Ken Pomeranz’s book confronts a theme ever-old and ever-new: why, in the final phase of advanced premodern economies using mainly animate power for production and transport, did late-imperial China and early modernizing north-western Europe follow such different paths? Whether or not one agrees with all he says – and I have some reservations – one can only admire the energy, imagination and erudition with which he has tackled this enormous topic. I would urge all who are interested in the grand themes of world history both to read it and to argue with it.

The basis of his position is that as late as the 18th century, both north-west Europe and the advanced parts of China were, broadly speaking, playing in the same league as regards production, productivity, commercialization, economic technology, scale and longevity of domestic firms, per-person consumption levels, and non-“Malthusian” population dynamics. This is essentially correct, and until Western economic historians absorb this point they are not going to contribute anything that is even (to adapt Pauli’s famous phrase) good enough to be “wrong” to the analysis of what Pomeranz calls the “great divergence.”

I do have some small but not trivial doubts here about details. For example, contrary to his view, expectation of life in the advanced parts of late-imperial China was probably below even contemporary French levels, and varied regionally more than he suggests (see Elvin, “Skills and resources,” in Zurndorfer (ed.), Chinese Women in the Imperial Past, 1999). My own study of the long-term local history of a lower-Yangzi area like Jiaxing also suggests that towards the end of the empire environmental pressures were more severe than he believes, and, contrary to his argument, were indeed worse in many parts of China than in Europe at this time. Bets are hedged, however, on pages 239 and 283 where only England and the Netherlands are said to have been seriously affected. How then does one deal with the fact that France up to the Revolution probably did as well economically as England, according to Crouzet? A balanced summary of China’s late-imperial environmental condition may be found in Vermeer’s chapter in Elvin and Liu, Sediments of Time (1998), but as regards the comparison it is interesting to look at the opinion of the only observers who knew both well at first hand in the 18th century. In the fourth volume of their Mémoires, one of the Jesuit fathers at Beijing wrote of China: “In France, the land rests every other year. In many places there are vast expanses of virgin soil. The countryside is broken up by woods, pastures, vineyards, parks, and buildings put up for pleasure. Nothing of all that could exist here.” My memories of reading Defoe’s (and Richardson’s) famous Tour makes me hesitant to
see even England as in the Chinese core’s situation, but the date of this
survey may be too early for it to be fully applicable. No doubt we shall
argue about who is right on these issues for some time yet, but the reader
needs to be wary about accepting Pomeranz’s view uncritically.

On the above basis, he then proposes as critical factors in the diver-
gence first domestic coal and secondly overseas colonies, to simplify his
more sophisticated argument. Coal, because, in contrast to Britain, it was
not located conveniently near good sources of iron in China, and could
not ease pressure on supplies of wood to the same degree. Colonies,
because they broke the ecological constraints that could otherwise have
held north-west Europe and Britain captive in resource shortages. Even
though Pomeranz is aware that, without continuing technological inven-
tion, north-west Europe would have slowed down again to economic
quasi-stasis, he ignores the critical point, which derives from Kuznets’s
ideas on the question, that, even if modern science played at most a
limited role in the start of the modern economic growth, it was crucial in
keeping it going in a sustained fashion. Not incorporating science into the
argument leaves a hole in the logic. It is not adequate to say, as he does
on page 264, that “western Europe was able to escape the proto-industrial
cul de sac … as the technology become available,” and not explain why
China could not do the same. “Available” from where, and why? Chinese
science was not far inferior to that of the West in most domains in the
16th century; but by the middle of the 18th, let alone the beginning of the
19th, it was lost to sight behind. Why? The 18th-century ex-Jesuit Pierre
Poivre was perhaps the last important European policy maker to be
operationally influenced by Chinese technical writings, as described by
Grove in Green Imperialism. In fact, to treat the issue on a more
sophisticated fashion, “modern science” and “technology” were branches
off the same cultural trunk, and were mutually interacting with each other
in Europe even before the industrial revolution. An example is provided
by De Bélidor’s Architecture hydraulique of 1737–53.

On the last two pages of his main text he reiterates that “the bridge that
got Europe through the first century of the proto-industrial world to
industrial transition … lay … in the New World,” and the New World
was why “western Europe’s otherwise largely unexceptional core
achieved breakthrough.” The italics are mine: science has been written
out of the scenario, not explicitly, which can always be argued for and
hence also argued against, but by sleight of hand.

Nevertheless we can agree that, in broad outline, what may be called
the “resource frontier” argument has force. It is simply that suitable
techniques are needed to exploit these frontiers – as was also the case
with the Chinese hydraulics that underpinned expansion in the under-
developed lower Yangzi basin about a thousand years ago. There is also
the point raised and partly answered by Cipolla: how did western Europe
acquire in the first place the technical and organizational ability to project
power over immense trans-oceanic distances in sustained fashion? Euro-
Chinese premodern parity arguments falter here.

To return to the main theme, the suggestion that the spatial separation
of deposits of iron and coal in regions that were economically advanced in late-imperial times played a key role in impeding a home-grown Chinese industrial revolution is sketched, but not proven. It needs a systematic geographical foundation, summarized in a map. The questions of the quality of the ores or seams, accessibility to late-imperial mining technology, and the availability of water transport all need to be factored in. The 1996 survey of natural resources, Zhongguo ziran ziyuan congshu, shows coal and iron deposits, fairly close to each other given water transport. Examples are Xuzhou coal and Shandong iron from Laiwu and other places, using the Grand Canal, and Maanshan on the Yangzi in Anhui for iron, with several sources of coal upstream. (See vols. 23 and 26 and the general maps in vol. 4.) Maybe they were too difficult to get down to? And what in economic terms of the time is “distant”? Twenty-five miles by water was no problem for Chinese domestic coal in the 17th century (Elvin, The Pattern of the Chinese Past, pp. 299–300), but “sea-coal” from Newcastle travelled much further to London. Why could it not also have done so in China? Su Dongpo, in the Song dynasty, wrote a famous poem on the discovery of coal in what is now a part of Jiangsu (in Wang Shuizhao’s Anthology, 118):

That a rich inheritance lay in their hills was something they did not know: Lovely black rock in abundance, ten thousands of cartloads of coal.

…

Once the leads to the seam were unearthed, it was found to be huge and unlimited. People danced in throngs in their jubilation. Large numbers went off to visit it.

China was a coal-conscious culture a millennium ago.

Anthracite was used in ironworks in Shaanxi and Sichuan (Elvin, “Skills and resources,” p. 91). Did it demonstrate clear advantages? Large ironworks operated on charcoal and made heavy inroads into timber, but there were some areas, like the Qinling mountains, where there were still sufficient reserves to do this. See the description of one such in a poem by Yan Ruyi in the Qing shiduo (p. 929), with “cast-iron billets stacked as high as houses.” Can one show unsatisfied demand? The failure to mobilize even known technology for coal-mining, such as ventilation fans and piston-pumps for drainage in cases where water was indeed a problem (in partial variance with what the author says) calls out for explanation. (See Elvin, “Skills and resources,” pp. 87, 99–100, 102–106). And even he notes that China had “huge” reserves of coal. None of the above means Pomeranz is necessarily wrong – I’m not sure – only that a convincing case remains to be made. The coal argument has been running in one form or another for some time – a recent version is given in Sieferle’s Der unterirdische Wald (1982) – and there is an urgent need to address the problem of why the late-imperial Chinese did not do as well as they could with the resources and skills that they had, an example of the latter being the partial-vacuum piston-pump, which was seemingly only used for fighting urban fires and not drainage in mines.
The “ghost acres” argument about supplies from colonies, such as cotton (for which there was no adequate European home-grown substitute), has substance, but its weight as a key factor, as opposed to an important facilitating one, is weakened by two considerations. First, machinery had to be invented to process it, or, in order to pay for other imports, to employ former farm or handcraft workers in other and more profitable ways. Secondly, the Chinese also subdued other peoples by force and made areas of significant size into colonies in late-imperial times. Examples are most of Guizhou and all of Taiwan. Although, as Lombard-Salmon showed, Guizhou provided important materials to the Chinese economy, colonial occupation there and in Taiwan was on a smaller scale relative to the huge core economy. The “styles” of colonization, too, though sometimes brutal, were far from being European. The “divergence” here was real but perhaps more subtle than the book allows for. And China imported 46 million pounds of raw cotton from India annually as late as 1833. Ghost acres, too, even if modest in scale. Nevertheless, the view that within the internal geographical space of late-imperial China it eventually came about that “the need for food land prevented cash-crop output from continuing indefinitely” (p. 125) is solid, if not wholly new.

A somewhat separate but interesting section of The Great Divergence refutes Sombart’s thesis that the generalization in society of some measure of “luxury” consumption was a driving force of economic transformation in Europe. Pomeranz argues that luxury demand “was at least as dispersed among various classes of Chinese … as it was among Europeans.” It is hard to judge the degree of truth of this by no means implausible view (especially as regards the Yangzi valley). There is some counter-evidence. Thus one French Jesuit father wrote from 18th-century Beijing that: “Since no-one here looks for anything in necessities except what is necessary, or for anything in objects of use except what is useful, no-one ever pays – or hardly ever – for additional charm. For this reason, fortune never favours the arts of taste, imagination, and fantasy, which is just as the government would wish” (Mémoires, IV). European cultural prejudice? North-Chinese geographical bias? We have to leave this issue on one side for the moment, but can agree with Pomeranz that the speed of change in fashion accelerated in Europe as compared to China (p. 152). What he only hints at (as with architecture and clothing, perhaps) is that the most striking difference was the multi-dimensional qualitative changes in Europe. The extending of the social range of ostentation or self-indulgence is secondary. Consider, for example, what happened to buildings, music, painting, clothing and of course ideas in Europe between 1600 and 1800. There was a general routinization of cultural innovation, of which there were only flickers elsewhere.

Finally, what might be called the “texture” of the work is at times patchy. For example, basing himself on Li Bozhong, Pomeranz says on page 104 that references to women working in the fields in the lower Yangzi area disappear “completely” after 1850–64. On page 291 this has
become “the nineteenth century” (a “mid” needs inserting). But discussion is required. There is, for instance, a reference to “women and children working flat out” at farmwork in the 1879 gazetteer for Jiaxing (reprint, p. 783). This was very probably just included as a quotation from an earlier edition, but the argument needs making (if it can be) as to why it, and maybe other similar passages in other gazetteers, no longer applied. Qian Zai, who died only in 1793, wrote a powerful poem on men and women sharing farmwork in Jiaxing (1879 gazetteer, p. 798). For the later 1920s, three-quarters of a century after their alleged disappearance, there are photographs of women working in the fields both with men and on their own on both banks of the lower Yangzi in the Zhongguo nongcun diaocha village surveys (1933;1970 reprint, I, plates pp. 16, 17, and 22). It is doubtful if the phenomenon simply disappeared around 1850 and was then back in evidence again quite so quickly. If it did, this needs to be nailed down properly.

There are also one or two sinological mishaps. Thus the author of the Guangdong xinyu, Qu Dajun, appears as “Chu” (e.g. pp. 119 and 343). This happens to almost all of us in this field, and does not affect the arguments, so far as I can tell.

In summary, this difficult, uneven, but provocative and often extremely perceptive book maps out the agenda, and in many places much of the substance, of a more satisfactory discussion than we have hitherto had of the reasons for the divergent economic paths taken by western Europe and China during the last three to four hundred years.

MARK ELVIN


In the three decades from the founding of the Chinese Communist Party in 1921 to the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949,
the Chinese Communists were always supported by foreign “friends.”
These not only included a few prominent personalities – Michael
Borodin, Otto Braun, Agnes Smedley and Anna Louise Strong – but also
hundreds of little-known advisers, doctors and journalists. The books
discussed here deal with the famous American journalist Edgar Snow, the
doctor George Hatem (Ma Haide), and with two Europeans only known
to a few China experts: the Red Army general Manfred Stern, and the
author and translator Ruth Weiss. The four people had very different
personal and political backgrounds and different reasons for going to
China, but they all arrived there between 1928 and 1933 and soon
co-operated with the CCP. In 1933 they were all living in Shanghai and
their biographies show that they all knew Song Qingling. All the books
provide new details about the activities of the four people involved (and
many others, including Otto Braun, Hans Shippe, Agnes Smedley, Song
Qingling and numerous Chinese Communists); they also present some
photographs never seen before.

