Book Reviews

China's Trapped Transition: The Limits of Developmental Autocracy. By MINXIN PEI [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006. 294 pp. $45.00. ISBN 0-674-02195-9.]

While Minxin Pei recognizes that China has made unprecedented achievement in economic development and social change for more than a quarter of a century, he chooses to highlight a range of China's weaknesses and problems in this volume. According to Pei, "symptoms of a trapped transition have become highly visible or even pervasive" (p. 10). China's developmental autocracy is doomed to stagnation.

The logic of Pei's model rests on the self-interest of the ruling elite in perpetuating the existing authoritarian order. In this political context, the default economic reform strategy is gradualism, which allows the ruling elite to defend its political and economic interests and contain the political risks of reform. Meanwhile, rapid growth has provided the ruling elite with greater resources to preserve the status quo and stave off democratization.

Pei devotes much of the book to the costs and pitfalls of gradualism. In Chapter two, he reviews a range of institutional and legal reforms as well as the spread of village elections. He detects some signs of "pluralism" and states that the legal reforms are "unprecedented in Chinese history" (p. 66). Nonetheless, Pei sees these reforms to be elements of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)'s strategy of illiberal adaptation rather than genuine steps toward liberal democracy.

Chapter three counts the costs of gradualism with case studies of the grain procurement system and the state-dominated commercial banking sector. It also looks at telecom service providers to underscore the government's dominance of strategic sectors. Counting the losses in the grain and banking sectors leads Pei to conclude that "reform will ultimately lose momentum as it grows, both politically and economically, more difficult and risky" (p. 131).

Chapter four moves on to the Chinese state, which Pei believes to have undergone a "critical transformation" and evolved into "a decentralized predatory state" (p. 132). This state is characterized by growing size, administrative decentralization and predation (except for some areas along the coast), the breakdown of the mechanisms for policing state agents and enforcing political accountability, rampant official corruption, and even the emergence of local mafia states. According to Pei, "the loss of confidence in the regime's own future has motivated its insiders to engage in unrestrained predation" (p. 206). "Doubtless," Pei asserts, "China's state capacity will continue to erode … Sustainable economic development will be put at risk …" (p. 166).

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The above leads Pei to elaborate on China's mounting governance deficits, such as problems with public and workplace safety, basic education, public health and the environment. In this connection, Pei also notes China's unemployment challenge, problems in rural areas and the weakening of the CCP as an organization. For Pei, "the build-up of governance deficits is an inevitable product of the transition strategy and policies adopted by the CCP" (p. 204) and now these deficits threaten the very sustainability of China's development. China is trapped. The political status quo bias of the ruling elite exacerbates the tensions and imbalances between state and society and prompts unrepresented but discontented groups to engage in collective protests; such protests in turn feed the fears of the ruling elite about liberal political reforms and reinforce their propensity to maintain the existing order through a combination of repression and co-optation. As a result, Pei argues, the Chinese model of developmental autocracy will not follow in the footsteps of other East Asian developmental states but will have diminishing returns.

Unlike Gordon Chang (*The Coming Collapse of China*), who predicts the demise of the Chinese Communist Party around 2010, Pei wisely stays away from such precise dating and dire prediction. For Pei, the probability for the collapse of the CCP is low unless the CCP fractures from within. Instead, he suggests that China may be stuck in political and economic stagnation for a long time to come, with neither "the development of a true market economy" (p. 206) nor the emergence of liberal democracy. It is highly likely that China's rise will fizzle (p. 213). China hawks in Washington can stop worrying about a mighty China and should instead contemplate the possibility of "an incapacitated state" (p. 214).

As of the book's publication time (2006), China's leaders face the envious tasks of wrestling with the world's largest foreign exchange reserves (close to US$1 trillion) and slowing down an economy that is galloping at double-digit growth rates and generating rapid increases in central government revenue. Pei, however, dismisses China's growth numbers by emphasizing the low quality of such growth. He predicts "the pathologies of a trapped transition will have a material impact on macroeconomic performance in future years" (p. 209).

One may also disagree with Pei on how to interpret various empirical facts. He cites the state commercial banking sector as a prime example of how reform has lost momentum but there is little doubt that reforms of the banking sector have picked up pace in recent years and the vigour of these reforms has helped win ratings upgrades from Standard & Poors. He uses issues such as workplace safety as indicators of governance deficits but makes little effort to examine the serious measures China's leaders have begun to adopt to tackle problems in each of these areas.

