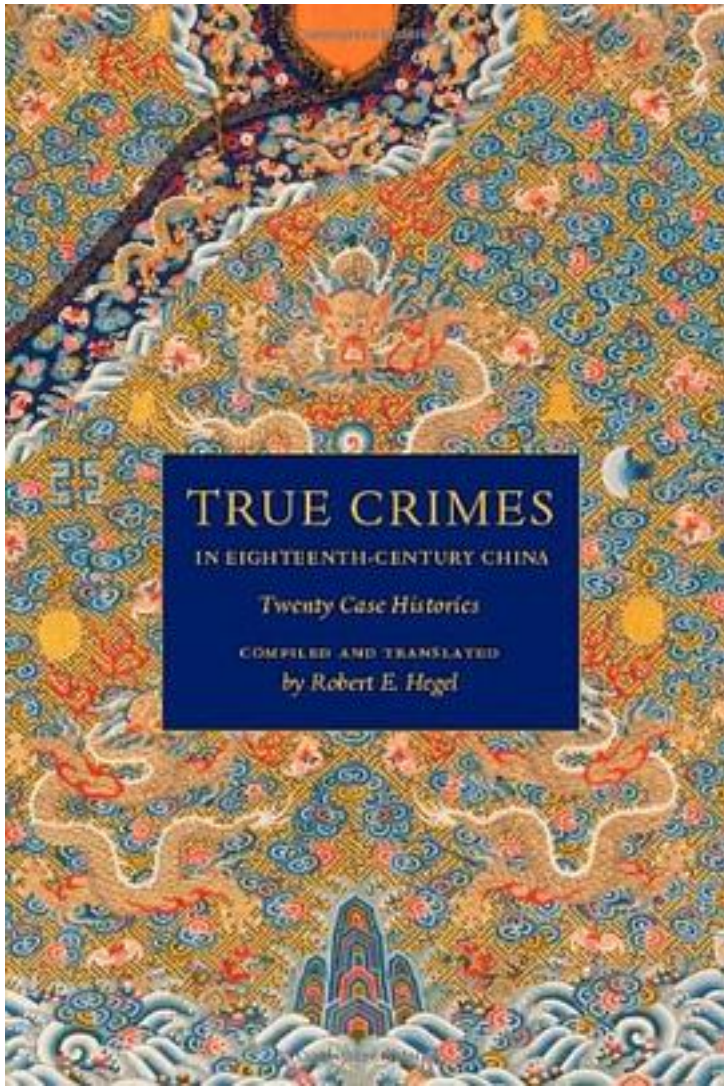


True Crimes in Eighteenth-Century China



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The little-examined genre of legal case narratives is represented in this fascinating volume, the first collection translated into English of criminal cases - most involving homicide - from late imperial China. These true stories of crimes of passion, family conflict, neighborhood feuds, gang violence, and sedition are a treasure trove of information about social relations and legal procedure.

Each narrative describes circumstances leading up to a crime and its discovery, the appearance of the crime scene and the body, the apparent cause of death, speculation about motives and premeditation, and whether self-defense was involved. Detailed testimony is included from the accused and from witnesses, family members, and neighbors, as well as summaries and opinions from local magistrates, their coroners, and other officials higher up the chain of judicial review. Officials explain which law in the Qing dynasty legal code was violated, which corresponding punishment was appropriate, and whether the sentence was eligible for reduction.

These records began as reports from magistrates on homicide cases within their jurisdiction that were required by law to be tried first at the county level, then reviewed by judicial officials at the prefectural, provincial, and national levels, with each administrator adding his own observations to the file. Each case was decided finally in Beijing, in the name of the emperor if not by the monarch himself, before sentences could be carried out and the records permanently filed. All of the cases translated here are from the Qing imperial copies, most of which are now housed in the First Historical Archives, Beijing.

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评论

case 16 天理教起義 & a few others

翻譯了20則十八世紀的法律案件，其中秘密社會組織的證詞並不完整，不知道是只翻譯了這麼多，還是材料敏感性導致的。

案件本身的价值早已模糊，有意义的是怎么做出关联；如何运用直接资料阐述观点。基于本书，从个体的案件中看到其生存的社会；而社会又反映出政府的侧重。以下是对其中一个小案子的感触：
正如鲁迅在《狂人日记》里写的一样：旧社会充斥着人吃人的状况，自卑的弱势往往只能欺负更卑微的群体以缓解由上层施加的生存压力。
带这样的观点去看校园暴力，是不是变得有意思多了。
另外，城管执法是不是也透露类似的规律。

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