Manfred (Moses) Stern (1896–1954) was the only member of a
Communist Party when he arrived in China and he was the only one
who was sent there from Moscow; he later died in a Siberian labour
camp. Walerij Brun-Zechowoj, a Russian historian in Moscow, shows
that his background and career were much more complicated than the
few details given by Otto Braun in his Comintern Agent in China
(London: Hurst, 1983) and some Soviet authors suggested. Stern was
born in a village near Czernowitz in an area which belonged to the
Austro-Hungarian empire, later to the Soviet Union and to the Ukraine.
In the First World War he fought in the Austrian Army but was
captured by the Russians and sent to Siberia, where he lived near the
Mongolian border. He joined the Communist Party and was sent to
Germany and the United States in the 1920s, and to China in the early
1930s. Braun had suggested that he himself and Stern were sent to
China by the Communist International. Recently published sources,
however, show that both were first sent there by the Red Army’s military
intelligence (Fourth Department). This explains Ruth Werner’s account
(Sonjas Rapport, Berlin: Verlag Neues Leben, 1977) of a meeting of
Braun, Stern, Richard Sorge and Ruth Werner in Shanghai: they all
worked for the same organization. If Braun and Stern had worked for the
Comintern, the rules of conspiracy would not have allowed a meeting
with military spies. Braun had also indicated that he waited for several
months until Stern finally arrived in Shanghai in 1933. But the new
biography shows that this was Stern’s second trip to China; he had
already worked in North and North-East China in 1932. The biography
shows that Stern was very interested in Chinese affairs and did not
regard his post as a punishment (as many Comintern people did); he
certainly had more military experience than Otto Braun. Still, Stern
failed in his attempts to travel to the Chinese Soviet in Jiangxi
and returned to Moscow in 1934. About two years later he was sent to
Spain and became famous as General Kleber. Shortly after his return to
Moscow he was arrested and never released. In 1956, two years after his
death, he was rehabilitated, but the documents used by Brun-Zechowoj were only made available in the 1990s, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Edgar Snow (1905–72) was born in Kansas City, Missouri and became interested in journalism at an early age. He arrived in China in 1928 and stayed for 13 years. He first lived in Shanghai, but travelled to many provinces and made trips to Burma, India, Vietnam and Taiwan. In 1931, Helen Foster (1907–97) came to China; she married Snow in 1932 and they soon moved to Peking. By that time Edgar Snow had already met Song Qingling, who later recommended him to the CCP leadership. He spent the summer of 1936 in Bao’an and other places controlled by the Communists. In the following year he published Red Star over China which not only contributed to his career as a journalist but also to Mao Zedong’s rise to the CCP leadership. The Snows left China in 1941, but he returned again in 1960 and 1970 and was involved in the preparations for Nixon’s visit to China. In addition to ten other books on China and Asia he published the autobiographical Journey to the Beginning (1958).

Edgar Snow was a famous personality and several other authors started writing biographies: John Maxwell Hamilton published Edgar Snow: A Biography (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988) and Robert M. Farnsworth From Vagabond to Journalist: Edgar Snow in Asia, 1928–1941 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1996). S. B. Thomas (Oakland University) also concentrates on Snow’s China years and his account is clearly the best, the result of a decade of archival studies, interviews and travels in China. As Thomas had already visited China before 1949 he was in a good position to discuss Snow’s publications of different periods. But there is one interesting aspect of Snow’s 1936 trip missing in his account, which might be mentioned here. In recent years Chinese scholars have studied the CCP’s preparations for the Snow visit and published some details which show that the Politburo had received a list of questions Snow wanted to discuss long before he arrived (Snow had already tried to enter the communist base in March but did not succeed). In May the Politburo, headed by Zhang Wentian, opened a half-day meeting to discuss all the questions and to define new united front and foreign policies. Wang Jiaxiang opened the discussion and Wu Liangping (who later served as an interpreter), Zhang Wentian, Qin Bangxian and Mao Zedong also presented their views. Thus many things Mao told Snow in summer were Politburo decisions and not his personal views.

Shafick George Hatem (1910–88) was born in Buffalo, New York, of Lebanese parents. After studying medicine in Lebanon and Switzerland he arrived in China in September 1933. In the following years he worked as a doctor in Shanghai and became acquainted with Agnes Smedley, Rewi Alley and Song Qingling. It was Song Qingling who arranged his trip to the communist area in the north-west in spring 1936. Hatem and Snow were the first foreigners (except Braun) who entered the new communist base. Snow left after a few months, Braun returned to
Moscow, but Hatem stayed in Yan’an. In 1937 Hatem became a member of the Chinese Communist Party, and was – according to Porter – the first foreigner to succeed in his application. In 1940 he married the actress Zhou Sufei, who had just arrived in Yan’an. In 1949 the family moved to Beijing and Hatem became the first foreigner granted citizenship by the new government. At that time he was involved in the establishment of a new ministry of public health. For many decades he was leading campaigns against leprosy and venereal disease.

Edgar A. Porter (University of Hawai‘i) is not the first biographer of Hatem; a few years earlier Sidney Shapiro published a book on his friend (Ma Haide: The Saga of American Doctor George Hatem in China, San Francisco: Cypress Press, 1993). Porter’s account is not much better than Shapiro’s. He had contact with Hatem’s family in America, had access to his letters and other documents, and interviewed his widow and many other Chinese. Porter’s account reads like a description of a close relative, positive and friendly. There is not much criticism of Hatem, the Chinese government or the Communist Party except for the usual condemnations of Kang Sheng, which are also frequent in PRC publications. Another problem is, of course, that for most of his life, Hatem was a doctor who did important and useful work; but this did not have much political relevance and is not interesting to read.

Ruth Felizitas Weiss was born in Vienna in 1908 and studied German and English literature. Dr Weiss arrived in Shanghai in October 1933 (just a month after Hatem) hoping to marry a Chinese she had met in Austria – but he was not interested and left for Japan. She planned to stay for a few months but never returned; when her memoirs were published in 1999 she was still living in China. She first lived in Shanghai and soon met Rewi Alley, then Agnes Smedley, George Hatem, Lu Xun and Song Qingling. Hatem and Weiss joined a leftist study group organized by the Polish Communist H. Shippe (who used the pseudonym Asiaticus for his publications). In 1937, Weiss moved to Sichuan and married a Chinese academic. After the War they went to the United States, but she returned to China in 1951, with two children but without her (anti-communist) husband. As her parents had died in a concentration camp and she had no other relatives, she did not want to return to Austria. In contrast to the other people discussed here, she had not had much contact with the CCP before 1949 and she was not a member of any other communist party. She spent the following decades writing and translating for the Foreign Languages Press and journals like People’s China, China Pictorial and China Reconstructs. In the early 1990s she started to write her memoirs.

Unfortunately, she just mentions numerous people without saying much about them. The whole book seems to depend on memory: there are no diaries, letters or other reliable documents. Thus dates and details are often vague or missing. There are hardly any relevant facts or interpretations which cannot be found elsewhere. As this volume has more than 500 pages but only a brief table of contents and no index, it is very difficult to find information about particular persons or events. Still, there
are often small details which could be relevant for historians. Weiss mentions, for example, that the American “radical” Steve Nelson was on the same boat which brought her to China in 1933. In his own memoirs (Steve Nelson, American Radical, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1981) Nelson mentions the trip without giving precise dates, but Weiss does. As Nelson brought instructions (and money) from Moscow to the Shanghai Comintern representatives this information is quite interesting. Nelson confirms his meeting with her but also wrote that after arriving in Shanghai he rarely left his hotel. “I was afraid of running into my fellow passengers, especially that pesky young Austrian woman” (p. 149).

People’s Doctor and Am Rande der Geschichte are not very convincing. Both Porter and Weiss not only describe fascinating adventures in the wars and civil wars before 1949, they also have to deal with four less fascinating decades of the People’s Republic. Even though the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s did not lack drama, the authors were not able to portray these decades in an interesting and readable way. It is obvious that Porter and Weiss are not very talented writers, but what makes things worse is their uncritical pro-PRC, pro-CCP attitude. Both books read like propaganda publications by Chinese authors published in the People’s Republic. As far as Weiss is concerned, this is not surprising as she wrote her book in Beijing, and memoirs are not scholarly publications. But a Western scholar teaching in the United States could and should be better. Still, both books show how foreigners lived in the People’s Republic of China and survived the Cultural Revolution. And they indicate why Hatem and Weiss did not want to return to their own countries and how they were treated by the Party and government.

The other two books are much more interesting. Even though Brun-Zechowoj’s biography of Manfred Stern is short and not very detailed, he portrays a man who is hardly known in the West, and his account is based on relevant sources not used before. S. B. Thomas had the most difficult task: presenting a biography of a well-known journalist who not only published his own autobiographical texts but whose life was studied by many other authors. But this book is not only based on newly available archival sources and numerous interviews, it is also well-written. Furthermore, it is the only work with detailed notes, a useful bibliography and a good index (totalling 75 pages).

These books clearly show that the foreigners described had very different – and often very personal – reasons for going to China and for staying there. Love for the country and sympathy with communism were just two of many reasons. It is also interesting to see that not only Hatem and Weiss had problems with the numerous campaigns and changes in CCP policy; Snow and Stern were also confronted with endless criticism, which Stern did not survive; Snow left the United States, went into exile and died in Switzerland.

Annual reviews are expected to be books chock full of up-to-date facts and figures, which China Review 2000 certainly is. They are also expected to be in their encyclopedic style bland, non-controversial and elegantly dull, not for cover-to-cover reading, but this is not what one finds in this boldly edited volume by Lau and Shen. Indeed, in the very first chapter on China’s foreign policy, Edward Friedman challenges what he believes is the mainstream view of China specialists that China’s guiding concern is economic development. He asserts instead that its top priority is power – both for the nation and for the Party and its current leaders. I suspect that there may be more scholars agreeing with Friedman than he is prepared to acknowledge. In any case this sets the stage for further chapters which are more intellectually provocative than is normal for yearbooks.

The majority of the chapters were written by scholars associated with the various Hong Kong universities. Not surprisingly their concerns tend to be on very current developments in China, with positive and negative occurrences analysed evenhandedly. Many subjects are treated with a pair of articles, not in order to balance ideological points of view but rather to achieve the full richness of analysis that comes from highlighting different sets of variables and factors. Thus, for example, in the two chapters dealing with Sino-American relations, Guoguang Wu systematically reviews the record of specific conflicts against a background of what he considers to be a mutual commitment to continuing dialogue, while Peter Van Ness deals with the problems raised by the Clinton (not yet the Bush) administration’s proposal for a ballistic missile defence. Jean-Pierre Cabestan provides a 20-year review of cross-Taiwan Straits politics and diplomacy, while Weixing Hu concentrates on the subtle differences in the ways in which the parties have described the “one-China Principle.” This first section on foreign affairs is rounded out with chapters by Quansheng Zhao on the China-Japan-U.S. triangle, and Berry Fong-chung Hsu on the global challenge inherent in the legal infrastructure of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

The next nine chapters deal with the economy and here the richness in both data and ideas is impressive. The three chapters by Lu Yuan and Terence Tsai, Yasheng Huang, and Francois Gipouloux have titles which suggest that they are all dealing with the same subject – foreign direct investments (FDI) – but they take very different approaches. Lu and Tsai concentrate on the evolution of national policy towards FDIs; Huang uses an analytical framework he calls the “institutional and policy factor” approach to bring out the wide range of Chinese individuals and entities, including managers of state enterprises, local government officials and private individuals who have competitively raised the demand for FDI; and Gipouloux focuses on the rise and then decline in interest of those providing FDI.
The remaining nine chapters cover social developments: rural and urban, education and environment management, religion and leadership of social organizations. As would be expected these chapters stick very close to the data and generally are careful to balance positive and negative developments. Luk Tak-chuen, however, makes a strong case that the campaign to eradicate poverty was a complete fraud. Local authorities had to report boastful figures of what they had accomplished each year in order to continue to get the subsidies the campaign offered, with the eventual result that they all had to say that they had eradicated all poverty in their jurisdictions no matter how many poor there still were.

What is conspicuously missing in this volume is any straightforward discussion of Chinese national politics. There are no chapters on elite politics or power relations within the leadership, the state of the Communist Party, or the prospects for leadership succession. With Jiang Zemin’s reign due to come to an end in 2002, readers will want to know something about the character and qualifications of the probable next generation of Chinese leaders. An annual review of China should contain, at a minimum, a listing of, say, the members of the Standing Committee of the Politburo, the Politburo itself and those occupying key government posts, and some accounting of the main political developments.

The absence of explicit treatment of national politics means that the book ends up presenting a picture of a wooden China, a country without a will or purpose, or any sense of direction, or any passions over successes and failures in achieving national ambitions. As the book now stands there is no reluctance to discuss China’s problems, and government actions are reported, but there is no recognition of any human volition guiding developments, no sense of pride or discouragement. Without the introduction of politics, China becomes a mechanical, lifeless system, made up of the many parts discussed in the separate chapters, but without an integrating spirit to make it stand out as a human endeavour. It is politics and decision-making that govern the setting of priorities for solving the many separate problems discussed in the chapters.

One can sympathize with the editors for not wanting to get caught up in defending any particular predictions about China’s prospects. Yet, far short of ultimate, long-range predictions there is a safe domain where it is possible to grapple with such questions as the mood of the people, the confidence or anxieties of the leaders, and the strength of legitimacy of the regime. True, Peter Tzu-ming Ng’s chapter, “From ideological Marxism to moderate pragmatism – religious policy in China at the turn of the century,” does address the leadership’s reactions to the growing popular interest in religion and the rise of the Falun gong, but as a matter of policy towards religion and not as symptoms of deeper problems of regime legitimacy and national morale.

There is something unique about China’s experiences with modernization that has left scholars gun-shy about discussing its political prospects. Yet, a pair or so of chapters on domestic politics could have been
introduced in the same non-controversial style as the chapters on such equally delicate topics as foreign policy and Sino-American relations. It is to be hoped that this blind spot will be rectified in the next issue of *China Review*, for the Hong Kong team of scholars have learned how to produce a work that China scholars throughout the world will certainly come to value, and even to read cover-to-cover.

**LUCIAN W. PYE**


With this able translation of a book originally published in French in 1994, English readers now have easy access to one of the newest and best attempts to work through the “enigma” that was Sun Yat-sen.

Marie-Claire Bergère organizes this comprehensive biography around three phases of Sun Yat-sen’s career, first as a revolutionary “adventurer” (1866–1905), then as “founding father” of the Chinese Republic (1905–20), and finally as the leader of a nationalist revolutionary movement (1920–25). Bergère’s account is not based on extensive or new primary research. Indeed she readily acknowledges her debt to the previous work of scholars such as Harold Schriffrin and C. Martin Wilbur. But the end result is also more than a synthesis of old ideas. Bergère’s goal is to present Sun Yat-sen in a new light that she believes to be more effective in revealing his actual place in Chinese history than seen in previous historical accounts.