At various places, Pei also seems to disagree with himself. He uses the break-up of China Telecom to assert that there was no competition in this sector (p. 105) but fails to note that the fixed-line service

providers have been under tremendous pressure from the mobile providers; a couple of pages later, however, Pei cites approvingly a report by a State Council think-tank that there had been price wars in the telecom sector. Most interestingly, while the book as a whole predicts stalled reforms, it states on p. 45 that "economic reform became irreversible and its impact had raised the standard of living several fold…" since the mid-1990s.

All in all, Pei does a great job in highlighting some of the costs of China's gradual reforms. He has put forward a stimulating framework for thinking about the past and future of China's political economy. Even those who disagree with Pei would do well to take his arguments seriously.

DALI L. YANG

New Directions in the Study of China's Foreign Policy. Edited by ALASTAIR IAIN JOHNSTON and ROBERT S. ROSS. [Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006. xvi + 482 pp. £24.95. ISBN 0-8047-5365-6.]

At a conference more than a decade ago, a senior Sinologist, paraphrasing Stalin's alleged description of historians as "vulgar factologists," described China specialists as "vulgar (lack of) factologists." *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*. After almost 30 years of openness, there are many sub-fields of Sinology in which dearth of information is no longer the problem; rather, scholars find themselves pursuing increasingly narrow specializations as a coping mechanism to deal with a relentless onslaught of data. While their elders once struggled with the agonizing pace of a dial-up connection, they now find themselves overwhelmed by the bandwidth of a fibre-optic submarine cable.

For analysts of Chinese foreign policy, however, the situation is arguably closer to the past, though most would agree that the connection has at least been upgraded to broadband. Foreign policy decision-making is still mostly a black box to outsider observers, with most of the process and debate taking place in secret. Yet the proliferation of foreign policy think tanks and experts in Beijing and Shanghai, combined with the corresponding explosion of journals, books, websites, blogs and even TV punditry, has at least given the Sinological community many more shadows on the cave wall to analyse and categorize. These new sources of data have naturally led the academic community to consider their implications for the models, theories and frameworks of the political science and international relations fields, hoping to gain new insights about the workings of China's increasingly complex relations with the outside world.

In this spirit, Iain Johnston and Bob Ross' recently published edited volume, *New Directions in the Study of China's Foreign Policy*, is an excellent first step in what will no doubt be a long-term quest to integrate theory and empirical evidence in this sub-field. Bringing together scholars chosen "in an attempt to represent current research in Chinese foreign policy from multiple theoretical perspectives and methodologies and multiple academic generations," the book seeks to "take stock of the field of Chinese foreign policy and to consider potential avenues of new research."

The body of the book is divided into three sections: Chinese security policy, including "Chinese use of force, policy towards conflicts of interest affecting war and peace"; China as an actor in multilateral institutions and China's response to global trends, including "evolving concepts of sovereignty and the emergence of globalization"; and new research on domestic–foreign linkage, considering the impact of "trends in public opinion and of Chinese identity on China's policy toward major powers."

The volume is well edited, and each of the chapters offers valuable insights on China's external policies. The Christensen chapter is especially strong, and the Johnston chapter is marked by the author's trademark methodological rigour despite an admittedly imperfect dataset. The only weak link in the volume is the chapter by Allen Carlson, whose analysis does not hold up against the insightful work on Chinese territorial disputes by MIT's Taylor Fravel.

I would recommend this volume without reservation to students of Chinese foreign policy, international relations, state-society relations, and even (God help me) social constructivist IR theory.

JAMES MULVENON

China's Compliance in Global Affairs: Trade, Arms Control, Environmental Protection, Human Rights. By GERALD CHAN [Singapore: World Scientific Publishing, 2006. xxii + 249 pp. $52.00. ISBN 981-256-504-3.]

China's compliance with international legal agreements is an issue that has received relatively little academic attention in the English-speaking world. Apart from a number of specialist studies dealing with issues such as human rights and arms control, appearing either as single-author books, articles or edited volumes, no-one has attempted a comprehensive view of China's activities in the international legal realm in recent years. Chan's book helps fill this gap, supplying a wealth of information on China's participation in multilateral treaties and organizations, and making analytical headway in explaining what makes China tick on matters of international legal obligation – an important accomplishment given the thorny epistemological and

methodological problems faced by scholars in this area. Although Chan may not himself have provided a genuinely unified theory for understanding China's compliance behaviour (and for predicting how China may act in the future), he has made a good effort in grappling with the issue, and helped lay down a research agenda for others to follow.

