The Second International Conference on the History of Chinese Science will be held 14 - 18 December 1983 at the University of Hong Kong. The main themes will be astronomy and mathematics, alchemy, agriculture and botany. In conjunction with the Conference a small invitational meeting on the Nan-fang ts’ao mu chuang 南方草木状 (A.D. 304) will take place in Guangzhou under sponsorship of South China Agricultural College. Inquiries about the Conference should be addressed to its secretary, Dr. S. H. Wong, Department of Chinese, University of Hong Kong, Pokfulam Road, Hong Kong. Official languages of the conference will be Chinese and English.

REVIEW


This book is a remarkable combination of economic and administrative data on mining (Part 1) and information on the technology and science of mining, metal processing and the extraction of clay, salt, jade and turquoise (Part 2), from the earliest times to the beginning of the Ch’ing era. In Part 1 the authors discuss general economic trends for each period and then study material on each region where active mining work was done during the period. Each section concludes with an economic analysis of the exploitation of each of the important ores and minerals. The arrangement is similar in Part 2, where the authors study mining tools and techniques, and the various geosciences, including a healthy section on geobotany.

Although the authors emphasize that this book is for the non-specialist, they do make at least two much-needed contributions that will be appreciated by all students: The first is their tabular presentation of when and where mines were opened and how much material was extracted. I found only one of these tables too difficult to follow without outside research (no. 24, p. 235: Historical Table of the Nationwide Distribution of Ferrous Mining). The second contribution is the abundant citation of rare books and intelligent readings of ancient texts (especially Shan hai ching 山海經 and Kuan-tzu 管子). Unfortunately, full bibliographic information is not given for any except recent publications and, upon occasion, recently annotated editions of classical works.

Andrew Jones