Bergère seeks to set a middle course between the hagiography of Chinese historians, who have exaggerated and idealized Sun’s ideological and political contributions, and the more critical work of Western scholars, who have generally found little in Sun’s thought or actions deserving of such regard. Strictly in terms of the “facts” of Sun’s career, Bergère does not necessarily disagree with the Western critique. She cannot, and does not seek to, show that Sun was a consistent or original thinker. Her narrative cannot but acknowledge that as a political leader Sun knew more failure than success. But she argues that Sun’s significance lies outside usual debate over these issues.

For Bergère, Sun’s contribution lay in his ability, as a man born on the Western-influenced periphery of Chinese society, to communicate across both geographical and cultural boundaries. Here she eschews the approach of China-centred history that downplays the role of the West in influencing China’s modern transformation. She does not, however, simply portray Sun as a “Westernizer.” Rather, in her eyes, Sun was a man who moved between societies, as much explaining China to the
world as explaining the world to China. Supposed flaws in Sun’s character take on a different meaning when evaluated in these terms. Whereas critics view inconsistencies in his pronouncements as evidence of muddled thinking or, even worse, mendacity, Bergère sees a savvy politician’s talent for reaching out different audiences with ideas and concepts they could appreciate. Likewise, Bergère is willing to concede the theoretical weaknesses of Sun’s Three Principles of the People because she sees their real significance as being an effective vehicle for the transcultural diffusion of ideas.

According to Bergère, Sun Yat-sen was a man ahead of his times. He was “a figure of the contemporary world: a communicator, a kind of media genius, born for jetliners, the Fax, and television, despite having had to content himself with steamers, the telegraph, and the press” (p. 5). Sun’s overly optimistic vision of what could be often led him down paths that his even his supporters found troubling. For example, Bergère sees Sun’s often-criticized search for foreign assistance and foreign allies as rooted, at least in part, in a prescient vision of the potential for international economic relations based on cooperation rather than conflict. It was a vision, however, more suited to Deng Xiaoping’s China than to the China of his own day.

The value of this book is not limited to the contribution it makes to a new understanding of Sun Yat-sen’s place in Chinese history. Bergère’s biography of Sun is carefully placed within a broader narrative of the main events and developments of the age in which Sun lived. Thus the book works equally well as a general history of late 19th and early 20th-century China. As such, the book should appeal to a broad audience.

EDWARD A. McCORD

A Place in the Sun: Marxism and Fascism in China’s Long Revolution.

In this loosely connected set of essays on “reactive nationalism” and fascism in modern China, A. James Gregor has several objectives. He wants to show that the Chinese revolution (from the late Qing through the present period) can be better understood through fascist lenses than Marxist ones, and that developments in modern China can be best understood not as having anything to do with class war or social justice but simply as attempts to build up a strong, economically advanced and unified nation capable of redressing its historical humiliations to find its “place in the sun.” On the face of it, Gregor reaches a startling conclusion: contemporary China is fascist. All modern Chinese history has been a species of “reactive nationalism,” that larger class of political types that includes fascism. From Sun Yat-sen to Chiang Kai-shek, from
Mao Zedong to Deng Xiaoping and beyond, Chinese leaders have tried to build a strong state.

Well, yes. One problem here is that Gregor has little to say about what was distinctive in the approaches of these various leaders and even less about popular culture, the intellectual milieu, international circumstances and state-society relations. Furthermore, there seem to be several basic contradictions in his approach. On the one hand, he denies that Mao Zedong should be considered a true Marxist, but on the other he acknowledges that Mao’s emphasis on class struggle discredits his fascist credentials. Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek look like better candidates to be fascists, and Gregor ridicules contradictory Marxist judgements on this issue. However, he himself seems to show how fascist was the Kuomintang while explicitly denying that its leaders could be considered fascist, on the grounds they remained ultimately committed to a democratic future. But one could say as much about Mao or contemporary communist leaders. And so on. Finally, in firmly classifying contemporary China as fascist, Gregor wilfully ignores the state’s weaknesses, the CCP’s divisions and forces of regionalism, as well as the many forms of, for lack of a better word, liberalization.

It is seldom a reviewer can report having learned nothing from a monograph, but there’s little new here. In the end, this book fails to analyse reactive or developmental nationalism; Gregor spends more time complaining that Chinese Marxists/Maoists (and later Western scholars) failed to understand Sunism. Yet he seldom stops to explain the reasons for these misunderstandings, which would have given the book historiographical significance; as well, his knowledge of the field is woefully out of date. Nor does Gregor offer systematic international comparisons between fascisms and nationalisms or post-war developmental policies. Perhaps this book should be read as a polemic: censuring overblown egos and Marxist remnants in the field. I would speculate there are more of the former than the latter, but in either case, although the book has all of the obsessive repetitiveness of a diatribe, it is more about kicking horses that are already very, very dead than offering criticisms that could be of use to contemporary scholars.

Of course, Gregor’s points are often correct. I agree that China’s recent opening to the West is no guarantee that it will become more like the West – though the logical conclusion of Gregor’s observation that social science has been a poor predictor of events would be that his own excessive pessimism is as inappropriate as excessive optimism. In terms of the overarching theme of the book, I accept that “reactive nationalism” explains or at least summarizes Sunism – and much of Maoism as well. “Fascism” has echoes throughout China’s 20th century, including the extreme nationalism found in parts of Chinese society today, and the second half of the book contains hints of how, if Gregor had more rigorously pursued this subject, an interesting monograph would have emerged.

Peter Zarrow
During the half century since Mao Zedong came to power in Beijing in 1949, he has been viewed and analysed both as a Leninist revolutionary leader and as the successor to strong rulers in China’s past. The importance attached to these two dimensions has, of course, varied substantially. During the early years of the People’s Republic, he was seen primarily as a disciple of Stalin; with the Great Leap Forward and the Sino-Soviet split, he came to be viewed more often as an autocrat of a traditional stamp. Indeed, in recent years there has been a tendency to label him as simply another emperor. Without going quite so far, Anita Andrew and John Rapp do, as the title of their book indicates, lean rather strongly in that direction.

If one is to adopt such an approach, there is no doubt that Ming Taizu constitutes one of the most interesting and meaningful subjects for comparison with Mao. In an article written a decade and a half ago, I suggested a parallel between Mao and the Qianlong Emperor. Shortly after this piece was published, I spent an evening with two well-known intellectuals in Beijing, and in the course of a wide-ranging conversation, one of them pulled a book about Zhu Yuanzhang from the shelf, and said, in effect, “other comparisons may be of some interest, but this is the man whom Mao best resembles.” Elaborating on his view, he stressed above all the way in which Ming Taizu sought to promote the study of his own “thought.”

Andrew and Rapp devote considerable attention to this aspect of Ming Taizu’s rule in their discussion (pp. 61–68) of the Da gao (“Great Warnings,” as they translate it, or “Grand Pronouncements” in Edward Farmer’s treatment of the topic). They see these pronouncements as the best illustration of “Zhu’s attempts to open channels of communication between the throne and the village community and to circumvent the bureaucracy once and for all.” They note that the emperor’s injunctions were to be read in every village, and that households possessing a copy of the document would receive lenient treatment in criminal cases, and argue that this reliance on “good people” in the countryside represents “an obvious similarity to Mao.”

This similarity is indeed obvious. In my view, however, the authors overstate their case in dealing with the broader and more fundamental resemblance between Zhu and Mao. Both of them, they argue, belong to “the type of ruler we call the ‘rebel founding emperor,’ that is, one who rises to power in a rural rebellion against a previous imperial regime” (p. 3). Mao, they add, “as a rebel founding emperor in Zhu Yuanzhang’s mold, … late in his career returned to his rebel roots in an attempt … to build his personal power against the … bureaucracy” (p. 5). No one would dispute that Mao was born into a peasant family, and that this fact
marked him to the end of his life. Relatively early on, however, despite his rural origins, Mao became a member of China’s intellectual and political elite. It is true that he had only a normal school education and not a diploma from Beida, but when he was only 26 he founded, edited and wrote the greater part of a short-lived paper which was considered by several leading figures of the time as one of the very best of the May Fourth period. While in his early 30s he played significant roles both in the Chinese Communist Party, and in the Kuomintang. Zhu Yuanzhang, on the other hand, did not explicitly distance himself from the Red Turbans, who had been his main power base, until shortly before he was proclaimed emperor at the age of 40. Edward Farmer has summed up concisely the difference between the two men:

Much as he may have resembled a founding emperor in political style, Mao was at heart a revolutionary. He espoused a Marxist world view, headed a Leninist political party, and enjoyed the support of a Stalinist governmental apparatus. He sought to reclaim China’s greatness by creating a new socialist China, not by reviving the old order. In this respect his redefinition of China contrasted with that of Zhu Yuanzhang, who cloaked even his innovations under the mantle of a return to the Chinese essence. (Edward L. Farmer, Zhu Yuanzhang and Early Ming Legislation (1995), p. 3.)

The fact remains that Mao did act and think, in his last two decades, more and more like an emperor of old, as many us have been saying in recent years. It is, however, difficult to sustain the argument that he was, or became, in essence nothing but another peasant rebel turned emperor, as Andrew and Rapp suggest. After all, Mao’s own project for radical change was not limited to agriculture. Twice, during the initial stages of the Great Leap in 1958–59, he dated the beginning of the process of modernization and change which had led to revolution in China to Zhang Zhidong’s programme of industrialization, measuring progress in one instance in terms of the number of machine tools, and in the other in terms of the growth of the working class. At that time, he also raised such slogans as “Overtake England in 15 years,” and “Steel as the key link,” and praised not only Dazhai but Daqing. His predictions were ludicrously inflated and could not be fulfilled, but they show clearly that his vision of revolution was not confined to agriculture or to the countryside. Indeed, the authors themselves recognize that obvious differences between Mao and Zhu include “the rise of industrial development and urbanization in the People’s Republic, which led Mao to be more dependent (perhaps more than he wished) on economic and technical elites than was Zhu Yuanzhang” (p. 89).

To sum up, the parallels between Mao’s career and that of Zhu are fascinating and instructive, and this thoughtful and well-documented book throws new light on them. The 90-page monograph with which it begins is clear and well organized, but it is accompanied by notes corresponding to nearly half that number of pages, which contain long paragraphs of additional argument, some of which has no counterpart in
the text. Thus it is necessary to flip constantly back and forth between text and notes, but a patient reader will find the effort worthwhile. The volume is completed by 200 pages of texts, half on or by Zhu Yuanzhang and half on or by Mao. All of these materials have been published before, but they remain of interest.

STUART SCHRAM


The political odyssey of Chiang Ching-kuo (CCK) is, in many ways, stranger than fiction. The only biological son of Chiang Kai-shek, he studied in the Soviet Union while his father pursued his dogged anti-communist campaigns of the late 1920s and 1930s in China. In the USSR the younger Chiang met important Soviet leaders of the day (including Stalin); became a candidate member of the Soviet Communist Party; served as chairman of a collective farm; denounced his father; and married a Russian who became his partner for life.

After he returned to China, CCK presided over an area in Jiangxi from 1941 to 1944 that was praised by an American foreign service officer as being “near utopian as far as China was concerned.” Before the Kuomintang fled to Taiwan, the younger Chiang managed a cadre training programme, took part in post-war negotiations with the Soviet Unions and was in charge of Shanghai until it fell to the Communists. On Taiwan, CCK was at first a shadowy figure, deeply involved in the KMT’s “White Terror” and working closely with the CIA to manage clandestine operations on the mainland. Later (in 1965) he became Minister of Defence and then, in 1972, Premier. Finally, in 1978 he became the President of the Republic of China on Taiwan until his death in 1988. This latter decade left an indelible mark on contemporary Taiwanese politics. Not only were the bases for Taiwan’s democratization established, but so were the beginnings of a complex, informal relationship with the mainland. These new directions constituted a radical turn from the sometimes brutal authoritarianism and militant anti-communism of his father’s era in which CCK was, himself, complicit, and they established the parameters for Taiwan’s politics thereafter.

In _The Generalissimo’s Son_ Jay Taylor presents a most careful tracing of this political odyssey. To tell his story Taylor has travelled to important places in CCK’s life, conducted extensive interviews with those around him, tapped the resources of archives in Shanghai, Moscow and the United States, and consulted diaries and secondary sources. He has written a lively narrative of a fascinating life which time after time returns to the equally fascinating times in which the younger Chiang lived.
The major flaw in this biography is, paradoxically, articulated in a conversation that CCK had with an old friend in the aftermath of the Kaohsiung incident. His colleague noted that Chiang Ching-kuo was “so good at listening, but you never give your opinion.” The younger Chiang replied: “That is the best way to get a true picture of things. Besides it saves energy” (p. 360). This biography is fundamentally a narrative of CCK’s life with very little analysis or explanation by the author. On the broadest level there is no attempt to explore any underlying threads that run through a complex – and often contradictory – political career. For example, throughout his life Chiang apparently shunned special privileges, kept his – and his family’s – distance from business interests, sought to mix with ordinary people and (beyond occasional womanizing) maintained a relatively Spartan lifestyle. Does this suggest a lingering influence of his years in the Soviet Union? A reaction to his father’s style?

In a related vein, how does one explain CCK’s commitment to democratic reform? Taylor offers a number of factors that prompted him to act, ranging from American pressure to a belief that the democratization of Taiwan would serve as a model for the mainland. However, the author never really analyses this turn-round from CCK’s earlier, hardly democratic, orientation. Was it simple expediency and an overestimation of Taiwan’s impact on the mainland? Or was Chiang genuinely committed to democratic ideals?

