

Book Reviews

Modernizing China's Military: Progress, Problems, and Prospects. By DAVID SHAMBAUGH. [Berkeley, CA, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2003. xxviii + 374 pp. £24.95; \$34.95. ISBN 0-520-22507-4.]

The field of PLA studies is at a crossroads. Whereas specialists once pored over the few pages of a general political department *Work Bulletin* for hints of the inner workings of the military, experts now struggle with trying to drink from a fire hose of information. PLA publishing houses, cut off from subsidy and desperate to generate revenue, are flooding the market with military books of varying levels of authoritativeness, and the Internet is awash with the all-too-familiar flotsam and jetsam of truths, half-truths, and outright fiction. These new sources have overwhelmed a field with too few advanced linguists, and with only the most rudimentary tools and frameworks with which to process and assess this information.

David Shambaugh's *Reforming China's Military* is an important milestone in this quest, bridging PLA studies of the past with those of the future. It is the natural heir of the classic book-length treatments of the subject by the intellectual progenitors of the field, including John Gittings, Harvey Nelson, Harlan Jencks, and Ellis Joffe. For specialist and non-specialist alike, the book is an essential reference work of both information and bibliography, providing "one-stop shopping" on civil-military relations, doctrine and training, command and control, force structure, budget and finance, defence industries, procurement, and threat perceptions by PLA strategists.

At the same time, the author should be credited for consistently going beyond mere description to advance a series of thematic arguments, some of them boldly controversial in the field, and defending them with impressive primary source scholarship and fieldwork. The strongest chapters deal with organizational issues and threat perceptions among PLA strategists, and the field must squarely confront the difficult questions raised by the author in the civil-military chapter, particularly his discussion of the possible "nationalization" of the military. While I acknowledge that the field must participate more actively in the larger political discussion about China, the final chapter on policy prescriptions, nonetheless, seems somewhat out of place, especially in light of the long shelf life that the rest of the work will no doubt enjoy.

Given the challenge of integrating such a large amount of information into a single textbook-like volume, the book inevitably strains from the scale of the task. The author acknowledges the challenge in his introduction, highlighting the need to constantly "update and rewrite based not only on the evolution of the PLA but also on the appearance of new materials or perspectives." Given the large caches of historical PLA material left to be processed and the prospect of seemingly geometric increases in the amount of future information, this may in fact be the last

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book in the canon that can claim to comprehensively examine the subject. As in the larger China field, the flood of data has unavoidably produced narrow specialization, with experts struggling to classify the genus of a single tree much less map the entire forest. Indeed, one can envision a future for the field in which entire books are written on each of this book's chapters. Yet comprehensiveness is ultimately the greatest strength of Shambaugh's opus, which succeeds in presenting the reader with a robust picture of the Chinese military. I would recommend this book without reservation to anyone interested in Chinese military affairs, contemporary Chinese politics, or East Asian security.

JAMES MULVENON

Taxation without Representation in Contemporary Rural China. By THOMAS P. BERNSTEIN and XIAOBO LÜ. [Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003. xviii + 282 pp. £50.00; \$70.00. ISBN 0-521-81318-2.]

Bernstein and Lü present a powerful argument that the problem of "peasant burdens" cannot be resolved unless rural taxpayers are included as fully-fledged polity members whose interests are represented in both policy making and policy implementation. They do so by addressing two important puzzles. In chapters two to four, the authors examine the paradoxical combination of light central taxation and onerous local extraction that has haunted rural China for centuries. They attribute this problem to two major institutional tensions. One is that Chinese peasants remain essentially subjects without political rights vis-à-vis the state (p. 38); the other is that subordinates in the bureaucracy have no right to disagree and negotiate with their superiors (pp. 41–42, 91–95). The authors show that these long-standing facts of life induce local officials to increase levies and taxes while the central state works hard but often fruitlessly to contain these same burdens (p. 90, pp. 109–114). In the end, all three parties involved in rural taxation lose out. The centre suffers because the public loses confidence in its ability to control local officials (pp. 51–56); local officials see their popular support drain away when they try to meet their "unfunded mandates," such as compulsory basic education (p. 56, p. 88); peasants, especially the poorer ones, lose most, as they not only lose a substantial portion of their income but are also often bullied or subjected to physical force by enforcers of unlawful extraction (pp. 60–61; 78–80).

The second major paradox the authors address is that neither peasants nor the central state can effectively restrain local officials from imposing excessive taxes and levies. Bernstein and Lü devote four chapters to explaining how peasants and the central state have attempted to tackle the problem of excessive peasant burdens and to outlining some possible solutions. They meticulously examine how peasants often fail in attempts

to reduce local impositions by engaging in individual and collective violence or by staging “rightful resistance” (pp. 120–136). The authors make a laudable attempt to explain collective action against excessive burdens using the language of social movements, though they caution that no such movement currently exists in rural China. Their analysis of the leadership dynamics surrounding collective action and the horizontal networking of peasant activists are ground breaking (pp. 146–57). Bernstein and Lü then proceed to offer a thoughtful treatment of why the central government has thus far failed to resolve the problem of excessive exactions despite “exhortations, regulations, and campaigns,” limited political reforms such as village elections to empower farmers, and administrative and rural tax reforms (chapters six and seven). They conclude that the best solution involves restructuring state–society and central–local relations (p. 167). Only when taxation is linked with a right to political representation, the authors suggest, will peasants become taxpayers with citizenship rights rather than subjects who unconditionally owe their grain to the authorities above. At this point, local officials would then become responsive politicians rather than tax farmers, and central leaders would become accountable political leaders rather than occasionally beneficent but often arbitrary rulers.

A particular strength of this book is its sensitivity to several significant yet often neglected distinctions. Bernstein and Lü show that it is necessary to distinguish between “agricultural rural China” and “industrial rural China” (p. 6), developmental and predatory states (pp. 4–7), central and local states (p. 8), state capacity to extract resources and state capacity to secure local compliance with policies that restrict extractions (pp. 15–16), as well as bottom-up and top-down approaches to contain extraction (chapters six to seven). Every one of these distinctions is a stepping-stone towards a better, more nuanced understanding of China, its rural population and its politics. Readers will learn just as much about how to study China as they will about China itself in this fascinating book.

LIANJIANG LI

The Reluctant Dragon: Crisis Cycles in Chinese Foreign Economic Policy. By LAWRENCE C. REARDON. [Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2002. 355 pp. £34.50. ISBN 0-295-8121-0.]

According to Lawrence Reardon, most Western scholarship on PRC foreign economic policy before 1978 painted the entire period as one highlighted by Maoist autarky. In fact, argues Reardon in this conceptually framed and empirically rich book, from 1949 to 1979 China’s foreign trade policy actually shifted back and forth in a cyclical pattern between “semi-autarky” and an “import substitution industrialization” (ISI) strategy. These were the two dominant, but competing, elite visions of how to attain the uniformly accepted goal of “self-reliance.” The two coali-

tions who held these views also disagreed about the motivational strategy the state should employ, with the semi-autarkists favouring a normative/mobilizational strategy, while the ISI coalition preferred a remunerative/administrative one. The driving force of the cyclical shifts were economic crises that triggered reassessments of the ongoing policy position by the competing elite group, who used problems in the extant development strategy to undermine the legitimacy of its opponents and their policy. The new dominant coalition then proposed its program, which eventually faced a crisis, ending the cycle of the policy process.

The Reluctant Dragon presents excellent, in-depth discussions of very important periods in China's foreign economic relations. It shows how Zhou Enlai and Chen Yun tried to reform the autarky imposed during the Korean War and how Mao undermined that effort, arguing for a "rash advancement." Reardon shows in great detail how, following the death of Lin Biao, Zhou Enlai with the assistance of Li Xiannian pushed for greater openness in 1972, only to be attacked by the Gang of Four in 1975–76. He also shows how some policies adopted after 1978, such as export-processing zones, had their origins in the export bases of the 1960s and early 1970s.