Chan has organized his analysis around the issue of China's global responsibility. "Responsibility" is defined in terms of answerability and accountability, and is tied to a country's position of power. This seems to suggest that China has less responsibility in dealing with international issues, an idea consistent with the notion of "common but differentiated responsibilities" in which level of development and financial and resource capabilities are relevant in deciding contributions. But Chan notes that China's nuclear power status, its Security Council permanent membership and its membership in many international organizations bear on the question as well. To gauge responsibility, Chan cites a number of criteria, including participation in collective governance, non-initiation of conflicts, acceptance of global norms and, most central to his analysis, compliance with international agreements. Compliance can be difficult to measure because treaties are open to different interpretations and information for judging compliance is typically provided to international organizations by member states themselves. Among the measures one can look at are: provision of information to a treaty body, acceptance of monitoring activities, passage of enabling legislation and actual carrying out of responsibilities domestically. Using this analytic framework, Chan looks at four different issue areas – trade, arms control, environmental protection and human rights. He finds that on issues of trade and arms control, China does better than on issues of human rights and environmental protection in terms of complying with international agreements, a judgment that seems fairly uncontroversial. His overall evaluation of China's compliance with international agreements is that it is "satisfactory to good."

One of the strengths of this book is that Chan considers the Chinese point of view in reaching judgements about China's global compliance. At times, it appears that Chan's goalposts are changing for assessing issues of responsibility and compliance and that a type of relativism has crept in to his evaluation of China's compliance behaviour. But his use of Chinese sources – *in addition* to Western sources – gives his case studies a richness and nuance that lead to more convincing conclusions, and are, in any event, more reflective of the reality that judgments about compliance will always be somewhat indeterminant because ambiguity is deliberately built into some treaties. In this context, one can understand Chan's judgment that China's compliance with international agreements has improved, but that more needs to be done if China is to meet the standards of "the West in general and the United States in particular" (p. 4) and that China "has moved away from fighting against unfair norms and

unjust rules to join the status quo of hegemonic governance'' (pp. 212–13). Another strength of the book is that it calls into question some of the more alarmist views of China. It shows that China is willing to be bound by international law, to pay costs and to share benefits of global collective goods. In important respects, China has become a status quo power, though it is not always easy to know what the status quo is in this era of pre-emptive war, harsh treatment of prisoners and absence of Geneva Convention protections for unlawful enemy combatants.

One topic on which Chan could have said more is why China complies – or does not comply, or does not fully comply – with international treaties. At times, he mentions national interests, morality and socialization as factors affecting China's behaviour but he does not develop them into a systematic theory with predictive power. There is a very rich literature on international compliance – of which Chan is aware as he briefly discusses it – that has arisen over the past decade that attempts to explain the conditions under which states will follow international law. There is a need to better relate these theories – which touch on matters such as reputation, epistemic communities, fairness of legal rules, and transgovernmental networks – to particular issue areas, and to investigate whether a common metric can be devised for understanding compliance.

Even with this shortcoming, Chan has produced a book of seminal importance, one that will be of interest to academics, policymakers and anyone else who is focused on the issue of China's changing position in world affairs. Not least of its accomplishments is that it shows that compliance theories can be tested empirically, helping remove doubts that the subject matter is not amenable to social science methods.

JAMES F. PARADISE

Growth of New Technology Ventures in China's Emerging Market. Edited by HAIYANG LI [Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, xiii + 325 pp. £75.00. ISBN 1-84542-119-1.]

Growth of New Technology Ventures in China's Emerging Market is a recent addition to the literature on China's advance toward global economic pre-eminence through examining the role of new technology ventures. The 13 chapters are divided into three parts. The first, ''Overview of New Technology Ventures in China,'' which consists of four chapters, reviews the literature on new technology ventures in emerging markets and its applicability to the Chinese case. The chapter that carries the most weight in this part is by Haiyang Li and Toyah Miller (interestingly, the introductory Chapter one is rather weak). The authors survey various theories of the emergence of new

ventures, including institutional theory that emphasizes the influence of institutions on individuals, groups and organizations; the resource-based view that suggests that a new venture's competitive advantage is mainly defined by its resources and capabilities; and resource dependence theory that points to the importance of the external environment in which a new firm operates. The social capital and network perspective in research on new ventures in emerging markets such as China has largely centred on obtaining access to resources, although social capital and network could not be overemphasized compared with such factors as capability building. This chapter also deals with the methodological issues encountered in research and concludes with a discussion of future directions in the field. Chapter three (by Quanlin Gu, Hongbin Li, Weiying Zhang and Li-An Zhou) is a quantitative analysis of the factors that have contributed to the survival and growth of firms in Zhongguancun High-Tech Park, factors which include firm size, ownership, productivity and financial performance. Chapter four (by David Ahlstrom, Kuang S. Yeh and Garry D. Bruton) is a qualitative study of venture capital in China.

