

Book Review. “Frontier Encounters. Knowledge and Practice at the Russian, Chinese and Mongolian Border” (Ed. Frank Billé, Grégory Delaplace, and Caroline Humphrey). Open Book Publishers, Cambridge, UK, 2012, 280 p in English

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1. The Book Summary

China and Russia are raising economic and political powers that share thousands of miles of border. Despite their proximity, their local interactions with each other—and with their third neighbour Mongolia—are rarely discussed. Although the three countries share a boundary, their traditions, languages and worldviews are remarkably different.

Frontier Encounters presents a wide range of views on how the borders between these unique countries are enacted, produced, and crossed. It sheds light on global uncertainties: China’s search for energy resources and the employment of its huge population, Russia’s fear of Chinese migration, and the precarious economic inde-

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pendence of Mongolia as its neighbours negotiate to extract its plentiful resources.

Bringing together anthropologists, sociologists and economists, this timely collection of essays offers new perspectives on an area that is currently of enormous economic, strategic and geo-political relevance.

2. The Editor's Comments

This collective volume is the outcome of a project based at the Mongolia and Inner Asia Studies Unit (University of Cambridge). That project formed the foundation for a new and ongoing research project “The life of borders: where China and Russia meet” which commenced in October 2012.

There are twelve contributors to the book; most of them are anthropologists and social anthropologists. As one of the editors summarized, the book intends to challenge a tendency in anthropological research to frame analysis in terms of “culture” and “identity” when dealing with issues relating to social life in the borderland areas. Materials provided throughout the eleven chapters of the book propose an alternative, and underline the benefits of a *technological approach* to the study of borders.

The book presents an enjoyable and informative collection of essays. They contain personal recollections, a wealth of ethnographic materials, and multi-angle analysis of social dynamics across the borders.

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