Reardon places his analysis within the context of international political economy and international relations, and within the debate over the relative role of external versus internal factors in a state's level of internationalization. Reardon strongly believes that because China had the independence to choose which strategy to adopt, and the fact that it shifted between these two strategies all the while eschewing export-led growth, shows that domestic politics, domestic debates, and elite values, rather than external forces, were the primary determinant of foreign economic policy. No doubt, the fact that China rejected export-led growth for this entire period shows that elite predilections, and particularly Mao's views, were a key factor determining China's developmental strategy. And while Mao's radicalization of foreign trade during the Great Leap Forward may have been driven by his own domestic political agenda, Reardon points out that the expanding conflict with the USSR and Mao's desire to sever ties with his former big brother also contributed to this shift (pp. 84–85). Reardon also quotes Bo Yibo that the improved international climate after the Geneva and Bandung conferences convinced the Politburo that the global situation had improved, triggering another innovative shift. Quoting Reardon: "as external systemic pressures subsided, China enjoyed a greater flexibility in selecting the level of involvement with the international community" (p. 76). Thus, while Reardon rightly emphasizes the role of domestic politics, the external environment did more than simply set the parameters of the debate; it facilitated shifts in domestic politics and the policy debates themselves.

The book makes other major contributions. First, it presents a terrific collection of quotes from leaders, particularly Mao, Zhou and Bo Yibo, outlining their views on the role of foreign trade in China's development. Their views make for wonderful reading in light of the degree of openness adopted today. Interestingly, many of the comments by Deng

Xiaoping that pushed forward internationalization in the early 1980s echo the attitudes expressed by Zhou Enlai as reflected in these pages. Secondly, Reardon is correct to argue that this is clearly an understudied period in China's foreign trade policy and that the history of the PRC is critical to understanding later periods in the PRC, such as how the limited success of the ISI strategy taught the elites that a more outward, export-led strategy was necessary if China was to modernize. Thirdly, Reardon's periodization resonates with other issue areas, so readers will feel comfortable with the argument and the shifts that occurred in foreign trade. Finally, because ISI and semi-autarky were the two poles on this policy continuum, with Mao controlling the parameters of the policy debate, we can see why China never adopted the export-led growth strategy that the Asian tigers initiated in the 1950 and 60s, a decision that left China impoverished at the end of the 1970s. Little wonder Deng began such a massive innovation in the foreign trade sector once he gained the full reins of political power.

DAVID ZWEIG

Local Government and Politics in China. Challenges from Below. By YANG ZHONG. [Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2003. 229 pp. \$25.95. ISBN: 0-7656-118-X.]

Yang Zhong's excellent book about *Local Government and Politics in China* gives a succinct and convincing account of the frameworks for local governance in the PRC today. The organization, functioning, powers and evolution of local government in China are notoriously difficult to grasp due to the many intersecting layers and lines of authority, the diversity of local conditions, and the shorthand language used by administrators to refer to local government. Although there is a growing literature on local government in contemporary China, we have, until now, lacked a comprehensive overview in English.

For almost a decade Yang Zhong has observed the behaviour of local government in a small number of places in China, and is thus able to base his account on actual practice. The style is refreshingly simple and easy to follow, the administrative jargon is well explained, and the structure of the presentation is lucid. The core aspects of local governance are covered, with a sound focus on counties, townships and towns, and a separate chapter dealing with village politics. Local authorities in cities are not covered; this omission is unfortunate, but understandable from the point of view of keeping the book within manageable limits.

The chapters deal with the long historical perspective, the organizational structures of counties, townships and towns, local officials, policy implementation and the role of village authorities. Although Yang Zhong claims to use a rational choice institutionalist approach, this model is largely left unexplained and seems only marginally to have guided the

description of local politics. The notion of rational choice, disappointingly, is used only to explain officials' reactions to incentives and disciplinary rules, the buying and selling of public office (p. 117), and pressure from the media, which has been given free rein from above to disclose corruption and mismanagement in local authorities.

The tension between local cadres' "excessive levies" of fees and taxes and the need to finance local infrastructure, education and other services enjoys due attention. The Chinese fiscal system does not allow local governments to keep enough revenue to function. At the same time, the central leadership forbids other types of levies, above a small percentage of incomes, in order to prevent the peasants' burden from becoming too large, which may cause social unrest. It is often forgotten that local governments need funds to operate properly and that, instead of being concerned with peasant unrest, the central state ought to create adequate frameworks for local public finance. Curing the illness is always better than treating the symptoms. Yang Zhong blames the problem on a mixture of "unfunded mandates" (i.e. obligatory expenditures financed by local means) and expensive "bloated local bureaucracy." In contrast, I believe that "unfunded mandates" are appropriate in most cases, but are likely to cause problems for some local governments. I also believe that local governments that hire officials in excess of the official limits are in most cases acting rationally from the point of view of getting the jobs done. The problem arises because the central state does not recognise the cost of developing proper local services and appropriate standards of administration in rural areas. The scale of local development and geographical location means that there are great differences in local governance needs. For example, a village in Zhejiang or Southern Jiangsu may have a gross domestic product larger than a whole county in Anhui or Henan. The need for administrative personnel and public finance differs strongly from place to place, far beyond the provisions made in the state's personnel quota (*bianzhi*). Yang Zhong does indicate the diversity of local conditions, but he could have done more to explain its effect on local governance behaviour.

Since the early 1980s, the Chinese state has made use of institutional rational choice mechanisms to induce local utility-maximizing behaviour. The devolution of power means that local government is increasingly exposed to incentives from above (rather than dictates). Special project funds, grants and loans are available if local authorities meet particular performance targets and if they match the central grant with local contributions. The use of incentives for institutional and corporate rational choice also extends to the use of competitive tenders, auctions and negotiations on financial burden sharing. It is a pity that Yang Zhong fails to explore this important aspect.

These omissions aside, this book is an excellent and well-written introduction to local Chinese politics. The book reflects good empirical research, but its real strength is to provide an excellent overview for students of Chinese politics and society who need to know about local public administration in rural areas.

FLEMMING CHRISTIANSEN

Twentieth-Century China: New Approaches. Edited by JEFFREY WASSERSTROM. [London and New York: Routledge, 2003. xv + 273 pp. \$25.95. ISBN 0-415-19504-7.]

This useful volume brings together a number of articles showing recent shifts in the English-language historiography of 20th-century China. Historians tend to talk in terms of centuries, and a book about historical approaches to the century just finished is timely. Wasserstrom's introduction establishes the grounds for thinking about China's 20th century as a discrete period of historical time, at the same time explaining the logic of the book and integrating its disparate elements.

The chapters show considerable diversity. Joseph Esherick's "Ten theses on the Chinese revolution," already well known in the field, rebuts some received wisdom about the (Communist) revolution and offers a series of alternative conclusions. Among these is "the need to break the 1949 barrier," (p. 41) a point discussed at greater length in Paul Cohen's essay on "The 1949 divide in Chinese history." The diminished significance of 1949 in recent studies is a natural product, as Cohen notes, of political and social change in China since the death of Mao, and he poses the problem of how to "probe the ways in which 1949 did indeed signal abrupt and important change, as well as the ways it did not" (p. 35).

Lin Chun's "Toward a Chinese feminism: a personal story," is the third essay, along with Esherick's and Cohen's, in Part one of the book ("The shape of a century"). This could hardly be described as a piece of historical writing in any conventional sense, and many of its points about the historico-cultural specificities of women's liberation in China are raised in a well-developed historiographical context by Harriet Evans in a second gender-related chapter, "The language of liberation: gender and *jiefang* in early Chinese Communist Party discourse." On the other hand, one can see that Lin's engaging, reflective essay would make a useful companion piece to one genre of writings now regularly set for contemporary China courses: women's memoirs.

The focus on China's socialist trajectory in the essays by Lin and Evans highlights the book's lack of attention to the Nationalist era. Two chapters focus on the early decades of the century. Henrietta Harrison's "Newspapers and nationalism in rural China, 1890–1929" nicely problematizes the theoretical nexus between print capitalism and nationalism, pointing to the mediation of printed communication by patterns of reading and oral culture in Shanxi. In "Contours of revolutionary change in a Chinese county, 1900–1950," Keith Schoppa provides a characteristically rich description of a sub-county periphery in a macro-regional core, showing the interplay of environment, communications and social organization in the reception and shaping of revolution. Among the themes in Republican-era history that this volume does not touch on is urban history. Topics such as consumption, communications, factories, urban space, night-life, art exhibitions and the movies, prostitutes and

criminals — in brief, a thick cultural history of social change — do not make an appearance in this book, although they feature in much recent published work.