Taylor’s description of the early democratization process is, finally, heavily CCK-centred with the impulses for change coming predominantly from the top down. There is little sense of pressures from below and, specifically, of the interactive process between the KMT and the opposition that resulted in democratization. To some extent this is the result of Taylor’s heavy reliance on interviews with CCK’s closest confidants. Unfortunately, the empirically and theoretically rich literature, in both Chinese and English, on the process of democratization is largely neglected.

In his discussion of U.S. relations with Taiwan during the 1970s, Taylor seems to have gained access to some of the cable traffic between American diplomats in Taipei and Washington by use of the Freedom of Information Act (although it is not clear to what his references in the footnotes to “FIO” refer). This would seem to be an extremely useful new source for understanding the diplomacy of these years. Yet it is used comparatively little and there is a greater emphasis on secondary sources and interviews.

Finally, a word must be said about the poor editorial work on this book. Simply put, the footnotes are a mess. The romanization of Chinese is random and inconsistent. One source appears in three different variants with either a romanization error, a different translation, or a different Chinese title. One expects better from Harvard University Press.

In short, while Jay Taylor’s dogged pursuit of the story of Chiang Ching-kuo has produced what must be considered the best English language biography of CCK to date, it also suggests how much more
work has to be done before this intriguing historical figure is truly understood.

STEVEN GOLDSTEIN


All societies have tried to educate their youth in various ways to be patriotic, law-abiding citizens. Authoritarian societies like Nazi Germany’s Hitler Jugend, the Soviet Union’s Komsomols and Nationalist China’s Blue Shirts sought to bring young people into their ranks. Democratic governments opted for private associations such as the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, the YMCA and YWCA, and other religious groups to do the job.

In Taiwan the government of the Republic of China (ROC) created the China Youth Corp or CYC (jiuguotuan) as its instrument to educate the young, but later privatized it to continue the same work. How did a political arm of the state survive the transition to a private, social organization?

Brindley provides a lucid and interesting account of how Chiang Kai-shek’s regime, beginning in 1952, created the CYC to instil a sense of being Chinese, believing in the “correct” ideology, and acquiring patriotism and Confucian virtues so that ROC youth might become good citizens. Whether they were Taiwanese, Hokkien or Aborigine, the CYC aimed at making them first feel Chinese and then patriots. By offering free summer camps and visits to scenic places the CYC converted many to its message, although a minority found the political message boring and excessive.

As an arm of the Kuomintang (KMT), the CYC wanted to turn all youth into ardent supporters of the new government by training them at summer camps, mobilizing them for parades and national campaigns, and engaging them in its social activities. By 1970 the CYC programmes annually reached more than a million young persons and offered them personal connections to obtain jobs in education, the KMT and the ROC government.

As living conditions improved and direct elections expanded in the 1970s and 1980s, the KMT lifted martial law in 1987, revised laws to expand free speech and guarantee human rights soon after, and expanded the electoral process in 1991 and 1992. The CYC also began to change with the times. In the early 1970s the CYC was transferred from the Ministry of Defence to the Ministry of Interior and referred to as a social organization. In 1991 the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), critical of the political and ideological content of the CYC’s programme, called it an instrument of the KMT that should not be supported by taxpayers’ revenues. Thus in 1994 the KMT established a private foundation to support the CYC and detach it from the state. High-ranking KMT members continue to serve on the CYC’s Board of Directors, but the political and ideological message of the past is muted and the focus is social and educational activities for young people.
There were new challenges to the CYC. Recruitment of members became more difficult because the CYC now lacked the easy access to the educational system. Secondly, its newly limited funds meant fewer students for its summer camps, hiking and other activities, in addition to having to compete with other groups, businesses and agencies offering similar programmes. Moreover, the interests of youth were often at odds with CYC programmes that stressed patriotism and traditional Confucian values. The CYC increasingly refrained from involvement in national and international political issues that might alienate its members as well as bring it unfavourable criticism. The CYC has addressed these challenges by offering overseas travel and learning programmes and establishing centres abroad. Throughout Taiwan the CYC has built new hostels for recreational activities.

The history of the CYC’s transition from an arm of the authoritarian state to a struggling private association trying to survive in a new competitive environment is well presented in this useful and informed account.

**Ramon H. Myers**


Best known for a long list of well-regarded studies on Chinese society, politics and economics under communism, David Goodman switches his attention in this new book to the history of the communist revolution. His subject is the Party’s Taihang anti-Japanese base in Shanxi, largely ignored in the days of the Mao cult because of its association with leaders of then dubious standing. Over the years, Goodman has established close relations with academics and politicians in Shanxi, thus opening for himself doors normally closed to outsiders. His book is therefore exceptionally well supported by documentary sources and interviews.

Like many scholars working since the late 1970s on the Anti-Japanese War and the ensuing Civil War, Goodman casts his study at a local level and is wary of extrapolating his findings to the country as a whole. His focus is on a cluster of three counties at the heart of the Taihang base, each sufficiently different from the next to permit a comparative analysis. Most of the hypotheses he explores will be familiar to researchers engaged in base-area studies over the past ten to 20 years, whose approach Goodman largely shares. They can be summarized as follows: the Resistance War was fought differently in different places, although historians (both Chinese and foreign) have often reduced it to a single stereotype; it is better to disaggregate the processes of change than to search for “grand theory,” at least for the time being; it is more useful to study the resistance from the point of view of its processes than of its outcomes, in order to promote agency over inevitability and teleology –
though the wider political environment ultimately determined the pace and direction of change; it is unhelpful to treat the peasantry as an undifferentiated mass; top-down political reform preceded social reform in the war years, and reforms were nearly always subordinated to military concerns; urban forces (especially intellectuals) played an important role in the rural resistance; whether or not a revolutionary tradition had previously figured in a region could crucially affect the course of the resistance; rural teachers and middle peasants were a principal agent of social change in the war years; and there was a strong tension between local traditions and the Party’s centralizing drive.

By and large, Goodman’s findings bear out the conclusions of previous studies on wartime communism. They are a useful test of this other work and one more step in the direction of a fully grounded theory of the Chinese revolution. Particularly helpful is his idea of “revolutionary incrementalism” (p. 272). His refusal to draw a line between past and present at 1949, on the grounds that “revolution and reform exist along a continuum” of social change (p. 12), informs the very structure of his book, which divides into four chapters dealing with the establishment of the Party’s military rule and political order in Taihang followed by another four on the drive for social reform and revolution. Some Western historians downplay the extent to which the Communists nurtured social change in their resistance bases. Goodman joins the debate on this issue by showing in convincing detail how the Communists managed a “silent revolution” in their Taihang base in the early 1940s, and how the process of change in the three core counties was inherently revolutionary almost from the beginning.

Students will find the introduction and the conclusions, which set out the relevant issues clearly and resolve them effectively, perhaps the best available summary of current research on wartime Chinese communism. The intervening chapters provide numerous thoughtful insights into the nature of social and political change in Taihang. At times, however, they could be said to cleave rather too closely to the style and angle of the source-books, which employ a predictable class analysis. Other studies suggest that many of the conflicts explained by Party reporters in terms of social class are better understood as coded references to divisions of a different order, rooted in a more tangled world that included lineage, native place and other factors in which class played only a minor role. On the whole, however, Goodman displays a firm grasp of the issues and provides an authoritative guide to the debates about them.

GREGOR BENTON


The world order was dominated by Western states when Japan came on
the scene after 1868. Its foreign policies set in motion events that transformed not only Japan but the entire Asia-Pacific region. In designing and carrying out these policies Japan’s leaders and elite seemed of two minds. Some envisaged a Japan expanding its imperial influence in East Asia by the sword and joint stock company. Others saw it playing by the new rules of the imperialist powers and expanding its economic power for the betterment of itself and its neighbours. This Janus-like view of the world typified the mind-set at Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Barbara J. Brooks’s carefully researched and well-written diplomatic history of the ministry describes its evolution in the context of Japan’s interaction with China between the first and second Sino-Japanese wars. Her account shows that the ministry enjoyed considerable autonomy during the Meiji and Taichō eras, with leaders resisting government attempts in the early 1920s to place it under an independent council and a government board attached to the prime minister’s office. Yet when ministry officials drew up petitions for ministry reforms after the First World War, they were refused. Nor could the ministry allocate its China experts effectively. Top ministry and government leaders undervalued ministry diplomats with long experience in China, and none ever advanced to ministry leadership. Government leaders also ignored ministry advice.

Meanwhile, in China between the two world wars, some ministry consuls tried to defuse crises between Japanese and Chinese communities as well as mediate growing conflicts between Koreans, Japanese and Chinese. In 1930 Consul Ishii Itarō had to investigate the murder of a Japanese national by a Korean in Jilin province. After his assistants mistakenly dug up an ancient Chinese grave, Ishii apologized to Chinese officials, only to be severely castigated by the Japanese media.

After 1928 the ministry lost its protracted struggle with the Kantō army and the Kantō and Korea governments-general to influence China policy. Consul-General Hayashi Kyūjirō (in Fengtian) had advocated to the ministry’s top officials that a unified system of Japanese administration be created in Manchuria to reduce conflict with the Chinese and blunt Japanese military expansion, but Foreign Minister Shidehara was ambivalent about persuading the powers in Tokyo to adopt it. Hayashi was threatened by a sword-waving army major when the Manchurian Incident erupted on 18 September 1931 (p. 140).

In the 1930s any influence of China policy the ministry might have had was no more. New government agencies – the Kō-Ain and later the Ministry of Greater East Asia – began to make China policy. Many ministry officials had tried to persuade Japan’s leaders to accommodate China’s rising nationalism. They had urged moderation and compromise with the Nationalist government’s new leader, Chiang Kai-shek. But the ministry lacked powerful patrons in the Genrō – a group of senior statesmen who advised the emperor during the Meiji era – to make their case in government. Moreover, no China expert ever came into the epicentre of power within the ministry to offer wise counsel to Japan’s leaders. Even though ministry officials frequently urged the military and
top government leaders to curb adventurism in north-east China, their arguments and pleas were ignored.

Professor Brooks’s scholarship enhances current understanding of how China and Japan interacted during the 1920s and 1930s. *Japan’s Imperial Diplomacy* should be read by scholars and students interested in the Sino-Japanese conflict and how the best intentions and efforts of China experts in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs failed to deter Japanese military aggression in China.

Ramon H. Myers


From the Japanese occupation of Manchuria in the autumn of 1931 until the outbreak of the second Sino-Japanese War in the summer of 1937, China faced unrelenting Japanese pressure. Chiang Kai-shek’s campaigns to defeat his regional military rivals and to eliminate the Chinese Communists occurred within the context of this Japanese threat. Nowhere was this more intense than in north China, along the border with the puppet state of Manzhouguo. Archives and new source materials available in China in recent years have yielded little new Western scholarship on this topic. Indeed, except for my own work on the political dimensions of this threat, Youli Sun’s diplomatic study and Donald Jordan’s work on boycotts, most Western studies of the topic are at least three decades old.

Marjorie Dryburgh’s important new work is thus a welcome contribution. First and foremost this is a study of Song Zheyuan and the 29th Army during the crucial years from the Tanggu Truce until the outbreak of war in 1937. Both the man and the military unit were pivotal figures in modern East Asian history, but have been largely overlooked in Western scholarship. Song Zheyuan became the dominant figure in north China after the fall of Feng Yuxiang, serving as the front line commander in facing the Japanese pressure for north China “autonomy.” Dryburgh’s study gives an invaluable description of Song’s delicate position between Nanjing and the Japanese. In the process, she provides important insights into the politics of Kuomintang China.

Dryburgh uses an array of newly available material, but her greatest strength is her careful reading of the telegraph traffic between Nanjing and north China officials. As a consequence she provides a convincing look at the nature of Republican politics, both the relationship between centre and region and among officials within each sphere. The former reveals less of a centralized state and more of an alliance of regimes. Chiang Kai-shek sends orders to Song and other northern leaders; he hopes they will be obeyed. Song in turn reveals only selected details of his negotiations with the Japanese, and attempts to keep the latter uniformed of consultation with Nanjing. Both Song and Chiang rely on
their own military base for political power. Neither wishes to sacrifice that power. Song attempts to appease the Japanese to the extent that they do not demand his removal (and he ends up like Zhang Xueliang); yet is unwilling to become a Japanese puppet.

Dryburgh’s research also illuminates relationships within each camp – among Chiang, Wang Jingwei, Huang Fu and He Yingqin in Nanjing’s camp, and among the various officials in the north. Students of the politics of the Nanjing decade will want to consult this work. Finally her discussion of the events in north China from the Xi’an Incident through the escalation of fighting after the Marco Polo Bridge Incident is the most complete account of the Chinese side of things available in English. In contrast to the more sanguine perspectives of some Japanese historians, Dryburgh argues that conditions in north China became increasingly tense during this period, and that war was virtually inevitable when the Marco Polo Bridge Incident occurred. Her evidence is compelling.

There are some disappointments. This work is dense with detail and a chapter on the diplomatic contacts between Nanjing and Tokyo comes after four chapters on the same time period dealing with north China. The work thus requires a fairly detailed knowledge of the period which will limit its use to advanced students and scholars. These minor caveats aside, this study represents a major advance in current understanding of both the politics of Nanjing era China and the events leading to the Sino-Japanese conflict of 1937.

PARKS M. COBLE


The book, authored by the Danish ambassador to China (1995–2000) was published to celebrate the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Denmark and China. It is bilingual in the sense that the whole text is written both in English and Chinese. Lin Hua, the best living translator of Danish literature to Chinese, provides an excellent Chinese translation.

