bibliography contains references to books and articles, some of which have been digitized and can be downloaded for researchers.

Visit: www.base-juniper.org.

Searchable Ornithological Research Archive (SORA). Recently the University of New Mexico Library officially announced the launch of the new, upgraded Searchable Ornithological Research Archive (SORA). The ornithological community is once again indebted to the UNM library for investing in the open access distribution of our historical ornithological literature. SORA has been moved to a new platform that will allow the resource to grow and expand over time. Many of the SORA journal titles have been updated with additional articles, and a new ornithological title has been added to the site. SORA now offers a number of new features for users and provides tools for journal publishers to update the SORA repository directly, with little or no technical support. All of these improvements have been needed for some time, and the UNM Libraries SORA team appreciates your collective patience; it has taken over a year to convert the entire SORA article holdings and prepare the new site for production. A number of ongoing improvements are still in the works for 2014, and as with any major system upgrade, there are a countless number of small details that still require attention. The new URL to the site is <http://sora.unm.edu>.

The Mongolist is a website dedicated to sharing knowledge about Mongolian politics, business, and society. The website is an ever growing resource built on data and information

collected on the Internet and in Mongolia. The aim of this website is to make understanding the complexity of the rapid social and economic change occurring in Mongolia not only accessible but also rewarding. The underlying principle guiding the development of all content on this website is evidence based investigation. Whenever possible, opinion, conjecture, and pure guesswork are replaced with facts, data, and extrapolation. And, when this is not possible, opinion, conjecture, and pure guesswork are advertised as such. Visit: <http://www.themongolist.com/>

Education About Asia (EAA) has become an essential resource for teachers dealing with Asian themes or topics; both in the broad trans-continental and regional contexts. Conceived as a publication for K-12 faculty, it has in fact proved to be extremely helpful for higher education faculty seeking insights on many subjects. The Asian Studies outreach activities of many colleges and universities have greatly benefited from EAA materials. Register (for free) to access approximately 900 articles from all thirty-seven back issues from 1996-2008: <http://www.asian-studies.org/EAA/index.htm> and subscribe to the Print Edition at <https://www.asian-studies.org/EAA-Subscriptions.htm>.

Inner Asian and Uralic National Resource Center: Indiana University's IAUNRC has updated its website to include not only its regular newsletters but podcasts, lecture videos, teaching resources and more: <http://www.iu.edu/~iaunrc/>.

Mongolia Focus (formerly "Mongolia Today"): "This blog is an attempt by three avid Mongolia watchers to share their observations about current developments in Mongolia." By Julian Dierkes and Dalaibulanii Byambajav, social scientists at the University of British Columbia, this blog mostly follows Mongolian politics and the mining sector. Visit: <http://blogs.ubc.ca/mongolia/>.

Other News and Events

Monthly Biobeers Talk: First Thursday of the month, Sweet Cafe (located behind the Information and Technological National Park and next to the Admon Printing Company, west of Internom Bookstore Building). People are requested to arrive after 6pm, in time for the talk to start at 6.30. Biobeers is a monthly gathering of government and NGO staff, biologists, researchers, and other professionals interested in conservation. Each month, Biobeers sponsors a half-hour presentation on a topic relevant to Mongolian conservation, followed by an informal gathering to discuss activities and issues of interest. Biobeers is an opportunity to find out what is happening in the field of conservation in Mongolia, talk informally to other researchers and peers in your field, and share information about issues critical to the environment and people of Mongolia. Biobeers is organised by the Zoological Society of London's Steppe Forward Programme and sponsored by the Wildlife Conservation Society. Join the Yahoo! Group Mongolbioweb for announcements.