The essays by Harrison and Schoppa are placed in Part two of the volume, “Going local,” designed by Wasserstrom to make the point that a local history differs from, if also inflects, the saga of the nation. Also in this section are “Perspectives on the Chinese communist revolution,” by Kathleen Hartford and Steven M. Goldstein, and Chen Yung-fa’s “Suspect history and the mass line.” The former provides a thoroughly useful historiographical retrospective on approaches to histories of communism in China, while drawing attention to the usefulness of comparative approaches to the history of the revolution and to the importance of local studies. The latter revisits the Yan’an purges of the 1940s, pointing to their foundational importance for the more extensive purges of the Cultural Revolution. Although both can be used to make the “localization” point that Wasserstrom wishes to emphasize, their historiographical significance is arguably greater for the history of Communist China than for the construction of alternative histories, or histories of “the fragment,” to use Partha Chatterjee’s term.

Parts three and four of the book, “Symbolic turns” and “Political legitimacy at the century’s end,” are devoted to developments in the PRC. Evans’ essay, mentioned above, is placed alongside “Revolutionary rudeness: the language of red guards and rebel workers in China’s Cultural Revolution,” by Elizabeth Perry and Li Xun. The use of swear words, of a local and earthy language, for political purposes in China has not to my knowledge elsewhere been examined. The point of comparison chosen by the authors is the class differentiation in rhetoric in 18th-century France, explored in Robert Darnton’s *The Great Cat Massacre*. This interesting paper puzzlingly concludes that language used by the Red Guards “was surprisingly ‘classless’” (p. 234), a moot point when this was clearly a non-literati language. A more useful comparison might have been language used by the Red Guards’ contemporaries in the West – the student revolutionaries of the 1960s who conducted their political struggle using terminology such as “fuck US imperialism.”

The last two chapters, on 1989 and 1999, bear out the strongly linear tendencies in history writing, however critical historians might themselves have become about such tendencies. Marie-Claire Bergère’s “Tiananmen 1989: background and consequences,” was first published in 1992 and the passage of time may have served to qualify some of its conclusions in the writer’s mind. In particular, although the PLA’s role was certainly strengthened after June Fourth, the armed forces have since been pared back. Contemporary China seems in no danger of becoming a militarist state. Wasserstrom brings the volume to a conclusion with “The year of living dangerously: China’s 1999.” A key event in 1999, just short of a century after the Boxer Rebellion, was a demonstration by the *falun gong*, a sect that has since become a byword for opposition to the Chinese state. Time will tell whether this event, like the Boxer Rebellion,

will come into its own as a historical turning point and become a point of departure for a new period of Chinese history.

ANTONIA FINNANE

From Leninist Discipline to Socialist Legalism: Peng Zhen on Law and Political Authority in the PRC. By PITMAN POTTER. [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003. xi + 259 pp. £42.95. ISBN 0-8047-4500-5.]

Pitman Potter has provided the first book-length treatment in English of Peng Zhen, a seminal figure in the development of the legal system in China during the Mao and Deng era. Peng began his roller coaster career by rising through the party ranks to become party secretary of Beijing and party secretary of the Political-Legal Commission. He was then purged and expelled from the Politburo for opposing Mao. After Mao's death, Peng returned to power, regaining his seat on the Politburo, and serving in a variety of high-level positions, including secretary of the Political-Legal Committee and chairman of NPC Standing Committee.

As Potter notes, the complexities of Peng's career, his view that the role of law must suit the needs of the time, and his own personality traits make it difficult to draw simple conclusions about his ideas on law and political authority. At times, Peng was a brutal enforcer of party policy who emphasized the subservience of law to party dictates. At other times, he boldly opposed Mao and later Deng and insisted that the party should be subject to legal constraints and refrain from interfering in day-to-day governance. A cynical reviewer could easily conclude that Peng adopted views based on what best suited his political position and personal interests at the time. Potter is somewhat more charitable, portraying Peng as a hardnosed pragmatist, willing to take a principled stand even at great personal expense when necessary, but also keen to keep up with the times.

Despite the inconsistencies in Peng's ever-changing views, Potter argues that it is possible to discern a broad trend involving a transition from *Leninist discipline* to *socialist legalism*. Law originates in both systems from party ideology and policy. However, whereas Leninist discipline relies on party organs carrying out party orders to govern, socialist legalism relies on judicial organs and political-legal committees to enforce formally enacted laws and regulations. Perhaps most important, whereas in the Leninist discipline approach law is merely an instrument and party policy trumps law, in socialist legalism law trumps party policy and binds not only citizens but state and party actors as well. While in socialist legalism the party sets the general direction for society in both cases, once party policies are enacted into law, the party must

follow laws until they are changed and refrain from micromanaging state organs responsible for daily governance.

Potter keeps the narrative moving along smoothly, and does an admirable job of tracing and making sense of Peng's views throughout his career despite all of the inconsistencies. The book is clearly written, well organized and extensively documented. This is an important work that should be read by anyone interested in Chinese legal history and the evolving relationship between law and politics.

However, while there can be no doubt that Peng was a pivotal figure in China's turn towards a law-based order, the lasting impact of his legacy is more debatable. The intellectual debates about the future of China's legal system have already moved well beyond Peng's truncated form of socialist legalism. Today, the idea that law is binding on both citizens and officials alike is well accepted in theory, although imperfectly implemented in practice. The debates nowadays are about rule of law rather than Leninist discipline and socialist legalism. Peng's socialist legalism, once cutting edge, now represents the conservative end of the ideological spectrum. His inchoate and undeveloped socialist legalism has been incorporated into a more developed and mature form of a statist socialist rule of law, articulated most succinctly by Jiang Zemin in his speech at the 15th Party Congress. This party and state-centred view of legality and the role of law in China is challenged by other schools, including a neo-authoritarian version of rule of law that also emphasizes the importance of the central state but does not emphasize the interests of the party nearly as much as Peng's socialist legalism. Indeed supporters of neo-authoritarian rule of law would abandon Peng's steadfast commitment to Deng's four cardinal principles, especially socialism and the leadership of the Party. In addition, there is support for a more communitarian variant of rule of law that is less state-oriented and endorses democracy, if not immediately, at least at some point in the future. There is even limited support, particularly among the legal intelligentsia and academic elite, for a liberal democratic rule of law of the general type found in certain economically-advanced Western states with well-developed legal systems.

Rather than a harbinger for an enduring socialist legalism, Peng arguably should be viewed as the beginning of the end of hard-liners who thought that socialist legalism is still viable and that law is only an instrument for carrying out party policy and attacking enemies. As Potter observes, Peng was shaped by his experiences as a revolutionary comrade, especially in the need for guerrilla warfare, for strengthening the Party by attacking its enemies, eliminating corruption and building up institutions within the Party and government. Those experiences produced certain responses, some favourable to the development of law and the legal system, some not. Given such circumstances and experiences, Peng's views were perhaps fairly progressive for the time, even if coloured by a heavy dose of opportunism and self-interest.

However, Peng and his generation are gone. Even Jiang Zemin and his generation are on their way out. The next generation of leaders are not

revolutionary leaders who still have the luxury of believing in old school socialism and the dream of ideological purity. They must respond to present realities. Peng was well aware that the role of law had to change given the transition to a market-based economy, which he opposed. He also lived long enough to see the effects of economic reforms, including a decrease in central control and party authority. The Party is no longer able to impose its will through policy on a rapidly-evolving economy with increasingly diverse economic actors, a rapidly-evolving society with a heightened consciousness of their rights, and a rapidly-evolving legal system where institutional reforms such as those overseen by Peng in the NPC have created new bases of authority, new norms and a body of professionals committed to such norms.

Peng's own experiences – and the political, economic, historical and cultural circumstances at the time – led to his limited and relatively undeveloped conception of Party-dominated, state-centred socialist legalism. 'But the times they are a changing.' While Peng undoubtedly is an important historical and transitional figure, Peng's relevance to contemporary China, and in particular the enduring power of his cramped conception of socialist legalism, is more questionable.

RANDALL PEERENBOOM

Birth Control in China 1949–2000: Population Policy and Demographic Development. By THOMAS SCHARPING. [London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003. 406 pp. \$95.00. ISBN 0-7007-1154-6.]

Despite the need for and importance of a book on birth control, the obstacles to a successful volume are daunting and have, until this publication, served to limit the possibility of a thorough-going analysis. The reasons are numerous. Since 1949 there have been a series of policies initiated and then set aside. Every policy seems to have had some exceptions, sometimes written and observable, on other occasions intuited from reports in newspapers and interviews. Though the diversity of the country is well recognized, understanding how it plays out in actual policy trends is much harder to assess. Until the past decade, detailed information has often been scarce and demographic indicators have been viewed with some suspicion. It is against this background that Thomas Scharping, with a lengthy and distinguished record of research, has written a study designed to fill this gap in our knowledge of Chinese development. The English version reviewed here draws on his revised 1995 German-language volume.

