

BOOK REVIEWS

Zhongguo gudai zhuzi (Chinese Ancient Beads).

Zhu Xiaoli. Guangxi Fine Arts Publishing House, 9 Wangyuan Road, Nanning, Guangxi 530022, China. 2010. 330 pp., 300+ color and B&W figs., fold-out bead timeline. ISBN: 978-7-80746-964-3. 150 Chinese yuan (available for \$50.00 including shipping within the continental U.S. from Leekan Designs: paddy@leekan.com) (paper cover).

In Chinese, with an English table of contents (pp. 325-329), *Chinese Ancient Beads* has received rave reviews in China where it is apparently heralded as the Chinese counterpart to Lois Dubin's *The History of Beads from 30,000 B.C. to the Present* (Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York, 1987). Zhu reportedly spent nearly a decade researching her book, earning a Ph.D. in the process. True to its ostensible prototype, *Chinese Ancient Beads* ends with a fold-out color timeline extending to 8 pages that presents dozens of Chinese beads, necklaces, earrings, and other ornaments dating from 16,000 B.C. to A.D. 1911. As many know, Dubin originated the bead timeline concept.

The links to Dubin 1987 do not end there. Regrettably, they underscore global differences in scholarly practices and publishing standards. At least four images originally commissioned by Dubin for use in her book appear in *Chinese Ancient Beads*: Figure 172 (cf. Dubin Figures 10-11, a beaded cloak in the collection of the University Museum, Philadelphia, PA); Figure 173 (cf. Dubin Figure 29 of double-spiral beads in the collection of Henry Anavian); Figure 254 (cf. Dubin Figure 214, a Tibetan prayer box and shoulder ornament in the collection of Ivory Freidus); and Figure 271 (cf. Dubin Figure 69, a Viking-period necklace in the collection of the Trondheim Royal Norwegian Scientific Society Museum). Dubin's 1987 book appears to be credited only once, in the caption for Zhu's Figure 254.

According to Dubin, in at least one (Figure 173) and possibly all four cases, reproduction rights were not obtained from the owners of the objects or the photographer, which is to say, according to international copyright regulations established by the Berne Convention, the rights were violated. Dubin finds the probable unauthorized use of the images from the museums and the definitely unauthorized use of the Anavian collection image disturbing (Dubin

2013: pers. comm.). There are several other images in *Chinese Ancient Beads* that, one suspects, may also derive from English-language publications.

It should be noted that since China is not a signatory to the Berne Convention, from the Chinese perspective, Zhu Xiaoli has done no wrong. Nor is she alone. China's apparent lack of concern for what much of the rest of the world identifies as intellectual property has sparked a debate that will likely continue for some time. In fact, as Nancy Berliner recently observed, "more and more scholars are noticing that their research, originally published in English, has been appearing in Chinese without attribution or credit" ("Lin, Mo, Fang," *Orientalism* 43 [Nov./Dec. 2012]: 126).

There are dozens of images in *Chinese Ancient Beads* which apparently originate in China. The image quality is uneven – some images look like scans – but the images are memorable for the broad assortment of ancient beads and beaded body ornaments they display. Readers may be unfamiliar with many of them as they were unearthed from archaeological contexts and typically first published in Chinese excavation reports and other sources. Beads from other countries are also occasionally depicted.

There are 15 chapters in *Chinese Ancient Beads*:

Chapter 1: About Beads

Chapter 2: (5000-3500 B.C.) – Beads in Prehistoric Village Culture

Chapter 3: (3500-1500 B.C.) – Beads in Prehistoric Rural Settlement Culture

Chapter 4: (1800-1000 B.C.) – Beads of the Xia and Shang Dynasties

Chapter 5: (1000-700 B.C.) – Aristocratic Adornment of the Western Zhou Dynasty

Chapter 6: (700-200 B.C.) – Beads of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods

Chapter 7: (260 B.C. - A.D. 220) – Beads of the Han Dynasty

Chapter 8: (A.D. 220-589) – Beads of the Wei and Jin and Southern and Northern Dynasties

Chapter 9: (A.D. 581-907) – Beads of the Sui and Tang Dynasties

Chapter 10: (A.D. 960-1234) – Beads of the Song and Liao Dynasties

Chapter 11: (A.D. 1206-1244) – Beads of the Yuan and Ming Dynasties

Chapter 12: (A.D. 1616-1911) – Beads of the Qing Dynasty

Chapter 13: Additional Discussion of Questions Relating to Beads

Chapter 14: Tibetan Beads

Chapter 15: Well-Known Ancient Beads of Other Civilizations

Bead scholars who do not read Mandarin will be able to evaluate the accuracy of the information provided in these chapters only after they have been translated into English or other languages and checked against Chinese and other bead scholarship. For the moment, on the basis of unpublished English translations of two sub-chapters, we may conclude that there is much of value in Zhu's text, though it falls short of perfection.

