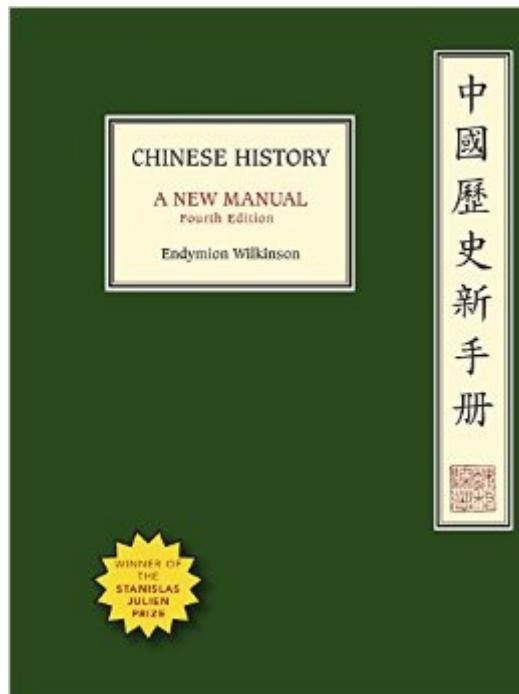


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Chinese History: A New Manual, Fourth Edition (Harvard-Yenching Institute Monograph Series)



Synopsis

Endymion Wilkinson's bestselling manual of Chinese history has long been an indispensable guide to all those interested in the civilization and history of China. The hugely enlarged third edition won the Stanislas Julien Prize for 2014. In the fourth edition the entire work has been corrected and updated and many sections rewritten. Fifteen years in the making, Chinese History introduces students to different types of transmitted, excavated, and artifactual sources from prehistory to the twenty-first century. It also examines the context in which the sources were produced, preserved, and received, the problems of research and interpretation associated with them, and the best, most up-to-date secondary works. Because history has always played a central role in Chinese politics and culture, special attention is devoted to the strengths and weaknesses of Chinese historiography. Chinese History comprises fourteen book-length parts subdivided into a total of seventy-six chapters: Books 1-9 cover Language; People; Geography and the Environment; Governing and Educating; Ideas and Beliefs, Literature, and the Fine Arts; Agriculture, Food, and Drink; Technology and Science; Trade; and Historiography. Books 10-13 present primary and secondary sources chronologically by period. Book 14 is on historical bibliography. Electronic resources are covered throughout.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

For those students of China who may ask "Where does one start to research Chinese history?" •

Well, you can start with this book, and for any myriad of reasons, such as the 9,800 primary, secondary, reference works, journals, and databases that are introduced in this latest and most up-to-date version of Endymion Wilkinson's Chinese History: A New Manual (4th Edition). Mind you, this is all at once a massive, readable, and fascinating guide to both ancient and modern Sinology. For any student of China (and at every level), Chinese History: A New Manual is not only a masterful scholarly endeavor, it is also (happily) a real page turner indeed, with captivating insights on every page. And it is very much a unique resource for further inquiry, which is one of its main stated purposes. Including the indexes, which are most helpfully complete and detailed, this new version is 1,135 pages in length, in two columnar font. Given the (quite justified) concerns regarding costs of higher education and textbooks in general, readers will be very gratified that all of this surveyed knowledge and extended commentary can be obtained at an extraordinarily reasonable price.

As the selection of the book for the Prix Stanislas Julien indicates, this is one of the masterpieces of its field. The sheer amount of material, in the excruciating detail in which it is offered, is just about incomprehensible. It offers (and the author's estimate of its equivalent in regular monographs is on the modest side) a library's worth of studies of topics that are fundamental to the study of Chinese history, as for instance about the handling of names, of time statements and measures, and of the documentation in historiography. It will be difficult to represent all that material in digital form, and people who commit to this, apparently the last, printed version will have a handy starting point for their electronic searches. That said, to call this massive work, for which one cannot congratulate the author enough, a handbook, is taking it a bit far, and for some a "stripped down" version excluding some uneven accretions of minute detail would be helpful (one senses a need for a guide to the manual). In no way, though, should this note detract from the sheer magnitude of its achievement.

This is an immensely useful reference for Sinologists and for anyone who has to deal with Chinese texts, history, culture, etc., even if only sporadically. It's most certainly worth having in your personal library, as it's quite affordable, especially in the light of the Gargantuan size of its most recent incarnation.

It is indeed a massive, comprehensive, informative text--BUT the print is not very dark so that the contrast with the white page makes reading a bit difficult and in particular the Chinese characters are small making multi-stroke characters almost impossible to read without a magnifier.

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