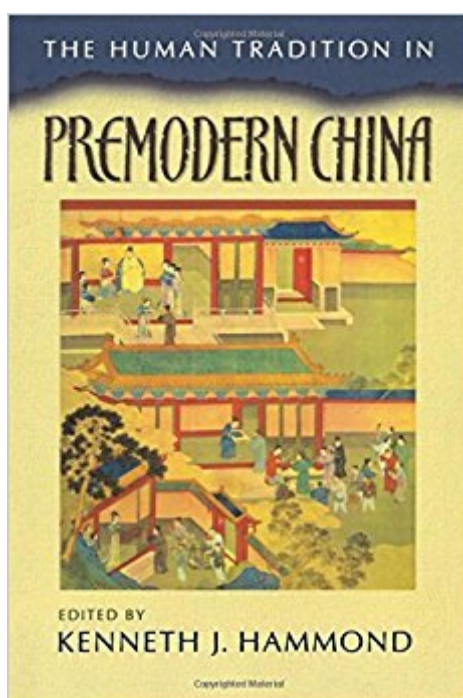


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The Human Tradition In Premodern China (The Human Tradition Around The World Series)



Synopsis

The Human Tradition in Premodern China is a collection of biographical essays revealing the variety and complexity of human experience in China from the earliest historical times to the dawn of the modern age. China is a vast country with a long history, and one which is by itself as complex as the history of Europe. This broad expanse of time and space in Chinese history has largely been approached in terms of narrative political and cultural history in most books. The reigns of emperors and the thoughts of the great masters such as Confucius or Laozi have been the principal focus. Yet the history of the Chinese, as with any great people, is built up from the lives of individuals, families, groups, and movements. By presenting life stories of individuals ranging from ancient court diviners to late imperial merchants to women in various periods, this engaging anthology highlights aspects of Chinese social, political and intellectual history not usually addressed. Additionally, The Human Tradition in Premodern China broadens the common image and understanding of society based on the dominant elite male discourse. Rich in new perspective and new scholarship, The Human Tradition in Premodern China is an ideal introduction to Chinese history, East Asian history, and world history.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A welcome addition to our sources for the study of Chinese history, this book explores the diversity and complexity of life in China over a 2,700-year period and puts a human face on the processes and conflict of history. The subjects are well-chosen and unusually balanced with regard to class,

gender, and occupation and include central as well as marginal figures. This will make a fine textbook and will also be a pleasure to read. (Suzanne Cahill) In this unique presentation of the Chinese past, ten distinguished younger historians turn their hand to biography and reconstruct the lives of one woman and nine men dispersed across almost three millennia of recorded history. Each biography is wonderfully different from the next, both in content and in style. Place them side by side and they become a mural on which individuals, facing a world never of their own making, have been able to fashion lives of meaning. (Timothy Brook) Professor Kenneth Hammond has assembled a marvelous kaleidoscope of Chinese elite personalities of the imperial period in *The Human Tradition in Premodern China*. These vivid essays, by a talented group of young experts, bring to life the variety of experiences to be found in China's great historical storehouse of humanity. Written and edited at a consistently high scholarly standard, this collection will introduce college students as well as general readers to some unforgettable personages. (Philip A. Kuhn)

Kenneth J. Hammond is associate professor of history at New Mexico State University.

I had to buy this book for my History of China I class, and the professor clearly only liked this book because the author was his student, and she must have listed him as some major influence on her love of Chinese history. Incidentally, he is about as disorganized feeling as this book. Maybe it's because I'm a double major and minor in hard sciences, but I don't feel like I came away with a coherent view of the history. It wasn't linear. It jumped from one cultural point or story to another, unrelated one, and then to a bit of actual history (the way I think of it, anyway, as in: Emperor A did this and had these policies, then this group reacted and took over, etc.). Then again, I guess the title is "The HUMAN Tradition," so the focus was less on learning political history and more on cultural history or something of that nature. You're probably buying this as a textbook anyway and don't have a choice, so I'm really just warning you. If you're not being tested on this material, I'm sure it sucks much less.

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