This book is not straightforward history. Instead, Scharping chooses to sketch out the basic ethical issues that are confronted in a birth control policy. He then explains the choices the Chinese authorities made and their difficulty in persuading a largely agricultural population to observe policies and practices that seem so counter to their own personal well-be-

ing. Emphasis is, of course, especially on the single child family (SCF) policy of the past two decades. Scharping accomplishes this task with remarkably little overstatement and few of the rhetorical flourishes that characterize so much of the literature on this important and controversial policy. The book is composed of six separate sections, most of which are further divided into two or three chapters (often rather brief).

The Introduction briefs the reader about the complexities, both political and moral, at the heart of the topic. Of special interest in the Introduction are some 15 pages entitled "Information and sources." Though the book places the notes for each chapter at the end, together with an extensive bibliography of both English and Chinese sources, this initial discussion of sources provides a hard-hitting analysis of publications in the general field of the SCF.

Part two, entitled "Policy formulation," outlines in 40 tightly-organized pages the Chinese experience with population planning leading up to the SCF, and the modifications and adaptations that followed the leadership's adoption of the program. These pages are worth reading especially carefully because they remind the reader that Chinese experiments, often quite diverse and equivocal in outcome, preceded the SCF. Moreover, they set the stage for the topically-oriented segments that form the heart of the book.

Part three, under the overarching title of "Bureaucratic implementation," is divided into three chapters: "Legal norms and practice in flux," "Problems of organization," and 13 pages of "Planning and evaluation." The length of this final chapter in Part three indicates how little attention planning and evaluation received and, perhaps, the importance attached to them. Part four, "Popular response," is short and divided into two parts: "Gender family size and sex preference" followed by an equally short discussion of "Strategies and evidence of non-compliance." This reader believes that a somewhat more extended discussion might have been useful, though anyone in the field of Chinese studies will have some knowledge of the cleverness and intensity, both in the past and still today, of non-compliance in Chinese society, especially in the countryside (though less so in the cities).

Part five, entitled "Demographic trends," focuses on female marriage trends, fertility levels, and changes in sex and age structures. These topics have been discussed ever since the SCF policy was adopted; scholars who have been working on rural social problems and developments in China will likely find support here for some of their interview results. Demographers have, of course, addressed these topics in their various census studies. Part six, "Conclusions and future perspectives," draws on the author's approximately 50 years of experience to summarize the demographic projections and lessons of the volume. It is a sober and thoughtful discussion of the likely developments that follow from long-term enforcement of the SCF.

Scholars working on specific social and political problems such as social stability or material well-being in China will find the tables and charts quite useful, even though some data of specific provinces and cities

is quite limited. Political scientists will be especially interested in the analysis of the role of the Party and governmental units. After all, this is where the new Chinese leadership will need to look for improved social welfare delivery in the aftermath of SARS.

This is a fine piece of work and will make a strong addition to the personal library of social science scholars of China.

JOYCE K. KALLGREN

Private Life under Socialism: Love, Intimacy, and Family Change in a Chinese Village, 1949–1999. By YUNXIANG YAN. [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003. xvi + 289 pp. Hard cover \$55.00, ISBN 0-8047-3309-0; paperback \$19.95, ISBN 0-8047-4456-4.]

When Yunxiang Yan's first book, *The Flow of Gifts*, was published in 1996 it was immediately clear that a new leading scholar of contemporary Chinese society had entered the scene. Yan's second book *Private Life under Socialism* richly delivers on the promise of his first. This new book is, in fact, very much a companion volume to *The Flow of Gifts*. Together, they constitute a uniquely rich ethnography of the intimate details of social life as lived and experienced in the village where Yan himself spent 15 years of his life before becoming an anthropologist. Both books draw on the same strengths of the author. The first and most obvious is his unprecedented access to and intimate understanding of his former village of residence. However, what makes for truly great ethnography here is Yan's almost uncanny ability to present often quite complex and challenging arguments in a deceptively simple and understated fashion, making the book both a major contribution to scholarship and an ideal reading assignment for students.

The subject matter of the book is adequately covered by the title *Private Life under Socialism*. Broadly speaking, the book asks how the ways Chinese villagers perceive sexuality and romance, find their partners, marry, exercise rights over family property, establish independent families and care for the aged have changed during the reform period. In this context, other crucial issues in contemporary China are discussed: the increased wealth and consumerism, the emergence of a youth culture and employment opportunities outside the village, changes in gender roles, and the impact of government policies on private life, all of which already are the subject of a rich literature. It is a therefore a testimony to Yan's skills as an anthropologist and a writer that he manages to shed fresh light on all of these topics in almost every paragraph of this book.

If one must be critical, two minor issues can be pointed out, although these can be read as much as strengths as weaknesses. First, Yan does not hide his concern with some of the new trends in village life, and is particularly worried about the hardship that a number of elderly villagers endure at the hands of their unfilial offspring and daughters-in-law. This no doubt is a cause of serious worry, but there is also more than a faint

echo here of Confucian moralizing that unquestioningly assumes that the younger generation ought to be responsible for the wellbeing of their parents, a sentiment obviously not shared by many younger villagers. Secondly, at many points Yan's analysis is critical of established wisdom of earlier anthropologists of China. Although a careful reading of the book reveals this very clearly, the understated nature of the argumentation may lead non-specialists to underestimate Yan's contributions to the field. Perhaps here too a little less respect for the ancestors would have been called for.

The anthropology of China is a rapidly growing and increasingly sophisticated field, yet there are still relatively few books that have made their mark beyond the narrow confines of this area of specialization. Yunxiang Yan's first two books are definitely among the handful of works that will be read widely by non-China anthropologists and China scholars working in other disciplines, and I am very confident that there is yet more to come.

FRANK N. PIEKE

Beyond Late Development: Taiwan's Upgrading Policies. By ALICE AMSDEN and WAN-WEN CHU. [Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003. 207 pp. ISBN 0-262-01198-0.]

Beyond Late Development offers economist Alice Amsden's most recent contribution (here with co-author Wan-wen Chu) to an already substantial body of work on East Asian political economy. Like her previous work, this book is important first because it trespasses the traditional boundaries of economics, seeking explanations to important developmental policy puzzles from institutional theories and empirical case studies more commonly the province of sociologists and area specialists; and second because it looks beyond Asia's mega-economies to the relatively smaller but still highly relevant late developers of Asia, offering important lessons for both students and practitioners of development policy.

Amsden and Chu seek to explain the ability of advanced "latecomer" countries to sustain their global competitiveness in mature high-technology manufacturing and newly-liberalized service industries. They support their argument with previously unpublished data and extensive firm-level interviews from Taiwan, the most successful of these successful latecomers, which Amsden identified in an earlier book, *The Rise of "The Rest"* (Oxford University Press, 2001). Although Taiwan's leading national firms seldom make the *Fortune 500* list, they dominate global market share for many mature, information technology (IT) manufactures. As of 1999, Taiwan produced 85 per cent of the world's scanners, nearly two-thirds of the world's keyboards, power supplies and monitors, and almost 40 per cent of all notebook computers.

The authors note that “first mover” innovators from the advanced industrial economies have already captured the large, initial profits from these and other maturing high-tech products. However, those firms able to invest rapidly enough in optimal size plants, technology, management and distribution are able to garner “second-mover” advantages and reap declining but nonetheless valuable rents as these products are mass produced on a global scale. Amsden and Chu depict this Darwinian struggle of cutthroat competition for plummeting profits in ever-shortening product cycles with clarity and detail; in the short time it took one Taiwan firm to move from planning to producing a particular switch for a \$20 computer keyboard, keyboard prices had dropped to \$4. In this environment, speed, scale, and support are everything. Taiwan’s share of global CD-ROM production leaped from one per cent in 1994 to 50 per cent in 1999!

How is this rapid “ramp-up” possible? Extrapolating from Taiwan’s successful second mover firms, Amsden and Chu identify three key components: first, *the national firm*, which over time displaces the multinational firm in these second-mover sectors, initially in the domestic market and then in terms of global market share; second, *the “neo-developmental state,”* which adopts industrial and regulatory policies designed to overcome the limitations of networking, incubate high-tech start ups, promote import substitution for key components, and protect budding service industries from foreign competition; and third, *the diversified business group*, which offers these firms the assets and experience to “scale” upward and “scope” outward.

