

O'Dowd aptly calls the Third Indochina War the "last Maoist war" because the result of the military operation alerted Deng Xiaoping to the flaws and shortcomings of the Maoist way of organizing the PLA, and when Deng completely assumed power in China in the early 1980s, he began to reform the heavily politicized army and society that had been shaped by Mao's ideas.

I am puzzled by O'Dowd's claim that there is no reference to the "Third Indochina War" in the current literature. In fact, a recent volume edited by Odd Arne Westad is devoted to the study of that conflict and uses the term "Third Indochina War" explicitly as its main title. Westad's collection examines the Sino-Vietnamese clash in a broader context, discussing how the interplay of the national, regional, and international dynamics contributed to the outbreak of the war. It also includes fuller treatments of the Vietnamese perspective of the war. Nevertheless, O'Dowd's book is a useful contribution to the study of the Third Indochina War.

QIANG ZHAI

Eurasian Crossroads: A History of Xinjiang

JAMES A. MILLWARD

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xxii + 438 pp. £20.00

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Undertaking a comprehensive history of Xinjiang from pre-historical times to the early 21st century is a daunting academic endeavour. The region, roughly situated in the middle of the Eurasian continent, resists all clear-cut definitions, whether historical, cultural or geographical. It saddles the shifting divide between the nomadic and settler civilizations of Inner-Asia and China/Mongolia; was never a distinct political entity; fell under the influence or rule of Tibetan, Arab, Turkic, Mongol, Russian and Chinese empires; and remains up to today a multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic and multi-religious ensemble.

Historical accounts are similarly scattered and must be pieced together from sources in Tokharian, Türk, Soghdian, Tibetan, Mongolian, Manchu, classical Chinese, Chaghatai, Persian, Russian, Japanese, French, Turkish, German and Mandarin, few of them directly concerned with the region *per se*. In addition, the People's Republic of China insists that Xinjiang has been part of China since the first century CE, and much of the writing about Xinjiang history in recent times has been shaped by contemporary nationalistic agendas, to the extent that "scrutiny from Beijing forces even non-Chinese scholars to think and re-think what they write and say in public settings" (p. x).

It is therefore no small achievement that, with *Eurasian Crossroad*, James A. Millward has managed to condense, in an authoritative and engaging account, the first general history of Xinjiang in the English language. Millward, who teaches history at Georgetown University, says that he has written "for a general audience (...) as well as specialists in the history of China or Central Asia who wish to know more about Xinjiang" (p. xi). But *Eurasian Crossroads* accomplishes much more than that. It provides the most even-handed, dispassionate and thorough historical account of a region that is "both Turkic and Chinese" (p. ix), carefully appraising, contrasting, and adding nuance to the best scholarship available on periods ranging from the classical period to post-9/11 Central-Asian geopolitics.

The volume looks at the intrinsic "betweenness" of the region over a long chronological perspective (p. 1) along seven chapters of 40 to 50 pages each: Ancient

encounters (earliest times–eighth century); Central Asia ascendant (ninth to 16th centuries); Between Islam and China (16th to 19th centuries); Between Empire and Nation (late 19th to early 20th century); Between China and the Soviet Union (1910s–1940s); In the People's Republic of China (1950s–1980s); Between China and the world (1990s–2000s). The text is supplemented by maps, figures, a timeline, three contemporary portraits and over two dozen pictures drawn from European archives (in particular the Riksarkivet in Stockholm) or taken by the author himself.

Because of the marked discontinuities in the region's history, the first two-thirds of the volume effectively intertwine the two distinct “Turkic” and “Chinese” historical perspectives. If the imperial history of the Western regions (*xi yu*), from the first Han colonies of soldiers-farmers (the *tuntian*) to the domestication of the province under the Manchu dynasty is relatively well known, it is not the case of the non-Chinese perspective, at least in the form of a comprehensive narrative. Millward's strength is that he depicts each period as the result of complex, and often haphazard, forces that shape very distinct modes of accommodation or conflict between the region and the external forces that impact it. Hence, each period is rendered through the prism of dynamic pairs – or at times trios – rather than through the classic angle of the rise and fall of the ruler of the day: the Xiongnu and the Han empire, the Türks and the Tang, the Uyghur Kingdoms and eastbound Islamization, the Mongols and the Chaghatayds, the Manchus and the Zungars, the Republic and the East Turkestan Republic... Xinjiang is always beset by both centrifugal and centripetal forces pulling in opposite directions. It is not until the Communist take-over in 1949, that the cast is finally died, and that the two narratives fuse into a single story of accelerated integration into China proper. The broad lines of this assimilation are deeply rooted in 18th- and 19th-century Qing frontier statecraft, supplemented by massive Han migrations, at first state-sponsored (under Mao), then economically driven (since the 1990s).