The title of the book indicates that the ambassador wants to show the positive side of the relationship between Denmark and China, and problems are avoided. An example is Denmark’s proposal in the UN’s Human Rights Committee in 1997 to criticize China, which resulted in considerable Chinese protests. This and other similar incidents are not mentioned in the book. It raises the question of what official relations means. Is it only who represented Denmark in China and to some extent the other way around or does it also comprise political issues? I find the latter more relevant.

The book’s approach is chronological and it is unclear whether there were other methodological considerations. The perspective, as indicated in the title, is “Danish,” that is, the events are seen mainly from the
Danish side. The main enlightenment I got was a confirmation of Danish opportunism in foreign policy. The Danes recognized the Japanese-installed government in 1941, the Nationalist government in 1945, and the same ambassador, Alex Mørch, got the honour of handing in the accreditation to Mao Zedong in 1950. The good side of opportunism is that sometimes one happens to do the right thing, and Denmark became one of the first capitalist countries to recognize Communist China, which was beneficial for the relations between the two countries for many years. Today it is probably forgotten.

There are lists throughout the book of names of Danish consuls during the early period, most of them of British origin. During the PRC period dates and pictures of Danish ministers and members of the royal family visiting China are provided. In the final pages the perspective seems to be broader, with pictures of the Foreign Policy Committee visiting Tibet, and Danish companies participating in the world EXPO’99 in Kunming. Even trade figures for export and import between the two counties are enclosed, with a picture of a meeting between Jiang Zemin and a Danish businessman Mærsk McKinney Møller, representing the A. P. Møller–Maersk Group, the largest Danish trader with China.

As a scholarly work the volume has its limitations. The English text, covering more than 300 years of diplomatic history, only consists of about 80 pages necessitating some very broad descriptions and generalizations rather than in-depth analysis. Moreover the text is not footnoted and there is only a very short list of secondary reference material at the end. However the book is worth reading for laymen interested in the history of the diplomatic relations between Denmark and China. It is nicely illustrated and will serve as a fine gift when Danes and Chinese meet formally.

VERNER WORM


Nancy Bernkopf Tucker has with great ingenuity taken the oral histories of 51 American foreign service officers, collected by the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, and artfully edited them to produce a coherent and informative insider’s view of a half century of Sino-American relations. Tucker provides summary introductions to the chronologically arranged chapters that begin with the end of the Second World War and the Marshall Mission and go through the Korean War, the Off Shore Island crises, Vietnam, the Sino-Soviet split, the Nixon opening, normalization, the end of the Cold War, right down to the Tiananmen tragedy. At every turn the views of those who were sending or receiving the cables and who were privy to the decision-making process are provided.
As with the *Tiananmen Papers* there are no smoking guns in these pages, but instead a very human and lively account of great events as seen by the participants. The voices are all conversational and generally quite reflective. Readers will feel that they are sitting in on discussions among wise people who are conscious of having been party to the making of history.

What these members of the China service have to tell is far livelier than what is found in the diplomatic archives. One has, however, to keep in mind that oral histories rest upon the shaky foundations of human memory, an activity of the mind which psychologists warn us is full of tricks and hidden distortions. Thus, memories can be unreliable for a host of unconscious reasons. There are also problems at the conscious level because the interviewees are speaking with the advantages of hindsight, and thus their accounts may be coloured in ways that documents in the archives are not. This second problem, however, is not as troublesome because the retired officers are all professionals who know that their words can be checked. Tucker is aware of these problems and periodically intervenes to test the accuracy of the interviewees’ memories. Indeed, Tucker at times has one officer correct the statements of another. Another minor problem, which probably has kept some from telling all that they know, is that they cannot speak about what are still classified matters. But this is a universal problem for all diplomatic historians.

If there is a common outlook among these foreign service officers it is their shared desire for ever better relations with China. Most had great empathy for the Chinese, and on most issues they were able to see and give weight to the Chinese point of view. (Taiwan was a different matter since for a few it was just a persistent nuisance.) They seem to be genuinely distressed over any setbacks in the relationship. Hence most of them were quick to criticize hard-line American politicians, and particularly newly elected presidents who had to be taught the importance of the China relationship.

The oral histories are frank about the frustrations inherent both in Washington’s bureaucratic politics, especially dealings with the White House and Congress, and in managing relations with a hypersensitive and secretive Chinese government. Yet these remarkably disciplined foreign service officers came through their battles with equanimity and not a hint of malice. Instead they seem pleased to make vivid what to them were exciting times. Veteran China watchers will enjoy the stories of people who for many were old friends, and those new to the field will enjoy a wonderful introduction to an insider’s view of an important era of diplomatic history.

Lucian W. Pye


The history of relations between the Soviet Union and PRC is usually
investigated within the scope of pure politics and common ideology of the two communist regimes. The military and economic aspects of the rapprochement of the two superpowers are often avoided by Western (and Eastern) scholars because of difficulties in access to the primary sources and general negligence to the achievements of Russian sinologists studying modern history. In this respect the book is a precious contribution as it is based mainly on materials from Russian archives and recent publications in Russian academic journals. This approach allows the author to substantiate his rather unbiased understanding of the Soviet–Chinese friendship. It is known that in the 1950s Soviet assistance was regarded in the Chinese and Soviet media as completely “disinterested.” In the 1960s it was treated in China like a “chauvinistic” attitude of an “elder brother.” In the 1990s a Chinese historian succeeded in revealing the true motives of this co-operation.

It can be seen from the documents that economic and military aid to Mao in the final stage of the civil war between the Communists and the Kuomintang (1945–49) was promised not only because of the ideological closeness of the two communist regimes. Stalin pursued his own aims in the Far East: to retain the independence of Mongolia from China and to regain positions in Manchuria formerly held by tsarist Russia. These factors influenced the forms of Soviet aid to China in this period. In 1949, as the victory of the Communists in China became inevitable, Soviet assistance appeared more obvious and comprehensive. Communist China badly needed this kind of aid to build up a modern economy and the USSR needed alliance with China because the Cold War was gaining momentum. Nevertheless contradictions between the two “brothers” were not eliminated. The absence of legal regulations in the joint management of the Chinese-Changchun railway resulted in a series of conflicts. Based on the archive findings, the author reveals that the process of signing the famous treaty of 1950 between the two countries was far from smooth. Stalin suspected that Mao was not sincere enough when dealing with his “big brother” in the eternal friendship. The decisive factor, in the author’s opinion, was Stalin’s fear of rapprochement between the United States and China. Stalin was also soothed by Mao’s promise to recognize Mongolia as a sovereign state. Besides, the Chinese admitted, though indirectly, the special interests of the USSR in Xinjiang and Manchuria. After all these concessions made by Mao, Stalin agreed to sign the new bilateral treaty with the new communist government. Nevertheless the mutual suspicion of the two leaders hindered the development of co-operation in the 1950s.

The most informative section is the third part of the book where Shen Zhihua provides an analysis of different forms of economic co-operation between the USSR and China in 1950–53. It was the Korean war that helped to break the psychological barriers between the two leaders and accelerated economic aid to China. Although estimating highly the role of Soviet aid in rebuilding the Chinese economy, the author points out some negative aspects which devalued this assistance to a certain extent. For example, low interest rates for credit offered by the USSR were ac-
accompanied by the demand of exclusive purchase of some strategic raw materials (tungsten, tin, stibium) from China. China had to spend a large portion of its credit on Soviet military manufactures at inflated prices. In addition, sending Soviet specialists to China was far from being “disinterested” because Stalin required the Chinese to pay a high rate for the use of Soviet brains. There are other facts in the book (such as Stalin’s adherence to an unfair exchange rate of rouble to yuan) that help to explain why and how the “spirit of brotherhood” could easily change into rough bargaining.

One hopes that exploration of the Chinese archives in research of the same issues will unveil even more details and contribute to further understanding of the motives and actions of the two communist regimes and their leaders.

ANDREI DIKARIOV


This is an exceptionally fine symposium and a subject of growing importance. Moscow and Beijing entered a new era in the 1990s, all aspects of which are covered here. The authors go beyond simple summary to project the problems and prospects for the relationship and the implications for East Asia. In particular the critical role of the Russian Far East (RFE) is examined in detail for both domestic and international aspects.

Garnett’s introduction is excellent in its clarity, thoughtfulness and synthesis of the symposium, although he may overstate how the RFE can destabilize East Asia. Dmitri Trenin, a former Red Army officer, recapitulates the standard Russian sinophobia, with emphasis on the already gross and now growing population imbalance between the two countries, underscored by the shift in the comparative GDP ratio narrowing the favourable gap. Despite cautioning against a “yellow peril” mentality, he worries that Chinese grievance over “unequal treaties” with Russia and military modernization may drive “Pax Sinica” expansionism in 2010–15. He obviously wants to limit the quality of weapons sold to China but does not argue the point. Instead he recommends building up the RFE for both economic bridges and local strength.

In contrast, Li Jingjie offers a platitudinous recapitulation of relations between 1989 and 1999, replete with summit vows and six pillars for a “strategic partnership” that Trenin denies has any basis. Because Li’s rosy picture focuses on politics it is necessarily constrained by the official line. No such inhibition marks Lu Nanquan’s survey of Chinese views of the Russian economy, positive and negative, siding strongly with the
latter. He finds growth unlikely but necessary for Russia to be a prospective player in a “multipolar world.” Alexei D. Voskressenski follows with a complex differentiation of Russian views of China as optimistic, pessimistic and pragmatic. He offers a better sense of positive and negative Chinese views of Russian reforms than does Li.

Gilbert Rozman’s long experience with perceptions on both sides produces the best chapter in the book, further enriched by informative endnotes. He cautions, “focusing on the state of their current partnership is less important than grasping the reasoning that drives them together” which he sees as more a “promise for the twenty-first century” than “an existing solid foundation for cooperation.” Rozman bluntly dismisses Russian research on China, despairs of “fleeting emotionalism” both positive and negative, and believes the Russian public has neither deep understanding nor sympathy for China. Ironically, better economic ties will depend on energy projects that in turn will require multilateral, not bilateral, involvement. The regions most relevant in this regard are also the most suspicious of the other side, especially the RFE with border tensions and demographic anxieties. Nevertheless Rozman concludes that “some strengthening of the relationship” is the most likely for the next 20 years.

Rozman follows with a chapter examining the problematic state of cross-border relations manifest in political writings on both sides. Moscow’s problems with the RFE repeatedly cut across its relations with Beijing despite the two capitals’ effort to resolve the inevitable difficulties in cross-border trade. A further examination of RFE views by Tamara Troyakova underscores the sense of vulnerability and hostility with respect to the need for Chinese labour on the one hand, and the fear of Chinese settlement on the other. Elizabeth Wishnick’s treatment of Chinese perspectives highlights the contrast between local interests and the more distant politics of Beijing, adding another complication to close economic development linking north-east China to the RFE. Judith Thornton examines reform in the RFE in a lengthy and detailed analysis of trade, investment, taxes and profitability that reveals how much remains to be done for it to be an engine of Sino-Russian interaction, much less an expansion of Russia’s role in East Asia. She also offers a thorough account of why the vaunted Tumen Project, supposedly to launch a six-nation economic venture, fell apart after more publicity than money.

Michael McFaul’s treatment of Moscow–RFE relations is a sophisticated account of the highly volatile but largely polemical exchanges that received widespread press attention at the time. He suggests that the stand-off between the capital and Primorskii Krai established principles of a federal order with autonomy and dual authority, despite the absence of mutual gains producing more decentralization than federalism. The explosive subject of Chinese migration into Russia is effectively deconstructed by Gatлина Vitkovskaya, Zhanna Zayonchkovskaya and Kathleen Newland, but they recognize that in politics perception may override reality. Martha Brill Olcott presents a closely reasoned and well re-
searched analysis of Russian–Chinese relations in Central Asia, offering valuable information on a less reported area.

Harry Gelman closes the volume with a superb analysis on the changing balance of power and politics in north-east Asia and how Russia and China pursue separate but convergent interests with respect to both Koreas and Japan. This is the only chapter to be overrun by events, with the emergence of Kim Jong II as an active player in the region and the Clinton administration’s responses in 2000. However Gelman’s perceptive coverage of Japanese politics and foreign policy adds a necessary perspective on the main economic actor in China and potentially the RFE so far as trade and investment are concerned. This underscores a recurring view expressed by other writers, namely that bilateral Russian–Chinese relationships may ultimately depend on third parties.

ALLEN S. WHITING


Almost every contributor to this thought-provoking collection writes well and none better than the two editors, Merle Goldman, professor of History at Boston University, and Roderick MacFarquhar, professor of Government and History at Harvard. Their introduction lucidly summarizes the entire volume. The Dengist open-door, they suggest, could lead to a more libertarian and prosperous China. But “the increasing geographic and social inequalities, coupled with rising expectations, also have the potential to lead to massive social upheaval and political instability. Such is the paradox of China’s reforms” (p. 29).

Among the book’s 14 approaches to this paradox are perspectives on the economy by Barry Naughton, elite politics by Joseph Fewsmith, Party–military relations by Paul Godwin, village elections by Lianjiang Li and Kevin O’Brien, workers by Martin Whyte, rural discontent by Thomas Bernstein, the floating population by Dorothy Solinger, politically independent intellectuals by Merle Goldman, and crime and corruption by Elizabeth Perry. Richard Baum and Alexei Shevchenko attempt to define the Chinese elephant which so many specialists have partially described (they note that the original touchers were blind).