Amsden and Chu’s second mover theory of industrial upgrading effectively accounts for the experiences of Taiwan and others among the fastest growing latecomers (their last chapter explores the relevance of their findings for other latecomers, other time periods, and other industries). These conclusions challenge both neo-liberal development orthodoxy and conventional wisdom about Taiwan’s high-tech industrial success. The authors note that “global ideology” for economic development champions open markets, declining state intervention, increased foreign investment, and a growing role for networks of small-scale firms. But rather than multinational corporations or the small, flexible firms so important to Taiwan’s labour-intensive industries, large national firms have led Taiwan’s electronics industry, and locally-owned diversified business groups have pioneered the modern service sector. And while its promotional policies have evolved, the authors contend that “government intervention has been greater and more systematic” in its promotion of high-technology electronics and modern services than in industries of an earlier era.

Although this slim volume will be of interest and value to students of development, policy practitioners, and Taiwan scholars alike, it is not always an easy read. The authors tell a persuasive and often interesting story, but slip on occasion into the shibboleths of economics and acronyms of new sector technologies, offering little guidance to the uninitiated. This should not frighten away the non-specialist; rather, as

with Amsden's earlier works, this book offers a heterogeneous (indeed heterodox) account of an important and understudied phase of late development. It is underpinned by nuanced theoretical support and offers novel policy prescriptions and will inspire others to further explore the avenues illuminated by the authors' conjectures and hypotheses.

KARL J. FIELDS

Between Assimilation and Independence: The Taiwanese Encounter Nationalist China, 1945–1950. By STEVEN E. PHILLIPS. [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003. 272 pp. \$55.00. ISBN 0-8047-4457-2.]

In recent years the sub-field of Taiwan studies has begun to take off and Steven E. Phillips' excellent study of local elite political activities and Nationalist state-building in Taiwan during the highly charged period following the island's retrocession to China is evidence that this process is now extending into the realm of historical research on the Nationalist period. Using a wide array of Chinese, English and Japanese language primary sources, Phillips examines the tensions between local, provincial forces and centralizing, national forces as he traces the question of local self-government through Taiwan's evolution from colony to province to province/nation in the period between 1945 and 1950. He argues that, given the different experiences of Taiwan's elite and the Nationalists, some sort of clash was inevitable, and both groups acted between 1945 and 1950 in ways that were consistent with their past actions and experiences. He further argues that the February 28 incident of 1947 was a turning point after which the Nationalists took over the drive for local self-government in Taiwan and Taiwan's local elite were increasingly politically marginalized.

Phillips shows that Taiwanese elites sought and acquired a political voice under Japanese colonial rule, mobilizing themselves first into assimilationist movements, and later into movements to promote local self-government. Taiwan's local elite continued after 1945 to seek provincial autonomy while remaining a part of the larger nation. They emphasized positive aspects of their colonial experience, such as stability, economic growth, high levels of education, and their own efforts at local self-government; they believed these set them apart from mainland China and on this basis argued for maintaining a loose relationship with the Nationalist government. The Nationalists, however, regarded Taiwan's elites with suspicion for their failure to resist Japanese rule, referring to them as having been "Japanized" or "enslaved." In addition, the sort of autonomy that Taiwanese elites sought did not fit into Nationalist ideas about state building, which, largely in reaction to the divisiveness of the warlord era, aimed to centralize government and diminish provincial power. By early 1947, Taiwanese elites and the Nationalists, who viewed

each other as “backward and feudal,” were on a collision course. When, after the initial violence of February 28, Taiwan’s elites stepped forward to act as intermediaries between the government and the people, they seized the opportunity to call for expanded self-government. The Nationalists responded forcefully, taking the opportunity to eliminate opposition and recast political discourse on the island. The February 28 incident was a watershed event after which the Nationalists increasingly dominated Taiwan politics. By 1948, the Nationalists were fully engaged in “N/nationalizing” Taiwan, a process through which even so-called local self-government became dominated by national concerns. In this environment Taiwan’s elites had no option but to operate within the political framework established by the Nationalists, a framework that Phillips is only partly willing to describe as “colonial.”

Unlike most studies of Taiwan, Phillips does a superb job of placing his subject into both the Japanese colonial context and the larger context of Chinese political history. His work demonstrates the importance of historical continuities between the Japanese colonial and Nationalist eras in Taiwan, and also between the mainland and Taiwan periods of KMT rule, and examines the very nexus at which these two historical trajectories collide. This book is both a great case study in the tensions between local and national level politics in Republican China, and an excellent investigation into a formative period in Taiwan politics. It is solidly researched and the analysis is balanced. It should be read by anyone interested in the political history of either Taiwan or the Republic of China.

J. MEGAN GREENE

Spymaster: Dai Li and the Chinese Secret Service. By FREDERIC WAKEMAN JR. [Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2003. xvii + 650 pp. \$75.00. ISBN 0-520-23407-3.]

In a brief afterword, Frederic Wakeman asks himself why he devoted “so much effort to fathoming such a morally monstrous” figure as Dai Li, the chief of Chiang Kai-shek’s secret service and he confessed that he was motivated by “a real fascination” for “cobra-like Dai Li” (p. 367). A biographer needs a minimal empathy with his hero. In the present case, however, it was an unwilling empathy for which the author felt that he had to justify himself. How to dissociate understanding and exonerating? Trying to avoid any revisionism, Wakeman opted for an implicit compromise: understanding and condemnation.

This book illuminates the dread world of secret police, spy and counterespionage organizations in Nationalist China. Wakeman has turned every stone and used every kind of source: Chinese, American and Old Shanghai municipal archives, memoirs of agents and observers, contemporary newspapers and magazines, as well as all available second-

ary literature, including some novels. Notes take up 152 pages, representing about 40% of the text's 365 pages. An exhaustive bibliography takes 38 more pages and readers will find the detailed and well-organized glossary-index very useful in navigating an enormous number of personal names and administrative and political labels.

What is missing is a systematic and critical presentation of sources. The author relies heavily on memoirs by former agents of the Chinese secret service. We learn from the bibliography that some of these memoirs were published in China, others in Taiwan. Only incidentally are we told (p. 155) that one of the authors, Shen Zui, was a "turncoat" who had been re-educated by the Communists before writing a "biased account" of his experiences as Dai Li's aide. One would feel more comfortable if informed of the conditions under which such testimonies were produced and with what measure of caution they were used by the author.

The book relates the history both of a man and his time. Dai Li's life reflected the society in which he lived and embodied "the tension between mercurial feudalism and steadfast revolutionary discipline" (p. xiii). On the other hand, Dai Li also exerted his influence on the Kuomintang regime and its interactions with the Communists, the Japanese and, later, its American allies. For Wakeman, "the personalities of dramatically powerful men ... remain the vital substance of history" (p. xv) and Dai Li was one of these men.

The first chapters describe the turbulent childhood of Dai Li in an impoverished family of Southern Zhejiang, his first encounters with the Shanghai Green Gang gangsters in 1921 and, five years later, his admission as a cadet into the sixth class of the Whampoa Academy. From chapter four on, the narrative moves to the description of the political institutions and struggles within the framework of which Dai Li built up his power. His rise was quite slow. In the fragmented organization of the Kuomintang secret service, Dai Li managed to protect his freedom of action, first as head of the *de facto* autonomous Special Service Department of the Bureau of Investigation and Statistics set up by Chen Lifu under the Military Affairs Commission in 1932, and after 1938, as chief of the independent Bureau of Statistics (*juntong*). His complete loyalty won him the personal trust of Chiang Kai-shek. When the Nationalist leader was kidnapped and imprisoned at Xi'an in December 1936, Dai took the risk of joining him to better his chances of rescuing him. Chiang never forgot this act of devotion. The subsequent rise of Dai Li to power was due to the leader's enhanced favour, as well as wartime conditions and a clever handling of American support. The spymaster reached the height of his public career in 1945, some months before his death in an accidental plane crash. Through all these years, Dai Li had used violence and terror to protect Chiang Kai-shek from his enemies inside the Kuomintang Party and outside, mainly the Communists and the Japanese.

The complex context within which Dai Li was active is analysed so extensively that sometimes Dai Li himself slips from view. Nevertheless, some of the shorter monographs presented within the main one are

excellent pieces of research. To take but one example, Wakeman's study of the "panoply" of institutions and associations that were loosely grafted onto the fascist-like *Lixingshe* (Society for Vigorous Practice), but not to be confused with it (although often subsumed under the same "Blue Shirts" heading), is sure to be extensively cited (chapters five to ten).

