

Sometimes the Great Wall itself—whatever it actually is—is obscured in this rich and evocative tapestry. Perhaps the most obvious omission in this narrative is the remodeling of Beijing in the late 1950s. It is hardly a coincidence that the same régime that set out to restore the Ming Great Wall to its former glory in 1957 was also the regime that presided over the physical destruction of most of China's ancient city walls, including the majestic Beijing City Wall, which was built by the Yongle Emperor, the very same emperor who decided to reinforce the Great Wall in the early fifteenth century. Indeed, it seems to this reviewer that the recreation of the Ming Great Wall and the destruction of the Ming Beijing City Wall were closely linked in a vision to recreate Chinese culture. One cannot but feel that the book lost an opportunity to discuss this interface of cultural and physical history of China.

None of this detracts from the general value of the book and Rojas has produced a well-written, entertaining and accessible book about the Great Wall, where both old China hands and first-time visitors to the People's Republic will find many things to ponder upon.

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PHOENIX: The Life of Norman Bethune By *Roderick Stewart and Sharon Stewart*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2011. xiii, 479 pp. (Maps, B&W photos, illus.) US\$39.95, cloth. ISBN 978-0-773-53819-1.

Since the 1952 publication of Ted Allen and Sidney Gordon's *The Scalpel, the Sword*, biographies of Norman Bethune have been almost a cottage industry in Canada. Roderick Stewart, who published two previous books on Bethune, has spent more than 30 years researching the life of Norman Bethune. With *Phoenix* he and Sharon Stewart have produced the *magnum opus*, a definitive, detailed and thoroughly researched study. They tell the well-known story of Bethune's rise to prominence as a brilliant Montreal surgeon, punctuated by his sudden conversion to and membership in the Canadian Communist Party in 1935. Impetuous and eager to win revolutionary fame, he went to Spain in 1937 to serve as a partisan doctor in the Spanish Civil War. But the fame he sought came in China as a revolutionary martyr. Bethune's heroic exploits between 1938-39 as a surgeon with the guerilla forces of the 8th Route Army during the early years of the Anti-Japanese War are today legendary and well remembered, especially in China. Bethune died tragically, contracting gangrene from a wound while performing operations under incredibly primitive conditions in the mountains near Shijiazhuang in 1939.

In *Phoenix* the Bethune story is told with more depth, context and subtlety than in previous works. The Stewarts' pursuit of primary sources

in the form of personal correspondence, oral interviews and institutional records is exhaustive. They take great pains to develop Bethune as a flesh and blood personality. Given his impetuosity, impatience and ego, he was not an easy man to like. The authors are relentless in digging up the facts of his private life—including a broken marriage and string of affairs—before he set off for Spain and China. Bethune had a serious drinking problem and was something of a misogynist. He was not a pleasant man. At the same time, he radiated charisma that drew people to him. He could attract support by overwhelming colleagues and acquaintances with the intensity and sincerity of his dedication to medical service for the poor and downtrodden. Bethune usually got his way, despite the prickly personality and an incredible lack of tact.

It was his dedication as a doctor and communist that impressed Mao Zedong when they met in February 1938 in Yan'an. Bethune did not want to sit around Yan'an managing a clinic. He insisted on being in the field ministering to soldiers. Mao gave him unusual authority to be manager of a team of doctors to serve in the Jin-Chi-Ji guerrilla base area. At first Bethune tried to establish a model hospital and school at Songyuankou (Shanxi). This failed for logistical and financial reasons. Bethune quickly adjusted, lowering expectations, and throwing himself into the development of a mobile surgical unit, which was a success. Bethune led it into many of the most dangerous areas in southwestern Hebei province, often behind enemy lines. Bethune wanted to be as close to the action and the floating frontline as possible.

As usual, Bethune was often irate over lives lost because of the crude and poorly trained methods of Chinese medical personnel he encountered. But his rage reached a boil over the inadequacy of basic medical supplies. He expected that his pleas for international support would be fully met and that the newly purchased medical supplies would be delivered promptly to his surgical group. Needless to say neither was forthcoming. Bethune was not willing to take no or delays for an answer. In mid-1938 the onus for marshaling the international medical aid he required landed on Agnes Smedley, Dr. Robert K. Lim (Lin Kesheng) and others in the wartime capital of Wuhan. Smedley and Bethune were a lot alike and although the two served the same cause they clashed badly and loudly. And Bethune never received significant supplies through Wuhan.

The China sections of the book are heavily based on the considerable personal correspondence that the authors dug up from a great variety of sources. On the Chinese side, the Stewarts collected available English-language memoir accounts as well as conducted interviews to develop an oral history of his last days in China. For the most part the latter sources follow and support the enshrining of the Bethune legend.

At the personal level, Bethune felt increasingly isolated and miserable in China. He seemed to never even try to master minimal spoken Chinese.

As he and his team got deeper into enemy territory, the translating became worse, leading to outbursts of anger on Bethune's part that were difficult for Chinese colleagues to understand. He slept fitfully and little. So physically, by 1939 he was deteriorating rapidly as the fine set of photos in the book well illustrate. In October the end came rather suddenly, he died after refusing treatment until he collapsed from a scalpel wound to his finger that developed septicemia.

In short, Bethune's is a wild story and it is well told by the Stewarts. The China section of the book provides a detailed chronological narrative that in accumulative fashion punctures the myth of Bethune. He emerges more as a sad, tragic figure than a revolutionary hero. At the same time, he was selfless. The lives saved and the methods Bethune taught his comrades in the field did play an important part in sustaining the 8th Route Army militarily on the Jin-Cha-Ji frontline through 1939.

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CHINESE ARCHITECTURE AND THE BEAUX-ARTS. *Spatial Habitus (Series)*. Edited by Jeffrey W. Cody, Nancy S. Steinhardt, and Tony Atkin. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press; Hong Kong: published in Asia by Hong Kong University Press, 2011. xxi, 385 pp. (Maps, B&W and coloured photos.) US\$52.00, cloth. ISBN 978-0-8248-3456-2.

When visiting China's largest cities I have many times been confronted by a most astonishing building or monument evidently transported in part or in whole from some other world and wondered half-aloud, "How did *that* get *here*?" This major collection of essays answers that particular question by tracing the development of the Beaux-Arts school of architecture from Europe to America and Russia, and finally to China in the late-nineteenth and twentieth century. In fully explaining the nature of Beaux-Arts architecture Cody, Steinhardt, Atkin and their many contributing authors further demonstrate how the Beaux-Arts school is fundamentally responsible for an enormous variety of Chinese architecture and urban plans that might not at a glance be associated with that tradition.

Based on papers delivered at the University of Pennsylvania School of Design in 2003, *Chinese Architecture and the Beaux-Arts* assembles a range of experts on Beaux-Arts architecture, including sinologists, architectural historians, conservationists and practicing architects. Nancy Steinhardt opens the collection with the compelling argument that Beaux-Arts did not produce a divergence from traditional Chinese architecture, but rather became part of a convergence of style. One of the collection's overarching themes is that the basic Beaux-Arts principles of decoration, planning, monumentality and service to the state were actually a good fit for China,