The collection arises from a conference in 1996 at Harvard’s Fairbank Center. There is naturally a somewhat out-of-date flavour (Deng died the year after the conference) although the book was published last year. The Falun gong and the Democrats, for example, were not on the academic screen in 1996 and hence not in gaol – although Elizabeth Perry notes in her fundamental and original study of the special post-reform nature of corruption and what is called crime, that religious and “superstitious” groups are deemed a special threat. In Merle Goldman’s chapter on turbulent intellectuals she masterfully shows how some continue to see
themselves as traditional remonstrancers. She traces the views of one
group to their Cultural Revolution background, but her two main exam-
pies, Chen Ziming and Wang Juntao, were flourishing, so to speak, well
before Tiananmen. If the book were more recent it would have been
useful to have Goldman’s views on the heterodox economist He Qinglian,
under close surveillance but not behind bars, and the recently sidelined
members of the Academy of Social Sciences.

Some of the best essays offer useful flashes-back to the Mao years.
Martin Whyte’s chapter on workers shows how their location, status and
views have changed over 50 years. He starts with a splendid sentence: “It
is one of the great ironies of our age that something close to a proletarian
revolution helped spell the doom not of capitalism, as Marx had pre-
dicted, but of state socialism” (p. 173). Of course he means Eastern
Europe. But the fear of an Eastern European-style debacle for the Party
together with another Tiananmen runs through many of these chapters.
Perry, Bernstein and Solinger ably discuss the rising tide of urban and
rural discontent, while Godwin makes plain that the hesitation of some
senior army officers to move on Tiananmen in 1989 – some of them
explicitly warned that it would be unworthy of the PLA to enter Beijing
for that purpose – led to sweeping political changes in the forces to
ensure their loyalty – if there is a next time. He skilfully notes too the
intimate link between the Party and the army, which makes useless any
notion of “civilian-military.”

Joseph Fewsmith traces expertly one of the leitmotivs of 20th-century
China: the aim for total dominance, “the game of politics … played as a
game to win all. As the Chinese frequently if inelegantly put it, ‘You die,
I live’ ” (p. 49). In what will come as a shock to some proponents of
“Asian values,” he quotes the contemporary philosopher Li Zehou and
the literary critic Liu Zaifu who argue that China “lacks a spirit of
compromise …” (p. 49). Though this spirit lingers, Fewsmith writes, as
seen in the humiliation of Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang, the game is no
longer as complete, and certainly not as lethal, as in Mao’s day.

As is usual in all such speculative collections, the authors avoid
prediction. Almost all chapters end with a phrase resembling “China is
hopeful but perilous, it could rise, but it could also decline.” I suppose
this is better than the BBC presenter’s famous “No matter what happens
China/Russia/Yugoslavia will never be the same again.” It is a sign of the
book’s intrinsic interest that I often wished for more. Dorothy Solinger,
for instance, who draws much of her material from her highly-regarded
book Contesting Citizenship, discusses the floating population (without,
as I far as I could see, ever stating whether it really numbers the notorious
100 million). A master of style, she concentrates on the various regional
“villages” in Beijing, from Zhejiang and elsewhere. She gives plenty of
detail of how they are organized and how miserable are the lives of most
of their exploited inhabitants. Many of these groupings – cobbiers,
garbage collectors, beggers – remind me of similar occupational guilds
and neighbourhoods in traditional China, except that they seem uniformly
despised by “real” city people. Solinger writes almost exclusively
about Beijing and concentrates on “tens of thousands of [floating] people,” who she says, and I agree, confront the state in a new way. I wonder, however, with such a small sample, if one can say so authoritatively that this confrontation “must be the seed from which some brand-new style of citizenship – and citizens – are born …” (p. 240).

This skilfully edited book, with its voluminous notes and citations, will interest modern China specialists in numbers of disciplines and can be recommended to beginning students for their term-papers and to graduate students searching for dissertation topics.

JOHNATHAN MIRSKY


This analysis of China’s post-Mao reform regime is an inquiry into the identity of the Chinese political system, pursuing the rather startling thesis that contemporary China is an unreconstructed totalitarian dictatorship. While hardly novel, such an appellation has become something of an endangered species of late. For the past two decades the climate of scholarly opinion has had it that China is moving from totalitarianism towards something rather more loosely constructed. The last academic analyst to characterize the Chinese system as “totalitarian” was Tang Tsou, in what became chapter 5 of his 1986 book, The Cultural Revolution and Post-Mao Reforms: A Historical Perspective; Tsou however limits the term to the 1966–76 period of “revolutionary-‘feudal’ totalitarianism,” from “the brink” of which he conceived the post-Mao regime to be withdrawing. Whereas the PRC leadership continues to embrace the ultimate values of “communism,” it does not accept the characterization of “totalitarian,” so this may be said to be a purely analytical concept not embraced by the target of analysis. One reason for this is that in the context of Western democratic pluralism it is difficult to divest the term of value connotations, which may have foreign policy consequences. The author, presumably conscious of going against the tide terminologically, concedes that there have been departures from the analytical model, but refutes these in two ways: first, distinguishing between “fundamental or core” and “operative” features, he argues that change has affected only the latter; and secondly, he argues that the actual changes ascribed even to the operative domain have been greatly exaggerated. Thus Guo finds himself resisting historical change as well as liberal illusion. Yet this young political scientist, a former policy analyst of the Chinese central government who has assembled an impressive bibliography of both Chinese and secondary sources, deserves a fair hearing.

Guo defines totalitarianism in terms of four basic features: philosophical absolutism, a claim to possess the absolute and universal truth; emphasis on pervasive propagation of a monolithic official ideology, insisting on “thought reform” to induce the populace actively to
affirm this ideology; the “leading role” of the party in the power structure, which has a de facto monopoly over all aspects of social life that may never be challenged; and a catch-all category embracing the “means and methods” the totalitarian leadership uses to implement the other three core features, which may include state terror, control of the security and legal apparatus, and manipulation of the cultural symbol structure via the media apparatus.

Chapter 2 takes up the Chinese ideological crisis of faith, arguing that whatever doubts or disenchantment may have infected the masses, the essential features of ideological totalism remain intact. The difference between Maoism and post-Maoism is that the latter puts modernization first while deferring utopia. But the regime retains its monopoly over the communications media, and periodic indoctrination campaigns continue to try to eliminate bourgeois liberalization and construct a socialist spiritual civilization. The author does however concede that there has been a waning in the intensity of ideological conviction – a “crisis of faith.”

Chapters 3 and 4 discuss political developments under reform that might have been expected to affect Guo’s third core feature, the vanguard role of the Party. The author has a fairly easy time pointing out the half-hearted character of the regime’s political reforms – most have been focused merely on rationalization of the existing administrative structure toward greater efficiency.

Chapters five and six, on the alleged advent of “civil society” and the progress of economic reform respectively (apparently corresponding to the fourth core feature), are among the more empirically rewarding parts of the book. Without denying the recent mushrooming of social associations of various types, Guo minimizes its significance by pointing to the restrictions placed on their autonomy, such as the 1989 Rules of Registration and Regulation of Mass Organizations. The security apparatus has grown in the course of reform (especially since Tiananmen), Guo points out, and the old network of “basic units” in urban areas and “villagers’ committees” in the countryside remains intact. The author finds no general evidence of political liberalization; the regime’s signature of two international covenants on human rights in 1997 was followed by no implementing legislation and the covenants remain to be ratified by the NPC. At the same time the author concedes that the regime has relaxed its control over the daily lives and economic activities of its citizenry. The explosive recent growth of Falun gong (which was denied registration) and other qigong societies illustrates the political implications.

Much of the discussion of economic reform is preoccupied with property rights and the author’s energetic denial of any “capitalist take-over”; although totalitarianism does not imply the socialization of private property, the author seems to have inadvertently conflated totalitarianism and communism. While conceding that the regime has allowed an opening to “diversity of ownership,” he insists the growth of the private sector has been greatly exaggerated. Despite indications of retreat from command planning, the government remains highly intrusive in the
economy through its use of regulatory power. Hence the regime’s ideological retreat to an earlier stage of socialism is not a change of direction but only a tactical retreat harbouring a continuing ambition to complete the socialist transition. Like Lance Gore, Guo finds evidence of marketization but little of privatization.

This book is one of a number of indications that the post-Mao regime faces serious confusion about its identity. Although the present work has the advantage of taking seriously the regime’s determination to maintain its structural integrity, it raises a number of problems. Of course the author’s conclusion that the current regime has not deviated from the model’s core features is empirically controversial, but beyond that there are reasons to question the a priori advisability of this choice of model. Not everyone will agree with the author’s conceptualization of totalitarianism. Any advantages of using China as a case study in comparative totalitarianism seem to have been forfeited, with no generalizations from the non-communist cases capable of throwing light on the future outlook of the PRC. If a structural benchmark were desired for the measurement of change, comparative communism would seem preferable to comparative totalitarianism, not least because the current regime still accepts that self-designation. While the author seems to be an intelligent and perceptive analyst of the Chinese system, his framework confines his attention to formal structures and official ideology, neglecting the realm of informal politics where change often makes its first appearance.

LOWELL DITTMER


This book provides a useful addition to the growing research on regionalism in China. Professor Yang divides China into two regions: coastal and interior (though on occasion the latter is subdivided into central and western). Such a coarse division overlooks substantial variation within the two regions, but it generally works for the macro-analyses in the book.

According to Yang, under Mao Zedong Chinese policies favoured the interior, though for political and military reasons rather than any regional strategies. Under Deng Xiaoping, the coastal regions gained favour though such policies as special economic zones. Under Jiang Zemin, a more balanced approach has been used. However, the interior is still disadvantaged and will continue to be so for both political and economic reasons.

Politically, the current leaders “lack the stature and authority of the founding generation of leaders and can ill afford to alienate major political forces unless absolutely necessary” (p. 133). The “preponderance of coastal interests within the top leadership and the
central government’s dependence on the coastal region for revenue” (p. 133) also make it difficult to take resources from the coastal region. In addition, the move from plan to market means “the central government now directly commands only a small proportion of total economic resources” making it “difficult for the central government to increase investment in the interior substantially” (p. 132). Furthermore, it is very difficult for provincial leaders to stand united against the centre. Economically, “the less developed areas in China are caught in a vicious circle of backwardness” (p. 137). As poorer areas, not only do they have less influence in Beijing, they also have fewer resources to devote to such things as education which would contribute to economic growth.

Yang urges interior leaders to avoid zero-sum struggles for scarce resources. Rather, they should demand equality of opportunity. “Thus, rather than seeking specific factories, they should emphasize their need for schools, roads, airports, and telecommunications networks. When given the same chance, children from the poorest areas will do just as well as those from the coast” (p. 141).

For this study, Yang has used a large number of Chinese primary, Chinese academic and Western academic sources. Some of the analyses are fairly technical, but the non-statistically minded reader should find the text accessible, if a bit dry. Perhaps the most important contributions are the short analyses of how coastal and interior leaders have tried to influence central policies. The issue of differing approaches and views towards the special economic zones is especially well covered.

The book will have particular interest to those interested in China’s political economy, regional policy and regional variation, as well as to those with particular regional or provincial interests.

J. Bruce Jacobs


This work consists of 10 articles that chiefly focus upon the 19th and 20th centuries. Four of the articles are on China and six on Japan. Of those dealing with China, Dikötter writes a general article on continuities and variations in racial discourse in China, Chow writes on Zhang Binglin and the invention of the Han “race” in China at the beginning of the 20th century, Xun writes on the myth of the “Jew” in China, and Sautman contributes an article on myths of descent, racial nationalism and ethnic minorities in the PRC. The chapters on Japan deal with the invention of racial identity in pre-war Japan, the dilemmas over the status of traditional Chinese learning in Japan, attitudes and policies towards the Ainu, the emergence in Manchukuo of the myth of “natural” Japanese leadership of the North-East Asian “five races” (Japanese, Chinese,
Korean, Manchurian and Mongolian), anti-semitism in Japan, and the discourse on racial identity in contemporary Japan.

The primary goal of this book is apparently modest: to raise the issues of race in politics in East Asia for debate, but not to be the last word. According to both Dikötter and Sautman, the subject is important and topical because its significance in international relations in East Asia is underestimated and so may come to dominate them. Yet if this is the primary concern, it is surprising that so few chapters actually deal with contemporary issues. Only Sautman really focuses on the international implications of the resurgence of a concept of racial superiority in China, although his article deals with more than that, namely the rise of nationalism in PRC foreign policy. None of the works on Japan discusses the impact of these debates upon Japanese foreign policy today.

All of the pieces start from roughly the same point, the belief that the concept of race is itself socially constructed. Several contributors explicitly argue that the genetic justification for views of racial uniqueness remains weak. They use Benedict Anderson’s phrase about “imagined communities” as the basis of racial identity. In this sense racial identity can be seen as analogous to ethnic identity. This also explains why evolutions have occurred in attitudes towards racial characteristics. Young and Yoshino, for instance, show how the Japanese concept of racial identity evolved from acceptance of the traditional deference towards Chinese civilization to assertion of “natural” Japanese superiority. Dikötter’s own contribution argues that specifically racial discourse only emerged in China towards the end of the 19th century as a fusion of various strands of thinking, including lineage discourse, anti-Manchu resentment and the need to find a discourse that united all their opponents against the decaying imperial system, and reaction to Western imperialism.