Recent Publications

The Baron's Cloak: A History of the Russian Empire in War and Revolution

(Willard Sunderland) Cornell University Press. Baron Roman Fedorovich von Ungern-Sternberg (1885–1921) was a Baltic German aristocrat and tsarist military officer who fought against the Bolsheviks in Eastern Siberia during the Russian Civil War. From there he established himself as the de facto warlord of Outer Mongolia, the base for a fantastical plan to restore the Russian and Chinese empires, which then ended with his capture and execution by the Red Army as the war drew to a close. In *The Baron's Cloak*, Willard Sunderland tells the epic story of the Russian Empire's final decades through the arc of the Baron's life, which spanned the vast reaches of Eurasia. Tracking Ungern's movements, he transits through the Empire's multinational borderlands, where the country bumped up against three other doomed empires, the Habsburg, Ottoman, and Qing, and where the violence unleashed by war, revolution, and imperial collapse was particularly vicious. In compulsively readable prose that draws on wide-ranging research in multiple languages, Sunderland recreates Ungern's far-flung life and uses it to tell a compelling and original tale of imperial success and failure in a momentous time. Sunderland visited the many sites that shaped Ungern's experience, from Austria and Estonia to Mongolia and China, and these travels help give the book its arresting geographical feel. In the early chapters, where direct evidence of Ungern's activities is sparse, he evokes peoples and places as Ungern would have experienced them, carefully tracing the accumulation of influences that ultimately came together to propel the better documented, more notorious phase of his career. Recurring throughout Sunderland's magisterial account is a specific artifact: the Baron's cloak, an essential part of the cross-cultural uniform Ungern chose for himself by the time of his Mongolian campaign: an orangey-gold Mongolian kaftan embroidered in the Khalkha fashion yet outfitted with tsarist-style epaulettes on the shoulders. Like his cloak, Ungern was an imperial product. He lived across the Russian Empire, combined its contrasting cultures, fought its wars, and was molded by its greatest institutions and most volatile frontiers. By the time of his trial and execution mere months before the decree that created the USSR, he had become a profoundly contradictory figure, reflecting both the empire's potential as a multinational society and its ultimately irresolvable limitations.

Mongolia and the United States: A Diplomatic History (Jonathan Addleton) Former U.S. ambassador Jonathan Addleton provides a pioneering firsthand look at the remarkable growth of civil society and diplomatic ties between two countries separated by vast distances yet sharing a growing list of strategic interests and values. While maintaining positive ties with Russia and China, its powerful neighbors and still-dominant trading partners, Mongolia has sought "third neighbors" to help provide balance, including Canada, Japan, Korea, European nations, and the United States. For its part, the United States has supported Mongolia as an emerging democracy while fostering development and commercial relations. People-to-people ties have significantly expanded in recent years, as has a security partnership that supports Mongolia's emergence as a provider of military peacekeepers under the U.N. flag in Sierra Leone, Chad, Kosovo, Darfur, South Sudan, and elsewhere. While focusing on diplomatic relations over the last quarter century, Addleton also briefly describes American encounters with Mongolia over the past 150 years. More recently,

Mongolia has emerged as a magnet for foreign investment, making it one of the world's fastest growing economies.

Nomadismes d'Asie centrale et septentrionale (Nomadism in Central and North Asia) by Charles Stépanoff, Carole Ferret, Gaëlle Lacaze, Julien Thorez. For more information in French about this publication visit [the website of the publisher](#), or find a table of contents pdf [here](#).

Tragic Spirits: Shamanism, Memory and Gender in Contemporary Mongolia, (Manduhai Buyandelger). The collapse of socialism at the end of the twentieth century brought devastating changes to Mongolia. Economic shock therapy—an immediate liberalization of trade and privatization of publicly owned assets—quickly led to impoverishment, especially in rural parts of the country, where *Tragic Spirits* takes place. Following the travels of the nomadic Buryats, Manduhai Buyandelger tells a story not only of economic devastation but also a remarkable Buryat response to it—the revival of shamanic practices after decades of socialist suppression. Attributing their current misfortunes to returning ancestral spirits who are vengeful over being abandoned under socialism, the Buryats are now at once trying to appease their ancestors and recover the history of their people through shamanic practice. Thoroughly documenting this process, Buyandelger situates it as part of a global phenomenon, comparing the rise of shamanism in liberalized Mongolia to its similar rise in Africa and Indonesia. In doing so, she offers a sophisticated analysis of the way economics, politics, gender, and other factors influence the spirit world and the crucial workings of cultural memory.

In Pursuit of Early Mammals (Life of the Past), (Zofia Kielan-Jaworowska). *In Pursuit of Early Mammals* presents the history of the mammals that lived during the Mesozoic era, the time when dinosaurs ruled the Earth, and describes their origins, anatomy, systematics, paleobiology, and distribution. It also tells the story of the author, a world-renowned specialist on these animals, and the other prominent paleontologists who have studied them. Zofia Kielan-Jaworowska was the first woman to lead large-scale paleontological expeditions, including eight to the Gobi Desert in Mongolia, which brought back important collections of dinosaur, early mammal, and other fossils. She shares the difficulties and pleasures encountered in finding rare fossils and describes the changing views on early mammals made possible by these discoveries. Between 1963 and 1971, Kielan-Jaworowska organized eight paleontological expeditions to the Gobi Desert in Mongolia. These expeditions assembled an impressive collection of dinosaurs and Cretaceous mammals. Her research has focused on the study of the detailed structure of the brain and musculature of early mammals and their evolutionary relationships.