The five chapters in the second part discuss "Environment and New Venture Strategies." Chapter five by Mike W. Peng tries to answer such questions as who are entrepreneurs in transition economies (mainly former Soviet Union bloc countries), how they have created wealth, and what lessons can be learned. Chapter six by Mingfang Li, Xudong Gao and Yajun Wu summarizes that effective strategies – localization strategy, resource expansion-oriented growth, strategic divergence, and collaboration for competition – have been vital for the success of Huawei, ZTE and Datang in global competition. Chapter seven by Haiyang Li, Yan Zhang and Tsang-Sing Chan examines the relationship between entrepreneurial strategy-making and performance amongst new technology ventures in Zhongguancun High-Tech Parks. Chapter eight by Xudong Gao and Weiqing Gao focuses on how strategic actions taken by telecommunications equipment makers – Huawei, ZTE and Datang again – have helped develop and enhance their innovation capabilities.

The third part of the book discusses "Entry of Foreign Ventures and Globalization of Local Ventures in China." The four chapters examine the challenges multinational corporations have faced in their Chinese operations, and assesses the "go out" efforts of Chinese firms. Research and development expansion and asset purchase, new phenomena of Chinese firms, will surely receive more attention worldwide in the years to come.

The publication of the book coincides with the release of China's ambitious 15-year plan for the development of science and technology that emphasizes unequivocally the building of indigenous innovation capability. The chapters are diversified as their authors have adopted different approaches toward their research. The book also involves collaboration between American scholars and their counterparts in Greater China.

What is missing here, however, is a chapter on current relations between new technology ventures and China's research community, and a concluding chapter to sum up how the chapters relate to the existing literature, whether they represent departure from it or improvement over it. As students of China's high-tech development know, China's early high-tech firms were spin-offs from institutions of learning. It seems to me that such symbiotic relations have mostly disappeared. If that is the case, it poses significant challenges to Chinese enterprises because they are still weak in their technological innovation; and scholarly research should also ask why the Chinese case differs from the high-tech development in the United States as described in AnnaLee Saxenian's *Regional Advantage: Culture and Competition in Silicon Valley and Route 128* (Harvard University Press, 1994) where universities are always instrumental in creating knowledge and new ventures. Finally, I am puzzled by the fact that the bulk of the book is still on the cases of Zhongguancun High Tech Zone and on such firms Huawei and ZTE. I look forward to many more studies of China's high-tech development – both case studies and quantitative analysis.

CONG CAO

Behind the Silence: Chinese Voices on Abortion. By NIEH JING-BAO [Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto and Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005. x + 294 pp. $27.95. ISBN 0-7425-2371-3.]

International opinion about abortion in China has long been dominated by two polarized positions: one, of official Chinese discourse, that abortion is a necessary component of the birth control programme in the service of collective welfare and the state, and the other, a largely US coalition of pro-lifers and liberal human rights and feminist scholars and activists, that abortion continues to be used as a coercive tool of a repressive state system targeting the bodies of women and unborn children. Based on questionnaires and interviews conducted amongst residents of five Chinese cities, and a pilot study of Chinese nationals living in the United States, Nieh Jing-bao's important book cuts through these positions to examine the diverse and difficult experiences and views of different groups of Chinese people: women, doctors and medical practitioners (mostly women), birth control officials, intellectuals and other professionals, religious groups, and Chinese nationals living in the US. In addressing the moral experience of abortion in China, it brings to light the multifaceted, complex and difficult dimensions of an issue that continues to be excluded from public debate by the political constraints of the Chinese state.