One may question the very detailed treatment of various events or themes but great accumulations of particulars are often vividly evocative; one example, among many others, is the description of the various techniques used by Dai Li's agents to avoid detection while kidnapping their victims from the crowded streets of Shanghai international settlement (p. 157 ff.). Still, do readers need to know all of the names of the many and changing organs of the Nationalist secret services, of their chief and deputy-chief clerks?

Such concrete, punctilious descriptions are called for by the author's methodological approach. Wakeman in this work is a master of narrative history. To his exhaustive information and his brisk literary style, he adds the ability to distance himself from the story he is telling and to capture the analytical in the descriptive.

Modern China students or researchers will greatly benefit from reading this book, which raises our knowledge of the working of the Kuomintang regime to a significantly higher level.

MARIE-CLAIRE BERGÈRE

The Political Thought of Sun Yat-sen: Development and Impact. By AUDREY WELLS. [London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001. 256 pp. £50.00. ISBN 0-333-77787-5.]

What, another book about Sun Yat-sen? The sceptical reader should not be deterred. He or she will learn much by reading this informative, lucid history of Sun Yat-sen's career, his thinking, and his influence on China as well as on various leaders of developing nations of the last century.

Wells portrays Sun as a rare, humane revolutionary who could have unified China and facilitated China's transition to a peaceful, modern society and state. Such achievements were well in his grasp but the foreign leaders of Sun's time preferred a weak, divided China and ignored his pleas for assistance.

Although Sun was famous in China immediately after his death, Sun's "synthesis of Eastern and Western ideas" attracted few outstanding Chinese leaders to his cause. As Ssu-yu Teng and John K. Fairbank stated in their *China's Response to the West: A Documentary Survey, 1839–1923* (p. 276) "the doom of the Kuomintang was sealed from the time when Dr. Sun failed to convince the scholars of Peita that his "Three People's Principles" could give them intellectual leadership." Why Sun's political thought did not attract a broad segment of the leading elite to agree with his message and follow his revolutionary path is still a puzzle.

Wells has written some excellent chapters explaining how Sun's Christian beliefs were separate from his political thinking and how his ideas about nationalism, social welfare, and democracy influenced such Kuomintang leaders as Chiang Kai-shek, Wang Jingwei, Hu Hanmin, Dai Jitao, and led even some members of the Communist Party to take Sunist thinking seriously. Unlike previous works about Sun, this one also describes how Sun's principles of democracy and nationalism resonated in the anti-colonial, liberation movements led by revolutionaries in pre-Second World War Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Libya.

Yet Sun did not anticipate the struggle after his death over how political power should be shared. As Suisheng Zhao's exemplary study of constitution-making in nationalist China shows (see his *Power by Design: Constitution-Making in Nationalist China*, University of Hawai'i Press, 1996), Chiang preferred the presidential system but his political rivals, Wang Jingwei, Hu Hanmin and Sun Fo, insisted on sharing power through a cabinet system. Chiang won that struggle and, borrowing from Sun's political legacy, held a national election for the First National Assembly. That body approved the 1948 Constitution and elected Chiang as president and Li Zongren as vice-president.

This constitution became the political road map for Taiwan's democratization, and Wells correctly argues that on Taiwan, Chiang and his Kuomintang followed Sun Yat-sen in believing that local elections could nurture self-governance and a spirit of democracy. Taiwan's local elections did that and more, by giving a political opposition the opportunity to form, challenge the Kuomintang, and eventually replace that party in 2000.

Any explanation for Taiwan's democratization cannot be complete without alluding to the powerful ideological influence of Sun's thought as contained in the primary and secondary school textbooks compiled during 1950s and revised in the following decades. Everyone educated in Taiwan learned democracy through the words of Sun Yat-sen.

RAMON H. MYERS

The Dianshizhai Pictorial: Shanghai Urban Life, 1884–1898. By XIAO-QING YE. [Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003. 249 pp. \$50.00. ISBN 0-89264-162-2.]

Finally, one is inclined to sigh, a scholarly study of the Shanghai illustrated magazine *Dianshizhi huabao*, one of the most significant pictorials in late-Qing China, founded by an Englishman, Ernest Major, who had successfully launched the Shanghai daily *Shenbao* a dozen years earlier. A handful of coffee table books hitherto featured illustrations from this pictorial, but there is no systematic study of its background and contents to date. This book is not that study either, but it presents a valuable mine of material. With its aim of reading the *Dianshizhai*

huabao as a “source of Shanghai social history” (p. 2), it not only covers a wide range of material from the pictorial itself (laudably, it includes 137 illustrations), but also makes extensive use of the *Shenbao*, as well as contemporary memoirs and literary works.

The book consists of four parts, a short introduction and an afterword. Part one gives a brief history of the *Dianshizhai*, parts two and three deal with stories depicting Shanghai as a city between old and new and the source of a new urban culture, respectively. Part four turns to religious practices depicted in the *Dianshizhai*. No explanation is given for why these particular topics have been chosen. In the 1991 dissertation on which this book is based, an argument about urban popular culture had served to connect the several parts. This argument created coherence. It has been eschewed here.

It is doubtless worthwhile to study the *Dianshizhai* as a source for Shanghai social history. But it remains crucial to question, as Ye herself does, the pictorial’s “reliability as a source for understanding the culture of the time” (p. 1). Newspaper science has long since abandoned the thought that the news-media are even remotely accurate mirrors of social realities. And the *Dianshizhai* thrived – as pointed out by Ye, too – in presenting the strange. Thus, what was seen on its pages was hardly a reflection of everyday and everyone’s life in Shanghai. This is obvious in the many depictions of festivals, and of particular human types, from criminals to dandies and prostitutes. Yet apart from her early question on the significance of such discrepancies, Ye nowhere reflects how relevant, or how dangerous, the connections she draws between the depicted realities in the journal and the lived realities in the city are. The book presents material but does not answer questions. It is impressionist, rather than fully argued.

The book does not provide enough context (or hides it in the footnotes) to show how and why the *Dianshizhai* embodied and reflected Shanghai as a “society undergoing dramatic change” (p. 2). Indeed, it contains quite a bit of evidence that the morals and values conveyed in the pictorial were not all new. Moreover, unlike Major’s earlier pictorial, the *Huan-ying Huabao* (which had simply reprinted pictures from foreign pictorials but had not been a success, in terms of the physical quality of paper, the printing and binding, the painting and layout), the *Dianshizhai* was designed purposely to fit into the traditional Chinese market in every formal way possible, while simultaneously maintaining the thrill that what was published there was presumably utterly modern.

The main arguments in this book are not quite convincing. It lacks both a grounded analytical and methodological approach. This is not to say, however, that it is not worthwhile: it can be of great use in locating primary sources on a myriad of subjects from social life in late-Qing Shanghai, and it offers many translations of *Dianshizhai* and *Shenbao* material that are most welcome in teaching these materials, as the language of these texts is quite difficult for students to grasp.

If many of the criticisms proffered here sound harsh, this is because they are written at a point in time when the field, once pioneered by Ye

in her dissertation, has exploded. Many others who took off from where Ye started, using her dissertation as a guide to find important materials, have now published their interpretations of the late-Qing media. This has added to the level of knowledge on these media (Goodman, Henningsmeier, Huntington, Janku, Kim, Mittler, Vittinghoff, Wagner, Xiong, Yeh). Much important information that bears immediately on the (sometimes faulty or debatable) points proffered in this book, has by now been uncovered and at least passing reference to this scholarship would have strengthened its import.

It is unfortunate that, unlike Major's publications, the book is also sloppily produced; typos abound, the chosen font is minute, the footnotes are barely legible, and the strange arrangement of having some of the long subtitles to the pictures run directly into the text makes for awkward reading. More serious, however, is the fact that there are no Chinese characters in the text, and no glossary. This significantly reduces its usefulness. It may well have been considerations of catering to a larger audience that have made what once was a rather exciting scholarly study into this pretty book that will now serve neither the specialist nor the generalist audience really well.

BARBARA MITTLER

Love-Letters and Privacy in Modern China: The Intimate Lives of Lu Xun and Xu Guangping. By BONNIE S. McDOUGALL. [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. 305 pp. \$125.00. ISBN 0-19-925679-9.]