A Monastery in Time: The Making of Mongolian Buddhism, by Caroline Humphrey and Hurelbaatar Ujeed. (University of Chicago Press). *A Monastery in Time* is the first book to describe the life of a Mongolian Buddhist monastery—the Mergen Monastery in Inner Mongolia—from inside its walls. From the Qing occupation of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries through the Cultural Revolution, Caroline Humphrey and Hurelbaatar Ujeed tell a story of religious formation, suppression, and survival over a history that spans three

centuries. Often overlooked in Buddhist studies, Mongolian Buddhism is an impressively self-sustaining tradition whose founding lama, the Third MergenGegen, transformed Tibetan Buddhism into an authentic counterpart using the Mongolian language. Drawing on fifteen years of fieldwork, Humphrey and Ujeed show how lamas have struggled to keep MergenGegen's vision alive through tremendous political upheaval, and how such upheaval has inextricably fastened politics to religion for many of today's practicing monks. Exploring the various ways Mongolian Buddhists have attempted to link the past, present, and future, Humphrey and Ujeed offer a compelling study of the interplay between the individual and the state, tradition and history.

Fossil Mammals of Asia: Neogene Biostratigraphy and Chronology, by Xiaoming Wang, Lawrence J. Flynn, Mikael Fortelius. (Columbia University Press). *Fossil Mammals of Asia*, edited by and with contributions from world-renowned scholars, is the first major work devoted to the late Cenozoic (Neogene) mammalian biostratigraphy and geochronology of Asia. This volume employs cutting-edge biostratigraphic and geochemical dating methods to map the emergence of mammals across the continent. Written by specialists working in a variety of Asian regions, it uses data from many basins with spectacular fossil records to establish a groundbreaking geochronological framework for the evolution of land mammals. Asia's violent tectonic history has resulted in some of the world's most varied topography, and its high mountain ranges and intense monsoon climates have spawned widely diverse environments over time. These geologic conditions profoundly influenced the evolution of Asian mammals and their migration into Europe, Africa, and North America. Focusing on amazing new fossil finds that have redefined Asia's role in mammalian evolution, this volume synthesizes information from a range of field studies on Asian mammals and biostratigraphy, helping to trace the histories and movements of extinct and extant mammals from various major groups and all northern continents, and providing geologists with a richer understanding of a variety of Asian terrains.

LIVE FROM UB: A Documentary on Modern Mongolian Rock, by Lauren Knapp (Fulbright-mtvU Fellow 2012). post-production is currently underway Lauren Knapp's documentary film LIVE FROM UB. She spent ten months in Mongolia researching the rock music scene, its history, and how the new generation of musicians is fusing traditional music and themes with modern styles to create something that is unique to both their generation and Mongolia. Lauren was first interested to learn how the first generation of Mongolians to grow up in a democracy was expressing themselves through music. She found that the trajectory of Mongolian rock through, emulates the path Mongolia has taken as a nation over the past three decades. You can read more about the film, her research, and watch exclusive videos on the film website (www.livefromub.com).

Does Everyone Want Democracy? : Insights from Mongolia, by Paula Sabloff. (Left Coast Press). Do all people desire democracy? For at least a century, the idea that democracy is a universal good has been an article of faith for American policy makers. Paula Sabloff challenges this conventional wisdom about who wants democracy and why. Arguing that certain universal human aspirations exist, she shows how local realities are highly particularistic and explains that culture, history, and values are critical to the study of political

systems. Her fascinating study of Mongolia —feudal until it became the first country to follow Russia into communism and now struggling with post-socialist democratization—is a model for investigating how everyday people around the world actually think about and implement democracy on their own terms.

A History of Land Use in Mongolia: The Thirteenth Century to the Present, by Elizabeth Endicott (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012). *A History of Land Use in Mongolia* examines conceptual and practical issues of land use during eight centuries of Mongolian history. The book analyzes how Mongolia's pastoral nomadic herding population historically has dealt with secular and religious forms of authority in the ongoing struggle for control over pastureland and water resources. The author's findings derive from a number of field trips to the Mongolian countryside as well as a diverse array of written sources including Russian geographic treatises, historical texts, Mongolian press accounts, and Western economic analyses of the present day herding sector.