Nieh Jing-bao contextualizes his study with an ambitious range of concerns: classical Chinese debates about ethics and the value of human life, the interventions of the Chinese state in its controlling fertility; Western debates from antiquity until now about the human status and rights of the foetus. Throughout, he seeks to explain individual experiences as the product of a fraught and shifting relationship between individual subjects, culturally-embedded practice, political discourses and state controls. In contrast to what he suggests is the standard Western assertion that "China belongs to a different ethical universe" in views about abortion, he argues that there is neither a unified perspective on abortion, nor does majority support for abortion in China signify a devaluation of human life. If the great majority of Chinese women accept the need for abortion, there is still a considerable number, and not only from religious groups, who think of the aborted foetus as a "lost child," or oppose it on principle.

Nieh has opened up discussion about a difficult and sensitive issue, long silenced by the widespread fear of political and material reprisals. Yet his coverage of the moral issues involved is limited, doubtless due – in part at least – to the constraints preventing women from articulating their views and feelings. The overriding emphasis he puts on the value of foetal life as the core of the moral experience of abortion sometimes leads him to read too much into his informants' comments and sometimes to overlook other related issues. He does not for example, engage with the ethical questions concerning the appropriate time limit for abortions; he does not adequately deal with women's perspectives on the status of their own bodies particularly in mid and late term abortions, nor on the legitimacy of intervention by husbands and other family members – alongside birth control and medical personnel – in pressurizing them into late-term abortions; and in his exposition of the moral-political debates about abortion (which include the argument that coercion of individuals may be a "lesser evil" if it upholds the interests of the collective) he ignores the issues of women's rights which the Chinese government upholds in its status as signatory to a series of relevant international conventions. Nieh's interest in views about the unborn foetus also sometimes leads him to ignore the obvious. He reads into women's anguish moral concerns for the foetus when, to me, their narratives suggest the trauma of having to confront the gruesome effects of inhumane institutional and medical arrangements. In a horrific instance of a late stage abortion, told him by a female doctor who refused to participate in the operation, the baby was delivered alive, and survived an attempt by another doctor to drown her in a bucket before being submerged in a wash basin. Yet Nieh's interpretation of the doctor's distress emphasized her "sympathetic feelings and high sensitivity to the foetus," when what she had witnessed was the infanticide of a new born baby struggling for her life.

In explaining this, there are a number of methodological and epistemological problems that go beyond the constraints and fears that Chinese women confront in talking about this issue. Despite his attempts to keep his questionnaire and interview questions as open-ended as possible, Nieh's interpretative emphasis suggests an analysis that corresponds more with his interests in the ethical definitions of human life, rather than with the views that emerge from his informants. His lack of engagement with the gendered dimension of the issue in explaining the multiple pressures to which women are subject in their experience of abortion, also limits his identification of the key questions that need to be raised. Moral issues of the kind he addresses do not, in my view, lend themselves to a survey-type approach of research. His use of percentage categories to interpret his questionnaire findings results in some misleading conclusions, such that, for example, while there is overwhelming socio-cultural support for abortion, about a third believe that abortion is "killing an infant" and a "silent majority think that abortion is morally problematic or wrong." A lack of analytical clarity in use of the term "abortion," and a repeated failure to indicate whether this refers to early, mid or late term, adds to these difficulties.

This the first scholarly book I know of that deals with the moral experience of this complex and highly contested issue in the Chinese context. If Nieh's research does not cover the full range of the issues involved, then in revealing the multiplicity of views in China, it indicates the need – and the possibility – for others to continue the project he has begun, and to contribute to opening up cross-cultural dialogue about women's and human rights and values in China.

HARRIET EVANS

Portraits of Influential Chinese Educators. By RUTH HAYHOE [Hong Kong: Comparative Education Research Centre, The University of Hong Kong, 2006. xiv + 398 pp. HK$250.00; US$38.00. ISBN 978-962-8093-40-3.]

Ruth Hayhoe here sets herself the task of introducing some of the key figures in Chinese educational research to a Western readership. She does this through presenting the life histories of 12 prominent "educators," including Gu Mingyuan, Pan Maoyuan and Wang Fengxian, setting these in the context of the histories of the institutions where they have studied and worked, while also tracing the development of their educational thinking.

The lives and thought of these scholars have all, according to Hayhoe, been characterized by distinctively "Confucian" values and relationships – sustained essentially unadulterated through the vicissitudes of China's wartime and revolutionary history. She

therefore prefaces her biographical chapters with a discussion of China's educational traditions, and Confucianism in particular. Seeking to contribute to a "dialogue amongst civilizations," she invokes Tu Wei-ming's criticism of the excessive individualism of the post-Enlightenment West, endorsing his call for "an inclusive sense of community, based on the communal critical self-consciousness of reflective minds as an ethico-religious goal, as well as a philosophical ideal" (p. 4).