This is an important work from a scholar who has already made wide-ranging contributions to our understanding of modern Chinese literature. With *Love-Letters and Privacy in Modern China*, Bonnie S. McDougall now adds a valuable study of its most prominent figure, Lu Xun (1881–1936), contributing in particular to the fast-growing scholarship on the private life of this modern icon. Her study focuses on his relationship with Xu Guangping (1898–1968), the student who became his partner, mother of his son, and for three decades after his death, editor and memoirist.

Two wider aims, named in the title, are to examine love letters as a literary genre and privacy as a social variable. Such research performs the task of bringing Chinese data to issues of general concern. The matter is not just a territorial one. As the author says of investigating privacy in modern China, “privacy is a human rights issue: deny a sense of privacy ... , or claim that it is substantially different, and we deny the people of that culture basic rights of association and communication” (p. 209).

McDougall's chief source is the collection of love letters, exchanged over five months of courtship in 1925 and later during three brief separations. There are two versions: a selection edited by Lu Xun and

published in 1933 as *Liangdi shu* (here, “Letters between Two”), and the original letters, which only became available in stages over the last 20 years. Together they represent a “richness of evidence ... [which is] unparalleled” in Chinese literature (p. 195) and provide the basis for her approach. Other sources, including numerous reminiscences, are usefully summarized in the Introduction. (A note here: given the many names known only to Lu Xun specialists, the total absence of Chinese characters is surprising, especially from this publisher.)

The format of *Love-Letters* is unusual but may be dictated by the unusually dense information presented. It consists of 36 short, sequentially numbered sections of three to nine pages that are grouped into three parts.

Part one, “Intimate lives,” summarizes in separate chapters the lives of Xu Guangping and Lu Xun before they met, followed by their lives together, then Xu’s alone, including her contacts with Zhu An, Lu Xun’s wife. These accounts, with their rare focus on the private lives, are valuable for their meticulousness and detail. The information on Xu especially will be new to many readers, and the pages on her early life, her non-Lu Xun writings, and her widowhood all provide a welcome depth to the person closest to Lu Xun in his last decade. Also interesting are the suggestions made throughout about the autobiographical pertinence of Lu Xun’s prose-poems from *Weeds* (*Ye cao*).

Part two, “Real and imagined lives,” groups together, somewhat awkwardly, a number of topics. It begins with a literary focus by situating the letters in European and Chinese traditions of love letters and of epistolary fiction (chapters eight and nine). Next, it discusses *Liangdi shu*, including its history, the factors in the decision to publish, and its reception (chapter ten). Here the important point is made that its publication likely gave Xu the status of Lu Xun’s widow (rather than Zhu An). Finally, chapters 11 and 12 turn to the characteristics of the letters. This analysis would seem to belong in Part three, but is placed here because it concerns “themes that are retained more or less intact” in the edited letters (p. 112).

Part three, “Searching for privacy,” is the densest and subtlest of the parts. McDougall begins and ends with a discussion of privacy, usually assumed not to exist in China because, as she points out, lexical differences between languages have been confused with the question of whether a concept exists. Most of Part three consists of a detailed, systematic examination of the many discrepancies between the two versions of the letters regarding the lovers’ relationship, their friends, enemies, family, contemporary gossip, and more. Not merely mechanical, in McDougall’s hands comparison yields insights that together compose a picture of “personal space.” Seemingly bland words signal their potency by their omission from the published letters. An example from “Sex and sexual relationships” (chapter 14) is McDougall’s investigation of the phrase “sitting and thinking in silence” as a private code. Another teased out from deletions is Xu’s very delayed knowledge of Lu Xun’s bitter estrangement from his younger brother (chapter 17). With these instances and many more, this study, which is “the first to employ the methodology

of literary criticism” to examine the concept of privacy (p. 3), is persuasive that “educated people in China in the 1920s and 1930s valued their privacy, and ... enjoyed a range of different ideas ... in regard to privacy” (p. 209).

Its detailed, organized analysis on a well-conceived topic, based on a mastery of complex primary and secondary sources, ensure that *Love-Letters and Privacy* will be a standard reference for Lu Xun specialists and a needed, reliable contribution to other fields of study.

EVA SHAN CHOU

Multilingualism in China: The Politics of Writing Reforms for Minority Languages 1949–2002. By MINGLANG ZHOU. [Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2003. xxiv + 458 pp. €94.00. ISBN 3-11-017896-6.]

This book is a detailed examination of reform in the writing of minority languages under the PRC, including the adaptation of languages to scripts never before used to write them. Considering how closely language is related to culture and society, this entails a good deal of treatment of issues such as PRC politics, external influences, such as from the Soviet Union and the West, the impact of modernization and factors like education and religion. Of course, there is quite a bit about China’s spoken minority languages as well.

The book is generally well written, though there are places where the language becomes dense and difficult to follow. The source material for the book is four summers of fieldwork in China’s minority areas (1997–2000) and a vast amount of printed material. The list of references takes up no less than 40 pages (pp. 407–446). All items are in Chinese or English. The author makes judicious use of this array of material to mould his own viewpoints on specific issues.

My only real problem with this book as a work of scholarship is the lack of clarity in the aims and central argument. The introduction gives extensive historical background on China’s ethnic relations and policies, including in the PRC. It also forecasts the topics of the individual chapters, concluding with the author’s hope that China’s experiences in multilingualism will “facilitate the maintenance and development of minority languages in the world community” (p. 35). The conclusion summarizes answers to some of the crucial questions the book tackles, and again returns to the hope that the Chinese experience will be of use to the world as a whole.

Although none of this seems to me a clear statement of aims and argument, there are some very interesting themes taken up in the conclusion and the author’s summaries are always fair. One example is Zhou’s evaluation of PRC performance in the field of minority language writing. He claims that the Chinese government has actually done more

than virtually any other to maintain and develop the writing of minority languages. At the same time, he blames the CCP for putting political goals ahead of minority interests in language writing policy, arguing that “with the same level of financial support minority language workers may have done a better professional job for writing reform” (p. 400). Government intervention is a two-edged sword, but I support Zhou’s view that the trend towards its withdrawal is a good one, allowing for minority professionals themselves to influence the reform of their own written language more effectively.

Under the PRC, the central government has been able to extend its control throughout the country to an unprecedented extent, including to the ethnic areas. One result is that the use and dominance of the Chinese language has greatly expanded. Zhou estimates that the proportion of people among the ethnic minorities with the ability to speak and understand Chinese has risen from about 25 per cent or more in 1949 to about 70 per cent at the dawn of the 21st century (p. 27). Many, but by no means all, of the ethnic languages have almost died out. Zhou offers a complex formula based on measurable data such as the use of ethnic languages in government, literature, the law and the media and finds that there is wide variation among the ethnic languages, with Uyghur, Tibetan, Mongolian, Kazak and Korean, in that order, being the languages still used most widely (pp. 30–1). Impressionistic evidence from my own work in ethnic areas generally bears out this finding, though I would have expected Korean to be ahead of Mongolian. However, the finding does overlook how strongly ethnic languages survive as a vehicle of oral communication in ordinary communities. Since Zhou’s concern is the written language, not the oral, one can hardly blame him for not focusing on the spoken language, which is extremely difficult to measure anyway. But given how strongly the PRC has come under attack for suppression of languages like Tibetan and Uyghur there is political and scholarly imperative in unbiased research on such matters.

Though not without weaknesses, this is a work of monumental scholarship and I expect it to remain the most important in its field for a long time to come. It tackles major issues not studied in preceding works in anything like the range or depth we find here. Its approach is dispassionate and appears to me reasonably unbiased. It is based on an extremely wide range of source materials. It has an impressive array of tables. I recommend it enthusiastically to specialists in Chinese linguistics and ethnic studies, and there is quite a bit that will interest specialists in other fields as well, such as politics and communism.

COLIN MACKERRAS

Huju: Traditional Opera in Modern Shanghai. By JONATHAN P. J. STOCK.
[Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. 279 pp.
£45.00. ISBN 0-19-726273-2.]

This book is a welcome addition to the relatively small number of

monograph-length studies dedicated to living Chinese opera traditions. Its focus on one of the hundreds of regional opera forms, Shanghai *huju*, as opposed to the better-known Peking opera (*jingju*), makes this book even more exceptional. Stock has designed his tome with the admirable goal of situating his study within the disciplinary frame of ethnomusicology. Broadly speaking, Chinese music has not achieved the same prominence in the general ethnomusicological discourse or the emerging “world music canon” as music of other regions, such as Bali or India. The reasons for this are many, and Stock should be commended for recognizing and aiming to tackle the problem. In his opening pages, Stock lays out the conundrum and questions where to position his study on a plane ranging from dry description to theoretical introspection. The book achieves a middle ground between these two extremes with most chapters organized around specific themes or theoretical concerns.