There is no explicit attempt at comparison between the two countries, although there is a parallel pair of articles that deal with anti-semitism in China and Japan. Xun argues that the “myth” of the “Jew” was built up by 1898 reformers because of the fear that, unless something was done, the “stateless” Chinese could become like the “stateless” Jews. Goodman, on the other hand, argues that the Japanese at that time were attracted by the similarities between the “outsider” position of the Jews with a claim to be God’s chosen people and that of the Japanese in Asia. Otherwise the contributors have been left free to pursue their own separate concerns. Sometimes these overlap, but more often they diverge. It is also a pity that there is no significant reference to the alternative interpretations of Chinese identity, including racial identity, that have been formulated in Taiwan in recent years. Nor is there any attempt to relate the debates over Japanese identity to the repeated arguments with China over official textbook interpretations of Japan’s actions in the Second World War. It is also a pity that there is no concluding chapter to draw the threads together.

Overall this collection is well-written and edited. It will achieve its goal of ensuring that the academic debates over racial discourse in both
China and Japan are kept alive. The subject is important. But there is still scope for another work that focuses more explicitly on the links between racial discourse and contemporary foreign policy issues.

Peter Ferdinand


China is a country undergoing profound change, but as this book shows it is a process that is seen as bringing both opportunities and dangers. The notion of luan, or chaos, has often been placed at the centre of discourse on China’s reforms as the drive for growth brings with it unintended consequences that threaten instability. This study describes how the Chinese leadership has tried to manage these changes, drawing on elements of tradition to build what has been variously described as a “secular morality” or a “revolutionary religion,” a cohesive force that can bind society through the “disorder of modernization” when modernization itself is viewed with suspicion and as the source of many of society’s problems.

Tracing the roots of political and social behaviour in contemporary China to traditional values in this way has too often resulted in overly simplistic conclusions, but Børge Bakken’s study offers a convincing explanation of some of the values underpinning current campaigns and, more generally, China’s approach to social control in the 21st century. It also offers important insights into the leadership’s incremental approach to reform that has characterized Chinese politics for at least the last five years.

As described in this volume, the exemplary society is a means of controlling change and of preventing disorder. The values that form its foundation are said to emerge as “memories of the past,” but these are not preserved unchanged, rather they are seen by the author as being a “calculated way of controlling the modern.” The author talks in terms of “repetition with a difference.” Some of the repetitive elements that the modern state draws upon are the notion prevalent in some strands of Chinese philosophy that all individuals are potentially perfectible, the attraction of positive models, and the importance of moral education. These and other strands are combined and adapted to meet the new challenges of the reform process in a new “moral science” of spiritual civilization.

The normative values of an exemplary society are not in themselves coercive but in the third section of this book the author shows how they have been linked to a more contemporary system of observation and evaluation. Through the processes of biaoxian and file-keeping the authorities aim to bring individual behaviour closer to the ideal of the exemplary society. Contemporary campaigns such as the “Ten stars of
civilization” again show the continuing significance of these ideas; however the author might have explored further the fraying at the edges of many of these control techniques brought about by ongoing changes in social organization and the means by which the authorities are trying to respond to these changes. While it might have been right for Walder to say that the danwei, or work unit, “dominates the scene in the cities,” developments in urban China are beginning to undermine its once all-powerful role.

An important point of this study is that moral values are only truly realized in a social setting: “morality in China is a social form of morality, based largely upon the gaze of the other,” says Bakken. This is reflected in notions of “face” and “saving face” where it is about being seen to do the right thing. Biaoxian and evaluation are similarly grounded in a public expression of correct behaviour. The author suggests that the danger inherent in these kinds of techniques of control is that most individuals simply develop strategies of feigned compliance. As a result behaviour has a tendency to descend into simulation, or, more strongly, hypocrisy. The author suggests that by relying to an ever greater extent on mechanisms that elicit only a formal, overt obedience the appearance of order becomes superficial. Such a system contains within it the possibility of breakdown, but in an interesting conclusion, the author suggests that such simulation strategies might also lead individuals to seek private solutions and have the indirect (or maybe deliberate?) effect of preventing collective action. The ability of the regime to maintain power appears to rely to a great extent on the willingness of individuals to see the worth in continuing to feign acceptance.

This valuable study draws on a rich variety of Western and Chinese language sources listed in a comprehensive bibliography. There is also an invaluable glossary of Chinese terms (including characters) for those wishing to carry out further reading in this field. Although the volume is grounded in sociological studies, it also makes an important contribution to the wider field of Chinese studies. It would be an appropriate and thought-provoking book for many postgraduate courses and should be of interest to all those with a serious interest in China.

IAN SECKINGTON


In recent years, the analysis of China’s economic reforms in English-language publications has come under the spell of agency theory, property rights theory or some other version of institutional economics. As the literature has focused increasingly on incentives, constraints, competition and control, the concrete institutional features of Chinese formal organi-
izations that once so fascinated sinologists have faded into the background. This substantial monograph, a revised version of the author’s 1997 doctoral thesis in sociology from the Université de Provence, offers a refreshing corrective to recent trends, and builds partly on an earlier tradition of sinological work founded by such figures as A. Doak Barnett, H. Franz Schurmann and Barry Richman. Corine Eyraud portrays China’s state enterprises under reform not as if they were the specialized economic entities posited in institutional economics, but as complex, multifaceted social institutions struggling to become so. Her theoretical perspectives are rooted firmly in a sociological tradition that takes seriously the manifold connections between any social organization and the larger political and social environment in which it exists.

Eyraud’s study is based primarily on 14 months of research during three separate stays in Beijing, Shanghai and Kunming from 1994 to 1996, during which time she conducted interviews in state enterprises, government agencies and banks about virtually all dimensions of the reform of state enterprise. The book is encyclopedic in its coverage of the basic organization of a state enterprise, the various stages of reform since the early 1980s and the gradual changes introduced since that time.

The central theme is the problematic evolution from the total institution of the Mao period to the purely economic entity envisaged by reformers. The three chapters of Part 2 sketch a brief history of the state sector, situate it in relation to the larger industrial economy, the hierarchy of governments and government agencies in which state enterprises are enmeshed, and the basic internal organization of a typical state enterprise. A total of 26 organizational charts illustrate the government planning and financial hierarchy, the banking system, the cadre management system, the Party, youth league, union and other formal organizations. The three chapters of Part 3 survey the changes introduced into these basic structures during the past two decades of reform. Chapter 6 lays out the primary objectives of reform – the dismantling of the work unit, planning and finance reforms, and changes in the banking system. Chapter 7 provides a chronological policy history of the different stages of reform. Chapter 8 provides a summary overview of the most important changes with regard to the formation of enterprise groups, the management of production, procurement of supplies, sales of products, employment practices, finance and banking.

This book deserves careful reading by anyone about to embark on a more specialized study of enterprise reform. Its most important contribution may be the author’s call to return to a sociological mode of analysis that treats the business enterprise not as a bundle of incentives but as an entity that has long been at the core of an entire urban social and political system. Eyraud reminds us that the reform of the urban state enterprise is simultaneously the reform of urban Chinese society and its mode of political governance. No longer the total institution devised during the Mao era, the state enterprise of today is still very different from the entity conjured up by the concept of the economic enterprise in Western tradition. We constantly refer to partial reform, but this assumes that we
know where things are headed. Eyraud rightly questions whether we know what form China’s state enterprise will eventually take any more than we know what form its social and political structures will eventually take. The two, after all, are one and the same.

ANDREW G. WALDER


Gregory Ruf’s book questions the assumptions embedded in our notions of village community through a careful examination of the ways that Qiaolou, a Sichuan village, was created from the mid 19th century to the present. Working against the conventional treatment of a community as a setting where a bounded and homogeneous group of people reside, Ruf makes the case that the residents in Qiaolou had a sense of common identity only since the 1949 Communist Revolution. The community building process “entailed the mobilization of some – and the suppression of other – local alliances of interest, emotion, and exchange.” Moreover, the transformation of what local people perceived as a “natural village” into an “administrative village,” as he demonstrates with convincing ethnographic details throughout the volume, was profoundly shaped by the institutions of state power.

Ruf begins by reconstructing the topographic past of Baimapu, a market township where the descendents of the first settlers of Qiaolou made their marks in agriculture, commerce and ritual activities, which in turn shaped the landscape of the emerging village community. It is worth noting that in the illustration of a selective genealogy of one village descent group (pp. 12–13), all the Party members (CCP) are marked as “pm” (party member), foreshadowing the series of events that are recounted in the book.

Chapters 3 to 5 contain excellent material that shed new light on the nature of everyday life under state socialism. Through a discussion of the making of a socialist village from the Land Reform to post-Mao decollectivization, Ruf highlights a series of social engineering campaigns aimed at altering the local power structure. He also examines the limit of such state efforts. Land Reform was intended as a means to establish a new order in Qiaolou which was to become an “administrative village.” By actively participating in mass mobilization efforts and pursuing strategies of negotiation, certain leaders avoided being assigned class labels (such as “rich peasants”) that could seal the fate of their families (pp. 80–82). Despite the change of political climate over more than four decades of socialist practices, the key leaders were able to stay in power through the manipulation of kinship networks and the careful maintenance of social relations. More importantly, the author maintains that collectivism
under socialism created the organizational foundations for the post-Mao development of corporate village industry essentially controlled and managed by local cadres and their kin. Nevertheless, the cadres had to evoke the idiom of “one big family” to control Qiaolou, an officially designated “civilized village.”

In his preface, Ruf candidly acknowledges the difficulty of conducting fieldwork in the aftermath of the 1989 Tiananmen democracy demonstrations. He overcomes this problem by intermingling personal narratives with historical accounts from Chinese scholars and the county gazette. His claim that he chose to write this book for his students is certainly a modest one. Since the primary purpose of his study is to question certain assumptions in community studies, his analysis is firmly situated in a large body of anthropological literature. In future work one might expect him address the publications of both William Skinner and Robert Redfield, who dealt with similar problems in other places during other eras. The potential contribution of Ruf’s book is certainly not limited to the field of Chinese studies. Scholars interested in community-building in both urban and rural settings, social and economic transition in late socialist states, urban sprawl and the production of space will find this book to be an important source of original, first-rate ethnographic data. This is an excellent book that deserves widespread attention.

Tianshu Pan


This book is about China’s foreign aid programme in Africa which has remained largely unexamined in the context of international foreign aid. Such an omission seems remarkable since China is the largest developing country aid donor outside OPEC and its aid programme to Africa dates back more than four decades. According to the author, there are some 1,426 Chinese development projects in Africa. However, it would appear that the Chinese desire to isolate their activities has given their missions a sense of mystery and secrecy and has left the world with relatively little understanding of China’s foreign policy.

Through foreign aid projects in Africa, the Chinese have built roads, stadiums, factories and prospected for gold, but perhaps their most typical development projects are small-scale rice schemes. There are well over 120 Chinese agricultural development projects in 44 African countries. Focusing on West Africa, the author compares the very different characteristics of Chinese aid programmes in three countries: Liberia, Sierra Leone and The Gambia. Each of these has experience of Chinese aid projects spanning more than two decades, allowing comparison between projects initiated during successive periods of ideological shift in China.
Two of the many questions which form an important focus in this book are, first, how and why did Chinese foreign aid programmes in Liberia, Sierra Leone and The Gambia start out with the same objectives, but diversify so considerably as they developed, and secondly, what lessons can be learnt from China’s aid, particularly from the agricultural development projects?

Adapting the Chinese model to Africa has proved more difficult than anticipated. As a technical package, China’s small-scale irrigation technology was, on the surface, highly transferable with only minor modifications. The Chinese were generally popular among farmers, their techniques were highly profitable, particularly when they resembled those common in China. However, technology transfer saw the emergence of numerous problems which ranged from macro level issues, such as differences in political ideology and institutional factors, to more immediate, small-scale problems such as the shortage of labour in Africa compared with East Asia. Range of problems has meant that the transference of China’s Green Revolution technology has not had lasting success in Africa.

The techniques introduced were potentially productive and a wide range of techniques are reviewed in the book. However, successful adoption of the complete package of Green Revolution technology was rare, even when it appeared to be appropriate and profitable for local farmers. Although all three projects began with much the same design, each developed differently over the following five years. Liberia shifted from agro-technical stations and village farms to large-scale rice plantations. The Gambia merged China’s independent agro-technical stations with its own rice programme, bringing Chinese schemes under Gambian management. Only Sierra Leone maintained autonomous agro-technical centres with a high degree of independence from the Sierra Leonean government. Each situation reflects a very serious struggle between the Chinese and the African governments. By the time the projects were handed back to Africa, it was clear that the least profitable techniques had become most widespread among farmers, though the most profitable and capital intensive, which were the most expensive to sustain, remained the most desirable among politicians in Africa.

The author analyses in some depth the reasons why China’s imported development ideology has had little lasting effect on West African countries, despite the attraction it held for their political leadership. To be sustained, development ideologies require not only support from the highest levels but also an institutional framework to sustain them. The institutions established by the Chinese in West Africa were not well linked to the existing agricultural infrastructure and in most cases they crumbled after the Chinese left. The author concludes that until African governments can establish an enabling environment which promotes the development of agriculture, the Green Revolution will not be realized.

This book provides a valuable contextualization of China’s aid programme to Africa, and its findings are highly pertinent to the development debate. A minor criticism is that the order apparent from the chapter
titles is not always equally clear in the text and there is a degree of repetition of material throughout the book. Nevertheless, it will be of interest to those concerned with the theory and practice of development, as well as those interested in China, Africa, and Africa’s struggle to develop its agricultural potential.

KATHY BAKER

_Tales of Translation: Composing the New Woman in China, 1899–1918._

In this fascinating study, Hu Ying analyses the process of “translation” through which the idea of a “new woman” was articulated by Chinese writers at the turn of the century. This process was both literal and figurative. Literally, it involved translating foreign-language works from French, Russian, English and Japanese into Chinese. Figuratively, it was a process by which Chinese writers imagined “other” cultures and, in that light, reimagined themselves and their own past, present and future. The results, as Hu warns us, can be unexpected and provocative (pp. 12–13). An expected result, confirmed by her study, is that ideas about women, gender relationships and female sexuality were central to the discourse on Chinese nationhood. A provocative revelation is how deftly female figures from European culture were snatched from their historical context and stitched into the fabric of China’s imagined “new woman” in creative ways that also resonate with the past.

