

## Recent Books on China – March 2011

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The Lore of the Chinese Lute: An Essay in the Ideology of the Ch'in / R. H. van Gulik  
3<sup>rd</sup> Edition  
Bangkok: Orchid Press, 2011  
First published by Monumenta Nipponica, Tokyo, 1940  
xix. 271p. ; 25cm.  
ISBN-13: 9789745241121 (HB)  
\$ 50.00

The lute, ch'in or guqin is one of China's oldest and most revered musical instruments. Records indicate that it has been a favourite of the literary classes for more than 2,500 years; Confucius himself was a great lover of the instrument. Over the centuries, it became representative of the life, taste and pastimes of the Chinese literati.

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Tea Horse Road: China's Ancient Road to Tibet / Michael Freeman & Selena Ahmed  
Bangkok: River Books Co., Ltd., 2011  
332p. ; 29cm.  
ISBN-13: 9789749863930 (HB)  
\$ 150.00

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One of the longest and most dramatic trade routes of the ancient world, the Tea Horse Road carried a crucial exchange for 15 centuries between China and Tibet. China needed war horses to protect its northern frontier, and Tibet could supply them. When the Tibetans discovered tea in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, it became a staple of their diet, but its origins are in southeast China, and they had to trade for it.

The result was a network of trails covering more than 3,000 kilometres through forest, gorges and high passes onto the Himalayan plateaus, traversed by horse, mule and yak caravans, and human porters. It linked cultures, economies and political ambitions, and lasted until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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