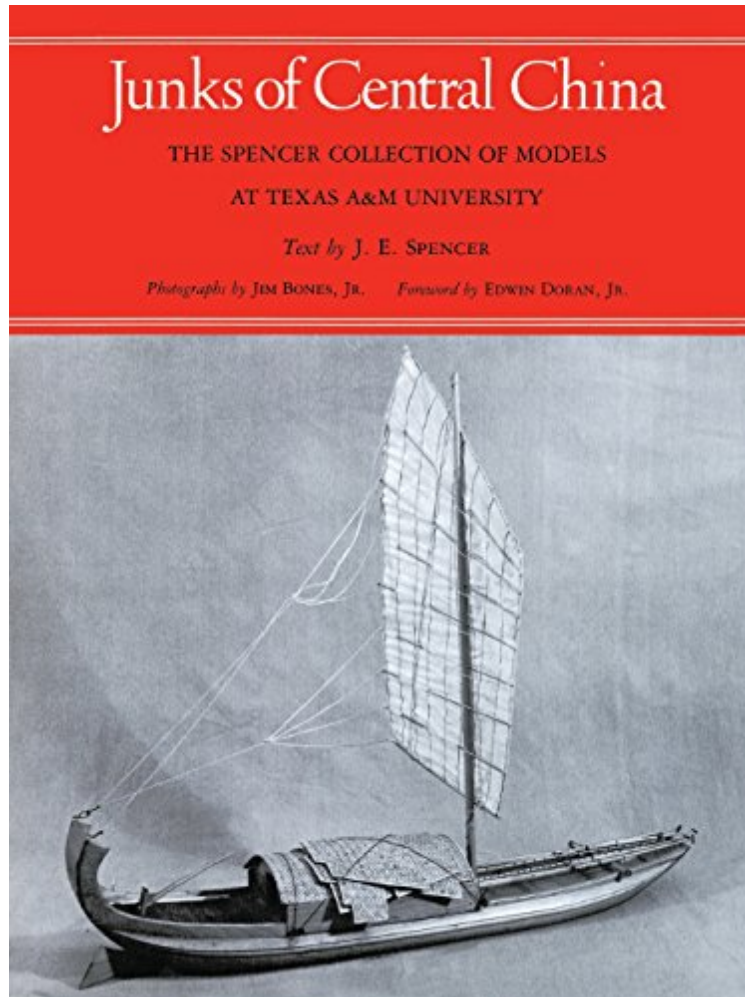


Junks of Central China: The Spencer Collection of Models at Texas AM University

Joseph E. Spencer

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Joseph E. Spencer : Junks of Central China: The Spencer Collection of Models at Texas AM University before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Junks of Central China: The Spencer Collection of Models at Texas AM University:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Catalog of junk collection at Texas AM By Bill Higgins This is a useful book to have if you already have Worcester, and wish more detail on the central Yangtze area junks. The photos are of models, all made by one craftsman, so there is a certain sameness that detracts somewhat from the overall effort. The text is useful, but cannot be regarded as more than an adjunct to Worcester. I get through southeast Texas occasionally, and this book is enticing enough to encourage me to visit the museum at College Station to see the

Spencer Collection. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Reprint of a scarce book By R. Chapel I am just glad to get a copy of this now scarce book. The photos suffer from lack of contrast and amateurish lighting, which is characteristic of the original hardback book also. The models are of high quality and the text is authoritative. It is a shame that the Aggies can't take new photos with professional standards and then re-issue the book with original text in hardback form. Paperback books do not survive long if handled frequently and the subject matter of this book is important and of enduring value.

Within the Yangtze River Basin of Central China are nearly twenty thousand miles of navigable waterways. Historically, overland transportation has been difficult, if not impossible, in many areas, and the Yangtze alone has long carried more boat traffic than any other of the world's great rivers. The collection of thirty-one model junks at Texas AM University, twenty-nine of which are pictured in this book, is a major nucleus of junk types acquired by Dr. Spencer in China between 1934 and 1936. Representing one of the largest known collections of Chinese watercraft, it is also the only known collection of Yangtze River junk types. Junk types have come and gone as needed. Over one thousand years old, the graceful Wushan Fan Tail was still in use in the 1930's, when the twenty-nine models included here were collected. But the Postal Boat, introduced in the late nineteenth century, disappeared within a few years, replaced by faster steam packets. Steam transport and improved roads have caused a marked decline in junk traffic in the twentieth century, a trend not likely to be reversed. The models thus provide a valuable record of traditional regional types. Dr. Spencer's accompanying text discusses details of design, construction, propulsion, and use for each. The introductory chapter gives an integrated account of the development of various styles and the regional trade patterns of the Yangtze Basin, illustrated by a map and representative photographs of actual junks taken by the author. The twenty-nine models featured here are a major nucleus of the Chinese freshwater junk types acquired by Dr. Spencer in China between 1934 and 1936, and they represent one of the largest known collections of its kind.