

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 For the moment, on the basis of unpublished English translations of two sub-chapters, we may conclude that there is much of value in Zhu's text, though it falls short of perfection.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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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.

“Conserving Ancient Beads Within Shifting Contexts: A Case Study among the Kelabit of Sarawak,” by Poline Bala, examines why ancient beads play important roles in the social life of the Kelabit of the highlands of Borneo and discusses efforts to preserve the value of such beads in contemporary Kelabit society.

“Exploring the Cultural Meanings Conveyed by the Paiwanese Beads,” by Kathy Chen Huei Yun, explores the way in which the visual patterns on the glass beads utilized by the indigenous Paiwanese peoples of Taiwan encode meanings.

“Jewellery in Action – Examples from East Africa,” by Martina Dempf, discusses the use of beads as adornment in East Africa with specific examples from the Toposa of the Southern Sudan, the Turkana of Kenya, and the Rashaida of Eritrea.

“The Story of Beads: Ghana/Africa,” by Akwele Suma Glory, presents a brief survey of a very complex subject, glass beads and beadmaking in Ghana, West Africa.

“20th-Century Chinese Glass Bead Curtains,” by Valerie Hector, begins with a look at the historical evidence for bead curtains in Imperial China followed by a discussion of 20th-century curtain iconography and the beads that comprise the curtains.

“Ancient and Modern Beads of Korea,” by Elaine Kim, introduces the reader to the World Jewellery Museum established in Seoul in 2004 by Lee Kang-won, followed by a lengthy discussion of the ancient and modern bead culture of Korea, as well as beads made by contemporary Korean artists and jewellery designers.

“An Overview of Beads in the Sabah Museum,” by Joanna Datuk Kitingan and Su Chin Sidih, consists only of an abstract and some images of Tenggara and Rungus individuals wearing beads.

“Borneo Beads in Literature,” by Heidi Munan, discusses publications that deal with the beads of Borneo and includes a bibliography of such publications as well as a list of Internet sources.

“Opulence in Organic Bead Jewellery,” by Stefany Tomalin, presents an overview of the various organic materials that have been used to produce beads around the world.

“Discovery and Research of Various Types of Beads in Bujang Valley, Kedah,” by Zuliskandar Ramli, discusses the glass beads of the early centuries A.D. excavated from sites in the Bujang Valley of Peninsular Malaysia. Most of these appear to be Indo-Pacific beads of local manufacture but there are also polychrome beads which appear to be imports.

As in the past, this volume was printed in time to be distributed at the conference, a commendable practice. Unfortunately, to meet the deadline, editing suffered. For example, in Plate XIV, which depicts a woman with a beaded headpiece, the caption incompletely reads, “Plate XIV: Girl with bead.” In the case of Valerie Hector’s article, no attempt was made to change her figure references in text to the appropriate plate number. Instead, the captions read, for example, “Plate XXII: Fig. 1 striped curtain.”

In Stefany Tomalin’s article, there are problems with some of the headings. For example, the heading “Fossils as Beads” (p. 159) looks to be a main section heading but should be the same as the other headings on the page. Further along, the sub-section “Operculum” (p. 161) also incorporates sea urchins, stone beads, and shell slices! In a number of instances, what appear to be the speaker’s personal notes have been included (e.g., pp. 164, 165, 175).

Despite these minor shortcomings, bead researchers and collectors will find this volume a good source for information on the beads and beadwork of various Asian and African cultures, past and present.

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Glass Beads: Selections from The Corning Museum of Glass.

Adrienne V. Gennett. The Corning Museum of Glass, One Museum Way, Corning, NY, 14830-2253. 2013. 88 pp., 55 color figs. ISBN-13: 978-0-87290-192-6. \$19.99 (paper).

This beautifully produced book is a companion to the exhibition “Life on a String: 35 Centuries of the Glass Bead” (May 18, 2013 to January 5, 2014) at The Corning Museum of Glass, Corning, NY. The volume presents full-color photographs of 50 of the finest items from the exhibit along with information regarding their manufacture, history, and cultural context. The images can also be found on the museum’s website (www.cmog.org), sometimes with a bit more descriptive material, but are larger in the print version and for this reason alone, the book is worthwhile. A visitor to the exhibition mentioned the difficulty of seeing the items in the dim light needed to conserve the integrity of the items. In the book they are large, well lit, and clear.