Always the distanced critic, Millward knock downs many received ideas along the way. He disputes the strength of Han dynasty control over Xinjiang (“The impression that all Xinjiang was Chinese territory throughout the Han Dynasty is a distortion arising from later historians' emphasis on certain aspects of this mixed record” [p. 24]). He refutes the idea that the tribute system marked the submission of non-Chinese people (“The Chinese term for these diplomatic presents, *gong*, is usually translated as ‘tribute’, but it would be better to simply call them ‘gifts’ since ‘tribute’ implies a subservient and extractive relationship that did not exist” [p. 73]). He discusses nationalists' views of Xinjiang provincialization under the Manchus (“To say that China ‘annexed’ Xinjiang in 1884 is wrong, first, because it was the Qing empire, and not China, that changed Xinjiang's status (...) In fact, Xinjiang, like Mongolia, northern Manchuria and other frontier territories, was an imperial holding on a par with China proper” [pp. 137–38]). He stresses that, unlike in Tibet and Mongolia there was “no unified Uyghur response to the fall of the Qing” because “there were no élites in positions of sufficient prominence” (p. 171). He relegates the role of the Soviet in the establishment of the East Turkestan as second to “local anti-Chinese and Turkic nationalist (not ‘Pan-Turkic’) sentiment” (p. 229). These are just a few examples.

In the last chapter (1990s onwards), Millward abandons a strictly chronological narrative for a thematic treatment of the forces that give the region its modern face: globalization, economic development, Han migration, environmental constraints, and ethnic dissent and separatism. He acknowledges that the 1990s brought “a broad shift in domestic policy” whose overall thrust was “integrationist and even assimilationist” (p. 341). Here the author seems quietly resigned to the accelerated

disappearance of the traditional Uyghur way of life, the price to pay for making China's hold on Xinjiang "now more secure than ever" (p. 354).

"The task of history," John K. Fairbank once wrote, "is to understand the circumstances, motives and actions of *all* parties concerned." *Eurasian Crossroad* is the first volume to do exactly that for Xinjiang studies, becoming the requisite scholarly reading on the region.

NICOLAS BECQUELIN

Culturing Modernity: The Nantong Model, 1890–1930

QIN SHAO

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The story of Zhang Jian, the Dasheng Cotton Mill, and Nantong as a model city is well known. Samuel C. Chu, *Reformer in Modern China, Chang Chien, 1853–1926* (Columbia University Press, 1965) and Marianne Bastid, *Educational Reform in Early Twentieth Century China* (Center for Chinese Studies University of Michigan, 1987) presented Zhang as a wily modernizing entrepreneur who used his status as holder of the *jinshi* degree to establish factories which in turn financed schools, museums, and the modernization of his hometown of Nantong, a small city just south of Shanghai.

Qin Shao's project has ambitious new dimensions. She has not only taken advantage of newly published sources and archives and repeatedly visited Nantong to look with new eyes and make extensive interviews. She thoughtfully draws on an eclectic variety of theory to comment on the pitfalls of the concept "modernity," the role of reform models in modern China, and the interplay of the national vs. local and past versus present.

The first chapters pointedly rehearse the rise and fall of the "Nantong Model" in myth and reality. They start with a more or less conventional history of Zhang's rise from humble roots, his initial plans for a textile factory and his trip to Japan in 1903 which, along with late Qing reforms, emboldened him to establish a "model town." Shao underlines the tension between using connections in the central government and Zhang's "village-ism" (*cunlu zhuyi*), that is, local autonomy. Shao then reads the physical town to explore the cultural and symbolic realm. She argues that Zhang manipulated space and time as "raw materials" to construct an "image" (p. 55) of political power. The modern-style paved roads, architecture, and institutions were partly practical but even more important, symbolic of a "modernity" which did not otherwise exist. Chapter three "The model in print," makes a parallel argument about books, periodicals, and official publications. Chapter four, "The model on display" is a supple commentary on the first modern museum in China, the schools as exhibitory institutions, and, intriguingly, the construction of modern theatre, including Zhang's patronage of Mei Lanfang, the Beijing opera star. Chapter five, "The model in decline," describes how, by the time Zhang died in 1926, Nantong's success had been undermined by corruption and obviated by radical nationalism. Shao concludes that "we must distinguish between what is successful and what is lasting" (p. 240).

This readable story smoothly incorporates important arguments, put most clearly in the sections "Show Time" (pp. 44–49) and "Myth Making" (pp. 50–54): Zhang produced not a genuinely modern town but a "socially engineered simulation of