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REVIEWS OF BOOKS

Far East

MONGOLIAN—ENGLISH DICTIONARY. Compiled by M. HALTOD, J. G. HANGIN, and S. KASSATKIN, with F. G. LESSING as General Editor. pp. xvii + 1217. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1960. Obtainable from Cambridge University Press, £7 8s.

The introduction to this Dictionary is so ingenuous and warm-hearted that it seems almost ungracious to speak harshly of it, but in fact it is open to serious criticism. No-one could have anything but sympathy for authors reduced by the harsh realities of American economics to publishing a Mongolian dictionary in facsimile typescript, but surely a typewriter could have been found with the characters for *ö* and *ü*. For the first a Scandinavian *ø* is acceptable, if eccentric, but the lack of the second started a chain reaction. *Y* had to be used for this sound, which involved using *j* for the palatal semi-vowel, which involved using *ʒ* for the voiced denti-palatal affricate, which involved using underlined *ʒ* for the voiced palatal sibilant (fortunately non-existent in Mongolian except in loan words). There is a cryptic statement in the introduction that "for technical reasons" *x* was substituted for the usual *g*, but it is difficult to see what they could have been. The reader is given no guide to the phonetic values of the Roman and Cyrillic letters used to transcribe Mongolian and is left to find out what such letters as underlined *g*, *k*, and *ʒ* represent.

The authors seem never to have framed a clear definition of "Mongolian" and this has led to an equal lack of clarity in their objective. The introduction states: "The dictionary has been compiled from sources of the following type: dictionaries in Russian, Japanese, Chinese, French, German, and English; printed texts, chiefly historical, such as the *Altan Tobci* and *Erdeni jin Tobci* (Sayan Secen); such modern publications as textbooks, newspapers, and magazines. Excluding the strictly archaic language, the dictionary contains the vocabulary of all periods from 1940, including the terminology developed since sovietization." The claim that the work contains the vocabulary of "all periods from 1940 on" seems modest when compared with the impressive list of authorities on which it is based. From 1940 on there have in fact been, apart from the other languages or dialects like Buriat, Kalmuk, and Mongor, two "official" Mongolian languages, which are in effect the same Khalkha dialect, that of the Mongolian People's Republic written as it is pronounced in a phonetic Cyrillic alphabet, and that of Inner Mongolia pronounced the same but written in Chinggis Khan's old official alphabet with all the absurd spelling conventions which produce such monstrosities as

Dr. Bawden's favourite word, "mule" *layusa*, which as pointed out in this dictionary under the alternative form *luusa* is merely the Chinese word *lo-tzũ* in an unrealistic spelling. Clearly this is more than a dictionary of these languages (or this language) and is intended to cover "Classical" Mongolian as well. It is the Mongolian equivalent of a dictionary of English from Chaucer to the *Daily Worker* but, except in the appendix of additional words, without the essential indication of the provenance of each word, so that except in such obvious cases as *kolonicalayci*, "coloniser," it is impossible to discover whether a particular word is Classical or modern or both.

So far as the book is a dictionary of Classical Mongolian it suffers from the disadvantage that its alphabetical order is that of a highly idiosyncratic Roman alphabet and not of the old official alphabet, although every word, old or new, is faithfully transcribed in the latter and there is an appendix giving the Romanization of over 7,400 ambiguous words. As a dictionary of the language of the Mongolian People's Republic it suffers from the disadvantage that every word must first be looked up in the reverse index containing some 17,500 words in order to locate the relevant entry. It is probably true that if one can make the necessary encypherment correctly one can with this dictionary come nearer than ever before to the ideal of finding any word one wants of either language, and the appendix containing additional Buddhist technical terms, on which Prof. Lessing is an acknowledged expert, will be invaluable in dealing with Classical Buddhist texts, but it is a great pity that both these languages had to be dealt with in a single comprehensive volume without any indication which was which.

GERARD CLAUSON.

RURAL CHINA: Imperial Control in the Nineteenth Century. By KUNG-CHUAN HSIAO. pp. xiv, 783, bibliography, index. University of Washington Press, Seattle, Washington, 1960. \$9.75.

Most European observers of nineteenth century China were convinced that a very large measure of provincial and local autonomy existed. Says E. H. Parker, for example :

So long as the provincial government sends its Peking supplies, administers a reasonable sop to its clamorous provincial duns, quells incipient insurrections, gives employment to the army of "expectants", staves off foreign demands, avoids "rows" of all kinds, and, in a word, keeps up a decent external surface of respectability, no questions are asked; all reports and promotions are passed; the Viceroy and his colleagues "enjoy happiness", and everybody makes his pile.

He was, however, writing of the post-Taiping period, when the control by the Throne was greatly weakened. Powerful personalities (whose power was dependent on their private armies) were now the decisive