Hu’s book centres on four female figures who dominated the imagination of readers and writers, male and female, during these decades: Sai Jinhua, the concubine-consort of one of China’s earliest ambassadors to Europe, and her fictional counterpart, Fu Caiyun, heroine of the novel _Niehai hua (Flower in a Sea of Retribution);_ Sophia Perovskaia, the Russian anarchist; the _Lady of the Camellias_ made famous in the French novel of the same title by Dumas fils; and the French revolutionary Madame Roland. She uses each of these figures to examine a different aspect of the paradoxical double process of translation, by scrutinizing the major works in Chinese where these female characters appear.

Her close reading of _Niehai hua_ shows how the novel subjects the Chinese woman to a foreign gaze, by moving Caiyun into Berlin and creating a “displaced narrative voice” that must explain the familiar as if to a stranger (pp. 26–27). Caiyun moves through several roles: she takes the place of her consort’s first wife (who declines to travel abroad and move about publicly, citing propriety); she then dons foreign clothing and indulges in blatant affairs that cross class and racial lines; and finally she becomes the pupil of a foreign tutor named Sarah Aizenson (modelled after Sophia Perovskaia). While Caiyun remains an ambiguous foil through whom problems of concubinage, free love and the faded figure of the courtesan are ironically examined by the novelist, Sarah is portrayed
This process of stripping away cultural context to create a foreign character who is unambiguously intelligible as a Chinese role model recurs in treatments of Madame Roland. Ultimately known in China as the “mother of the French revolution,” Madame Roland first gained Chinese readers’ attention in a lengthy biography composed by Liang Qichao. Liang portrayed Madame Roland as a woman who – in a long-established mode of literati writing that used a female voice – articulated his own radical critique of despotism. Like Sophia Perovskaia and (almost) like Liang himself, she paid with her life for her revolutionary beliefs. Penning Madame Roland’s biography from his position as an exile in Japan, Liang Qichao also drew empathically on a Chinese biographical tradition of eroticizing martyred women. Classical virtues and modes of literati self-representation come together, then, in Liang’s complex act of “translation.” Hu plays off Liang’s biography against a tanci by female writer Chen Wanlan. Chen situates Madame Roland in a circle of like-minded women who “sustain, write about, and die with her” (p. 185). The tanci, a literary form favoured by female writers and readers in the Qing period, was composed using informal verse and vernacular speech, including musical accompaniment so that it could be sung or chanted aloud. In Chen’s tanci, Madame Roland begins as mentor and muse, a classical role model, to her Chinese protégée. Ultimately, though, she is upstaged by her pupil Huang Xiuqiu, whose very name signals her metamorphosis: “Yellow” for the Chinese race, “Xiuqiu” for her original feminine name of “Pretty Autumn,” and for the name she embraces as she immerses herself in the new learning of her time – “Embroidering the Globe.”

Hu’s analysis of the complex interaction of European and Chinese female characters in writings by Chinese men and women acts like a refracting crystal on her texts, breaking up their complex parts to reveal classical tropes and late imperial values, which infuse renderings of stripped-clean foreign role models who, thus de-cultured, can be insinuated into plots that fit imagined versions of China’s new woman. This book about the “new woman” misromanizes the term throughout.

SUSAN MANN


Since Esther Boserup’s 1970 pathbreaking work, writers have struggled to conceptualize gender disparities as they affect access to property and machinery to work the land. This volume, dedicated to Boserup, updates knowledge of recent changes in access to physical property as a result of current economic restructuring and privatization. This is an important
issue. Housing in these nations is a major means of enforcing government policies regarding population, family size and lifestyle.

The volume brings together hard-to-get materials on an important area of the globe currently undergoing massive changes. The studies convey the sense of these general changes, as well as specific national differences. The editors chose depth over breadth. Four countries are represented: Singapore (one article), Vietnam (5 articles), Laos (2 articles) and China (7 articles). Nevertheless, overall there is a good coverage of urban and rural differences, and social class impacts on women’s access to property.

The areas are comparable. China, Vietnam, Laos and Singapore share a common Confucian heritage, which affects all aspects of people’s lives. To various degrees, these countries are also characterized by decisive socialist states that deliberately structure access to property. The volume brings together writers from those nations and scholars abroad, through WONET (Women’s Network on Economic Transition in East/South-East Asia). Among the themes are changing ideology and the enactment of equality with privatization. The socialist governments emphasized property rights for women and men, but the reality was often different. In rural China and Vietnam, women have no share of their parents’ houses because they are expected to live with their husbands’ families (p. 91). Hoang Thi Lich argues for Vietnam that only involvement in urban housing programmes can satisfy women’s needs. With privatization, ideology has shifted to the market, but here, too, women may not have the same jobs or seniority, and may mainly get housing through their husbands’ units. Fei Juanhong gives an account of Shanghai women’s housing rights. Before market reforms, employment status affected women’s access to housing directly, since both income and housing resource were located in their working unit. The recent housing reform – from state control to market operation – gave women and men freer access to the housing market, with housing subsidies from their employers. However, women’s higher rate of unemployment and informal sector work, and more family responsibilities, reduce their chance for housing benefits (p. 200). Analysis is needed of the male/female division of labour in different sectors rather than the housing policy per se.

According to Barbara Hopkins, women’s lower status in the labour market affects their status at home. Single women, widows and divorced women are especially disadvantaged in access to housing in Beijing, because they have lower pay on average and fewer options (Wei Zhangling and Bu Xin, p. 230). One earner’s income is not enough for decent housing.

Rural areas in China have a different set of issues. The household responsibility system emphasizes the family as a working unit, and land is likely to be registered under the household head’s name. On the one hand, Li Weisha’s study shows that the commune system cleared the old clan elder (patriarchy) system in rural areas. The majority of women (76.25%) tend to make joint decisions with their spouse (p. 235). Further, Li Zongmin points out that the one-child policy may improve
women’s position, given the tradition of passing on the house to sons (p. 253). On the other hand, however, Li also found that although Chinese rural women participate in labour-allocation decisions in a more diverse local economy, usually the husband signs the contract for land use rights, and if a woman lives with her husband’s family her land rights would be nominal.

Tran Thi Van Anh is positive about the contract system in Vietnam (p. 101) and praises government policies for being gender sensitive. Implementation, however, is another story. Land allocation based on working age results in women from 56 to 60 only receiving half the ration of land in comparison with men of the same age (p. 103). As in China, only the name of the head of household appears on land use certificates, generally the man’s (p. 109). Tinker found that in the land and housing registration, even when they are eligible, some women may not claim their rights to a land use certificate, and are not always aware of their rights (p. 19). Vietnam’s housing policies sound equal (Thai Thi Ngoc Du, p. 61), and while the cultural norm of male dominance may override policies, it is the case that women own more houses in Ho Chi Minh City than men (25.7% versus 13%). It would be interesting to know the quality of house owned.

The Singapore government’s linking of family values to access to social goods is well known. Housing policy reinforces its population policy. Since the mid-1990s, Singapore has become vocal regarding the importance of Asian values (such as the importance of family, the community, hard work and respect for authority), as opposed to Western values, as a key component of a successful development model (Pyle, pp. 27–28). This limits access by unmarried women and single mothers to the government-provided housing. On the other hand, stress on the family unit encourages multi-generational care, family care for the elderly and grandparents’ care for grandchildren, which may benefit women.

Overall, the gist of the book is that gender equality has worsened since the economic reforms.

WEIZHEN DONG and JANET W. SALAFF


Modest in style, simply and often charmingly written, this is nevertheless a very ambitious book. It is framed by the perpetual human drama of autonomy and dependency, the “separation constraint” as Stafford calls it. He argues persuasively that it is a human universal and a worthy theme for comparative social study. Drawing attention to it through psychological theories of attachment and separation anxiety, he completely recasts the classical anthropological theme of rites of passage. What anthropologists have missed are the physical acts of parting and return, and their
elaboration into performances of summoning, greeting, reunion, detaining and seeing off, in which reunion is already heralded. The basic premise of such acts is the making of relations through constant movement away and back. Being away is as much a condition for maintaining relations, constructing them as an ideal in imagination, as being back together.

China is a paradigm case of this human fact because “one encounters there narratives and rituals of separation and reunion which are unusually elaborate, unusually explicit, and unusually literal” (p. 177, his emphases). To elaborate the theme itself Stafford revisits and connects in unusual ways a series of topics he and other anthropologists and historians of China have studied before. He sheds upon them a new significance and adds many illustrations from his own fieldwork in two far-flung rural areas, one in Taiwan in the 1980s the other in north-east China in the 1990s.

After the theoretical introduction comes a chapter on the annual New Year and Autumn festivals of reunion and visiting. Next is a chapter on the paradox of elaborate performances of greeting people as friends when they are not close and lack of ceremony among those who are close. It is followed by a chapter on gates and doors, which attract the good and repel the dangerous. The order makes excellent sense, but reading them one wonders where the separation constraint has gone. They are about separation, but how are they driven by it and what are the effects of the way they channel it? Then comes a chapter on having meals together and on the central place of women in the preparation of meals. It is followed by a chapter on women being the paradigm within the China paradigm of separation as brides and the emotional focus of return as mothers, and – as he could and perhaps should have added – key agents in the making of relationships as the keepers of social accounts and preparers of the gifts for making visits and maintaining contacts. The next chapter is on how children learn through rhythms of the ordinary and the festive and of repetition after family members upon whom they depend. These chapters are much more obviously about attachment and separation, and their social-psychological core. But Stafford still does not offer an explicit analysis of the peculiar effects of their Chinese cultural formation. He is concerned only with the Chinese elaboration of the theme as such. His touch is light and suggestive.

I have left to last what will probably interest readers of this journal most. It is the way in which the senses of belonging and history, learned in this way, inform the greater narratives and events of political history. When the state cuts or refashions festivals of reunion to emphasize new unities, such as that of a work unit, or refashions senses of commonality into those of nation, not only does it create a new before/after division in the regular pulses of separation and reunion, it also creates an anxiety of separation from those domestic and other senses of attachment that people had created in the apparently eternal cycles of making relationships. They will probably find new ways of revitalizing themselves. On the other hand, since they do need to be remade, kept unmade for long enough they would atrophy in favour of new kinds of coming,
going and union. The same is true of the effects of colonial occupation and civil war that have separated Taiwan from mainland China. The rhetoric of sacred union and poignant separation used by Communist and (some) Nationalist leaders evokes the emotive narrative of parting and reunion. The Chinese separation and reunion story is a powerful political weapon, but not powerful enough if for many generations union is not remade. The salience of close ties across the straits can atrophy, while others are made. That is as much as Stafford says, in his modest way. But we can conclude from this very suggestive book that increasing visits and economic ties are vital for union, bellicosity counter-productive.

Stephan Feuchtwang

*Social Transformation and Private Education in China.* By Jing Lin.

Private education has been expanding rapidly in China in recent years but the scholarly literature has been rather slow to document this. Much of the discussion thus far, particularly in China but also elsewhere, has been in the popular media, and the focus, not surprisingly, has been on the high-profile “elite” private schools. Commanding high tuition and attracting the nouveaux riches, such “schools for aristocrats” have provided fodder for a variety of sensationalistic accounts of their elaborate facilities and the costs associated with education at them as well as the excesses of parents who compete with each other to engage in conspicuous consumption. By contrast, Jing Lin’s welcome volume offers the most detailed scholarly overview to date of the wide range of private education available in China today, thus putting into context the place of the elite schools in this larger picture.

The book is divided into four parts, with Part 2 – which provides profiles and characteristics of elite private schools, ordinary private schools and private universities – and Part 4 – which addresses the continuing debate over these schools, through an analysis of the differing responses from the public, the scholarly community and the government – offering the most rewarding information for readers of this journal.

Lin has done a very good job of combing the Chinese press for relevant sources, but her real contribution comes from the fieldwork undertaken in 1995, 1996, 1997 and 1999. She was able to visit nearly 40 schools in various parts of the country, including those in large urban, township and rural areas. These were short trips, with Lin spending half a day to one day at each school, so readers should not expect to find anything resembling a detailed ethnographic study of any individual school. Nevertheless, by using connections through friends and colleagues, she was able to conduct informal interviews with many school founders and other relevant personnel. At this stage of research on private schooling in China, this broad brush approach is very appropriate. Indeed, some
subjects, such as rural private schooling, have hardly received any previous attention, either in China or the West.

Readers in different disciplines may well be attracted to different sections of the book. For political scientists, economists and legal scholars, perhaps the most interesting discussion concerns issues of ownership of private school property and the right to make a profit in education, which is still considered to be a “public undertaking.” While Lin’s discussion of this is relatively brief (pp. 157–163), it does suggest some of the key issues involved in these debates, and details some of the malpractices of these schools as they try to circumvent what is an imperfectly regulated system, with inherent contradictions.

Considering the most recent developments in Chinese private education, including the growth of private education companies and the franchising of successful private boarding schools as a profit-making activity, and the establishment of private colleges in China by foreigners in violation of current (albeit not always enforced) laws (see *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 14 June 2001, pp. 60–63), the issue of private schooling is likely to become more salient even to those outside the field of education with a more general interest in Chinese reforms. Jing Lin has provided a very useful road map for all of us.

STANLEY ROSEN