The sub-chapter "Glass Beads of Yongning Temple in Luoyang" (pp. 200-202, Chapter 8) concerns the approximately 150,000 drawn glass beads dating to A.D. 534 unearthed at the Yongning Temple in Luoyang, Henan. The information provided is accurate until Zhu ventures the problematic assertion that the beads were netted together in a technique akin to that used by the ancient Egyptians to unite faience beads into mummy ornaments. There is no evidence for such a claim. What 6th-century Chinese netted beadwork might have looked like, let alone that it proceeded two beads at a time in a technique known as peyote stitch to many English-speaking beadworkers, has not been established, as far as I know. Early Chinese beadnetting techniques may well follow a different logic. Color images of the Yongning Temple bead finds (Figure 182) and of an ancient Egyptian mummy bead ornament (Figure 183) add much to the presentation.

The sub-chapter "Bead Curtains and *Liuli* Techniques of the Song" (pp. 233-234, Chapter 10) discusses Song dynasty (960-1279) glass bead curtains as they are referenced largely in Song Dynasty poems. Such a literary perspective is helpful as far as it goes, but much is missing. Bead curtains existed in Chinese textual and material culture long before and after the Song dynasty, a fact Zhu does not mention. Further, they were made of other materials besides glass and used in a wide variety of contexts. No images of bead curtains accompany the text – another disappointing omission. Zhu says little in this sub-chapter about *liuli* production techniques (*liuli* is a common Chinese term for glass).

Chinese Ancient Beads concludes with six appendices: 1) Distribution and Chronicle of Beads of the Prehistoric Period, 2) Chinese Dynasty Chronicle and Beads Variety, 3) Chinese Ancient Literature Related to Beads and Personal Adornment, 4) Bibliography (which includes approximately 55 Chinese publications as well as several English-language ones), 5) Illustration of Chinese Ancient Beads (the timeline), and 6) English Table of Contents.

Appendix 5 presents Zhu's timeline of Chinese beads, which runs from 16,000 B.C. to A.D. 1911. The timeline is structured by the dates of Chinese dynasties, whose lengths vary considerably. While Chinese readers may take such a periodicity for granted, Western readers may find it confusing. In Zhu's timeline it is difficult to draw a line up from a bead to find the exact date of its origin. Moreover, Zhu sometimes grants the beads of one dynasty a disproportionate amount of space, even as beads of other dynasties receive comparatively less (Robert K. Liu 2013: pers. comm.). The disparity is particularly noticeable with respect to beads of the Zhou (ca. 1046-221 B.C.) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties. Thus, while beads dating to the 825 years of the Zhou dynasty occupy a generous 56 cm on the timeline, beads from the 267 years of the Qing receive a scant 6 cm. In sum, although the timeline is visually compelling and especially strong on ancient Chinese beads, it should not be regarded as definitive for all dynasties.

Note: Robert K. Liu (2013: pers. comm.) reports that a second, revised edition of *Chinese Ancient Beads* has been published. To what extent it differs from the first edition remains to be seen.

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Journal: Borneo International Beads Conference 2013.

Heidi Munan and Kay Margaret Lyons (eds.). Craithub, No. 96 Main Bazaar, First Floor, 93000 Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia. 2013. i-vi + 206 pp., 59 color figs., 9 B&W figs. \$50.00 postpaid (paper cover). To order, contact craithub@gmail.com.

This volume contains the ten papers presented at the third Borneo International Beads Conference which was held in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia, in October of 2013. While the bulk of the articles deal with Asian beads and beadwork, there are also two that deal with African material and another that surveys the various organic materials that have been used to produce beads in various parts of the world.