Chapter one, “The rise of a local opera form in East China, up to 1920,” is a fairly straightforward discussion of the historical, social, and performative elements that led to the rise of *huju*. Chapter two focuses on gender issues surrounding the performance of female roles and the rise of female performers from approximately 1915 to 1950. In chapter three, Stock argues convincingly that “place constructs music rather than vice versa” (p. 22), and that location, rather than simple timing, is a vital force shaping a tradition’s development. This chapter makes a fine contribution to the still nascent literature on “music and place.” In chapter four, “*Huju* and the politics of revolution, post-1949,” Stock raises the question that remains central to investigations of music and politics: does music simply reflect political change or does it actively propel change? Primarily on the basis of close analyses of the text, music, and context of three operas from differing periods, Stock concludes that while *huju* certainly reflects and has been shaped by its political environment, its efficacy in creating political change has been very limited.

In the concluding chapter, “Ethnomusicological research in an urban setting,” Stock discusses challenges he faced researching this urban tradition whose carriers are busy professionals. Typically, ethnomusicological fieldworkers spend significant time and effort building close personal and professional relationships with the musicians whose artistry they are investigating. Stock’s openness in recounting his research experience is commendable, yet it reveals that he was, unfortunately, unable to build close rapport with even some of his key *huju* associates in Shanghai. This perhaps partly explains the lack of an intimate connection with his subject that one senses throughout the book, which leaves us with a distanced view of *huju*. This may also be an unfortunate (and one would hope, not inevitable) result of the author’s decision to reach beyond the limited circle of readers already familiar with Chinese music scholarship. While his intentions are good, the result is a general overview of both *huju* and the “pre-existing theoretical perspectives” that he invokes.

Chapter two most clearly illustrates how the embedding of *huju* within musicological discourse, for example, may have done more to obscure

than to advance this investigation. The central discussion is preceded by a bibliographic essay on the current state of gender research in music. Most of the sources outlined deal with Western forms, especially opera. Throughout this section we are reminded that the various concepts and metaphors must be translated to the Chinese context. They have, after all, derived from markedly different societies and performing traditions.

Central to gender construction and performance in Chinese opera is the concept of role type. Role type classification is only briefly touched upon in chapter one, and then mainly in reference to Yuan drama. Role type determines performative elements including pronunciation, melodic material, voice type, makeup, costume, and style of movement and gesture. Actors typically train from childhood to specialize in one specific role type. Historically, the performer's biological sex need not match that of his/her role type specialization. There is much to learn about how gender is constructed and performed in Chinese opera by investigating the classification and operation within this system. How role types are manifested, classified, performed, and even named in *huju*, however, is never systematically introduced. Scholars such as Elizabeth Wichmann have made important inroads into exploring role type and gender construction in Peking opera. Surely, examination of this scholarship and comparisons with genres closely related to *huju* would have proven more fruitful than an overview of somewhat mismatched notions derived from Western forms. As a Peking opera specialist, I am left uncertain as to how a range of roles in *huju* might appear. If a specialist in a closely related tradition is left uncertain, what will other readers (particularly the broad ethnomusicological audience that Stock seeks) be left imagining?

Stock's dilemma is shared by scholars of many Chinese subjects. These traditions, often complex and with long histories, demand that scholars devote years simply to gain a firm grasp of their essential elements. How do we present this rich material to readers beyond a small, established circle of the initiated without compromising depth of coverage? Stock's work points in an important direction. Hopefully, future related endeavours will strike an even greater balance between depth of coverage and larger conceptual frameworks.

NANCY GUY

Hong Kong Cinema: Coloniser, Motherland and Self. By YINGCHI CHU.
[London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002. xxi + 184 pp.
£55.00. ISBN 0-7007-1746-3.]

The recent success of Jackie Chan, Chow Yun-fat, Jet Li, Wong Kar-wai, and John Woo in reaching a global audience, along with the enormous changes in Hong Kong since the early 1990s, has attracted a lot of critical attention to Hong Kong cinema around the world. Beginning with Stephen Teo's *Hong Kong Cinema* (1997) and David Bordwell's *Planet*

Hong Kong (2000), scholarship on the cinema of Hong Kong – whether from the perspective of cultural identity, global culture, film history, or film art – has greatly expanded. Australian scholar Yingchi Chu's book, *Hong Kong Cinema: Coloniser, Motherland and Self*, contributes to this growing trend.

Hong Kong Cinema is a brief but ambitious book. In less than 150 pages, it tries to map out the entire history of the cinema, from the 1910s to developments after the 1997 takeover. The book draws on a provocative conceptual framework to provide a sweeping overview of Hong Kong cinema and offers some fascinating observations on the industry. However, the book needs further revisions to bring out its rich potential.

This book approaches the development of Hong Kong cinema in terms of “national cinema,” a concept that Chu borrows largely from Susan Hayward. Chu shares the conventional belief that Hong Kong only developed its own identity in the 1970s, when a “distinct community” emerged as a result of the colonial government's localization policy and the colony's capitalist prosperity, in contrast to the socialist poverty of the “motherland” across the border. Furthermore, “Hong Kong nationalism” and “nation-building” consciousness spread rapidly in the 1980s and 1990s as anxiety over the future of the colony increased. Reflecting these changes, Hong Kong cinema evolved from a mere “part of the Chinese national cinema” (1913–56) to a “diasporic cinema” (1956–79), controlled by and appealing to the overseas Chinese communities and, after 1979, to a “national cinema.” At the same time, recognizing that Hong Kong is not a nation, Chu modifies her claim by describing it as a “quasi-nation,” meaning that it both “lacked the political status as an independent nation” and was situated “in a triangular relationship” between China and England (p. 50). Yet its cinema had “distinct national” character. It articulated the “quasi-national identity” of Hong Kong; its “geopolitical” differences” with China did not “undermine Hong Kong's Chineseness and identification with China” (p. 66); its industry was controlled by local capital and supported by the state.

The argument that Hong Kong was situated between Chinese nationalism and British colonialism, or that its identity (as projected in its cinema) was fraught with ambiguity and fragmentation, is not entirely original. What is original and thought-provoking is Chu's claim that Hong Kong is a quasi-nation and its cinema was “distinctly national.” But the brevity and narrow focus of the book do little to justify it. As is well known, a “distinct community” is not necessarily a nation, which demands above all a complex process of imagination and construction. But Chu is surprisingly silent about the specific details of any social movement and cultural discourse on nation building in the colony in the 1980s and 1990s (and the socio-economic forces underlying them), and does not explain how they differed from collective imagination in previous decades. Nor does Chu explain why she chooses to subject only a few films (out of many thousands) to in-depth analysis (mainly Jackie Chan's *Project A*, Evans Chan's *To Liv(e)*, and Stanley Kwan's *Full Moon in New York*). Chu's analyses are thoughtful and astute, yet they demon-

strate only that these films project Hong Kong (a colony different from mainland China) as a distinct but not really a national community (chapter six).

The book tends to generalize. For example, it claims that Hong Kong cinema between 1956 and 1979 was a diasporic cinema, controlled by outside capital and articulating an identity that was not distinctly Hong Kong's. This might have been true for the Mandarin (not Cantonese) film industry; but even here ambiguity abounded. The Shaw Brothers Studio drew its capital originally from Singapore, yet its expanding business in the colony (including real estate) was so closely intertwined with the "local" economy and closely affiliated with the colonial government that it might be inappropriate to dismiss it as outsider (especially in a city that had been and continues to be composed largely of immigrants). The Shaw Brothers Studio was also intimately related to Chiang Kai-shek's Taiwan, which claimed to be the only legitimate Chinese government. Similarly, Chu asserts that the colony's cinema before 1956 was "Chinese national." Yet there is no analysis of any single film produced during these 40 years and the book draws its materials mostly from mainland-sponsored publications (particularly *Yilin*).

Many major works (in both Chinese and English) on various themes of Hong Kong cinema have been published since the late 1990s. It is surprising that Chu does not engage with any of them. With analysis of only a handful of films and no illustrations, this book gives little feel of the film culture of Hong Kong to people not already familiar with it. In sum, *Hong Kong Cinema* is an ambitious, thought-provoking book and it contains some fascinating material on the film industry in 1980–2000. Its brevity and narrow focus, however, make it likely to appeal only to specialists.

POSHEK FU