

policy” hardly explains the extent of Wei’s influence on the Ch’ing policy decision. Thus, the title of the book under review is misleading; a more accurate title should be: *Wei Yuan’s Rediscovery of Maritime Asia*.

Those who are familiar with the history of the Chinese in South-east Asia are quick to point out that one of the key factors contributing to the reshaping of Ch’ing policies towards South-east Asia is that of the influx of Chinese nationals into that region throughout the 19th century. Unfortunately, Leonard’s book totally ignores that important aspect.

Nor is the book a biography of Wei Yuan. The description of Wei’s life and career is at best sketchy. The book would have been more attractive had there been more details on Wei Yuan, since such a biography in English is still not yet available.

The book however is solidly and painstakingly researched, with major Chinese sources included. Leonard’s thesis is both challenging and refreshing – it leads one to think of Wei Yuan more along traditional Chinese lines. As such, the book is an important contribution to the understanding of Chinese history from a Chinese perspective (Paul Cohen labels it the “China-centered” Chinese history).

EDWIN PAK-WAH LEUNG

*Tibet: A Political History*. By TSEPON W. D. SHAKABPA. [New York: Potala Publishers, 1984 (original pub. 1967, Yale University Press), 369 pp.]

Shakabpa’s history of Tibet is the best general history currently available, and it is fitting that Potala Publishers has reissued it in paperback format.

In May 1951 the Tibetan Government signed the 17-Point Agreement with the People’s Republic of China acknowledging Chinese sovereignty. This brought Chinese military and civil personnel to Tibet and prompted a number of officials, including Shakabpa, to leave Tibet and move to Kalimpong, India. It was there that Shakabpa began work on this book. All those interested in Tibetan history and culture owe him their gratitude for his outstanding effort.

This history deals with Tibet from the era of the great kings of Tibet in the seventh century A.D. to 1959 when the Dalai Lama fled from Tibet to India. It is replete with quotations from Tibetan texts and otherwise unavailable Tibetan Government records which Shakabpa either copied, or had copied for him. It contains an excellent glossary with correct Tibetan spellings, and is clearly a major contribution to Tibetan historiography.

The coverage of the book, however, is heavily weighted in favour of the earlier eras, with only 16 per cent devoted to the critical period from 1934–59. This is particularly unfortunate since Shakabpa was an

important lay official in the traditional Tibetan Government and himself played a key role in Tibetan history during the late 1940–50s. He was head of the Tibetan Trade Mission that visited the United States and England in 1948, and then co-head of the abortive Tibetan Mission to China in 1950. He was also one of the closest advisers of Taktra, the Regent of Tibet, and thus played a major role in determining policy. The virtual absence of information on internal Tibetan affairs and the inner workings of the Tibetan Government is a major disappointment.

Shakabpa's position as an important Tibetan official gave him unusual access to otherwise unavailable documents and texts and this is one of the book's great strengths. However, his position is also a weakness, since the aim of the book, to a considerable degree, is polemic rather than scholarly. Shakabpa is interested in countering Chinese claims that Tibet was a part of China, and thus there is considerable selectivity in what he presents. For example, Shakabpa makes a major point of the fact that Great Britain, the United States and several other western nations recognized his Tibetan Government-issued passport in 1948 and placed their visas on it. He, in fact, includes a reproduction of his passport with its visas as proof of this. However, as he well knows, the British Government actually told him they had made a mistake in initially issuing him a visa on his passport versus on a "certificate of identity," and then refused to give him a new visa when the first one expired. (This is discussed in detail in M. C. Goldstein, "The demise of the Lamaist state: a history of modern Tibet," ms.) While this omission does not seriously distort the reader's view of Tibetan history, it does reveal the need for readers to keep in mind that Shakabpa is a Tibetan writing about Tibetan history to further a cause.

Nevertheless, the book is excellent and is a must for all interested in Tibetan history. It remains the best all around history of Tibet, and is likely to be so for some time to come.

MELVYN C. GOLDSTEIN

*Nationalitätenpolitik und Entwicklungspolitik in den Gebieten nationalen Minderheiten in China.* By THOMAS HEBERER. [Bremen: Universität Bremen, 1984. 369 pp. DM 20.00.]

The last few years have seen a veritable explosion of Chinese-language publications on China's minority nationalities, and this has been reflected in a growing literature in western languages. Thomas Heberer's fine book is a large-scale and fairly comprehensive contribution. It is based on research he carried out during a four-year stay in Beijing (1977–81) and an extended period of field study in one nationality area, the Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture.

In the first part Heberer has taken a chronological approach, discussing policy and practice in the various periods before and after