A Kazakh Teacher's Story: Surviving the Silent Steppe, by Mukhamet Shayakhmetov. (Stacey International, 2013). This book begins where 'The Silent Steppe' left off. It is early 1945, and the author, Mukhamet, still recuperating from serious war injuries, has traveled thousands of kilometers back to his home village in the eastern Kazakh steppe. As he encounters scenes of desperate poverty, he quickly realizes the immense sacrifices made by local people, and particularly women, while the able-bodied men were away fighting. Mukhamet endeavors to pick up the pieces of his pre-war life, working hard to support his extended family, marrying, continuing his education, and eventually embarking on a life in teaching dedicated to giving young people the best education possible. Through his insightful portraits of local party bosses, district officials and bureaucrats, and tales of the vicissitudes of daily life, a broader, more personal picture emerges of life under Stalin, and of his pervading shadow decades on. The author's moral integrity, stoicism and profound respect for the struggles of the common people stand out in this memoir of a life of self-effacing dedication.

Energy Access, Poverty, and Development: The Governance of Small-Scale Renewable Energy in Developing Asia (Ashgate Studies in Environmental Policy and Practice) by Benjamin K. Sovacool and Ira Martina Drupady. (Ashgate Pub Co, 2012). This book showcases how small-scale renewable energy technologies such as solar panels, cook stoves, biogas digesters, microhydro units, and wind turbines are helping Asia respond to a daunting set of energy governance challenges. Using extensive original research this book offers a compendium of the most interesting renewable energy case studies over the last ten years from one of the most diverse regions in the world. Through an in-depth exploration of case studies in Bangladesh, China, India, Laos, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, and Sri Lanka, the authors highlight the applicability of different approaches and technologies and illuminates how household and commercial innovations occur (or fail to occur) within particular energy governance regimes. It also, uniquely, explores successful case studies alongside failures or "worst practice" examples that are often just as revealing as those that met their targets. Based on these successes and failures, the book presents twelve salient lessons for policymakers and practitioners wishing

to expand energy access and raise standards of living in some of the world's poorest communities. It also develops an innovative framework consisting of 42 distinct factors that explain why some energy development interventions accomplish all of their goals while others languish to achieve any.

The History of Central Asia: The Age of the Steppe Warriors (Complete Illustrated History 1) by Christoph Baumer. (I. B. Tauris, 2012). The epic plains and arid deserts of Central Asia have witnessed some of the greatest migrations, as well as many of the most transformative developments, in the history of civilization. Christoph Baumer's ambitious four-volume treatment of the region charts the 3000-year drama of Scythians and Sarmatians; Soviets and transcontinental Silk Roads; trade routes and the transmission of ideas across the steppes; and the breathless and brutal conquests of Alexander the Great and Chinghis Khan. Masterfully interweaving the stories of individuals and peoples, the author's engaging prose is richly augmented throughout by color photographs taken on his own travels. For all the complexity of the history, Dr. Baumer, a noted authority on Central Asia, never loses sight of the sweeping grandeur of its overall setting. Volume 1 focuses on the geography of the area now occupied by present-day Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, northern Afghanistan, western and central Mongolia and parts of southern Russia and northern China. Discussing the changing climates of the Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Ages, the author explores subjects as diverse as glacial retreat; the invention of the wheel; the legendary Cimmerians and Amazons; Hellenism and Zoroastrianism; and the Oxus Treasure. Future volumes will explore the later historical periods of the region.

The Short Essays of the Ming and Qing Dynasties, by Wang Hong and Zhang Shunsheng. (Paths International Ltd., 2013). The late Ming Dynasty (1572-1644) and the early Qing Dynasty (1644-1722) saw the true splendour of short essays in China. No other period in the history of short essays in ancient China can match them in the quality and number of works, literary schools, or the variety of styles. Compared with those written before or after, the short essays in these periods were richer in the choice of topics, and freer in form, focusing not only on real social life, but also on worldly experience and life's little delights. They are a rich and vital part of China's literary and cultural heritage. The 127 short essays in this wonderful book are considered to be the very best examples from an era of China's history that's synonymous with beautifully crafted short essays. 82 essays are from the Ming Dynasty and 45 essays are from the Qing Dynasty, written by more than a hundred different Chinese authors from both dynasties. These are arranged in the order of the authors' birth dates and tenderly translated into English by leading Chinese translators Wang Hong and Zhang Shunsheng, who have faithfully represented the styles and literary achievements made by the featured essayists. It's a wonderful book that will delight fans of classic Chinese short essays, as well as providing the perfect introduction to readers new to the genre.