Hayhoe also alludes to Alasdair MacIntyre's critique of post-Enlightenment ethical philosophy, and in particular his attack on approaches to the study of human society that adopt an objectivist, value-neutral stance modelled on the methods of the natural sciences. MacIntyre's emphasis on the importance of narrative for both philosophical and historical understanding is cited as justification for Hayhoe's reliance here on a narrative approach.

This introductory disquisition raises – albeit rather superficially – some interesting issues regarding the distinctiveness of Chinese educational thought that might repay sustained analysis. However, sustained analysis is not what is on offer in this book. Instead, the adoption of a "narrative method" turns out to involve uncritical regurgitation of the official histories of various institutions of higher education, together with the life histories of these "influential educators" as recounted by themselves. Hayhoe's own views seldom intrude, except to garnish the narrative with gushing personal testimonials. The reader is repeatedly informed of how "honored," "privileged" or "touched" she was by her encounters with these distinguished academic luminaries.

This is not to say that these "influential educators" are undeserving of admiration. Many have certainly lived extraordinary lives of great dedication and self-sacrifice. They may even be profound and original thinkers, though it is difficult to tell on the basis of their evidence presented here, as the lengthy narrative treatment of their lives leaves little space for analysis of their ideas. The tensions between their Confucian heritage and their predominantly Western- or Soviet-derived academic training, though occasionally alluded to, are not thoroughly explored.

In a short concluding chapter, Hayhoe attempts to sum up the contribution that Chinese educational thought can make to the "dialogue among civilizations." Here she juxtaposes an idealized vision of a harmonious, communitarian Chinese order with a vision of a dysfunctional "Western world … where the individual's satisfaction and fulfilment has tended to be given priority over family solidarity and community benefit" (p. 361). Reminding us of the patriotism and dedication shown by these educators, she also asks "How far does Western education serve to root us in the values of our civilization and the sense of the destiny of our community and nation?" (p. 367).

This may be a fair question, but are Chinese-style patriotic instruction and rampant educational elitism really the best antidote to our Western decadence and anomie? Outside the secluded groves of

Chinese academe we find a society – and an education system – characterized by glaring inequality, corruption and injustice that belie the Confucian ideals cherished by Hayhoe and her subjects. While there are undoubtedly positive lessons we can take from China's traditions of educational thought and practice, there are many negative ones as well. This dark side of the Chinese experience (today, as well as during the Maoist era) receives scant acknowledgement here.

In her eagerness to avoid (and be seen to avoid) an unduly "objectivist," "linear" or perhaps "Orientalist" approach, Hayhoe effectively abandons all grounds for rational comparison of ethical standpoints. Instead, she implicitly adopts the principle of cultural authenticity as the ultimate arbiter of value in the realm of ideas, referring in the book's last sentence to her selected educators as a group "all deeply rooted in China's cultural soil" (p. 371). Such phrases inescapably remind a European reader of the unpleasant consequences to which appeals to cultural authenticity *über alles* can lead.

One of the most acute critics of this kind of thinking is none other than Alasdair MacIntyre. In an essay discussing the conditions required for a rational comparison of distinct ethical traditions, he suggests that Confucianism may have become increasingly problematic *in its own terms* insofar as it "aspires to reconcile a largely particularist morality in which the exercise of the virtues is defined in terms of highly specific types of social, especially familial, relationships with some account of what we owe to human beings as such" (see 'Incommensurability, Truth and the Conversation between Confucians and Aristotelians' in Eliot Deutsch, ed., *Culture and Modernity: East-West Philosophical Perspectives*, University of Hawai'i Press, 1991, p. 119).

The historical context in which these educators have lived their lives testifies to the strains attendant on China's continuing search for a social ethos that can satisfactorily reconcile Confucian mores and the realities of a modern, increasingly urban, and cosmopolitan mode of living. Political conditions unfortunately mean that it still falls largely to scholars based outside the People's Republic to make explicit the kind of trenchant critique of social and political – and educational – issues that is generally implicit and indirect, if not entirely suppressed, in the work of their mainland counterparts. These uniformly glowing portraits of famous educators Hayhoe has known contribute little in this respect.

EDWARD VICKERS

Scenic Spots: Chinese Tourism, the State and Cultural Authority. By PÁL NYÍRI [Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, xii + 134 pp. $40.00; £25.95. ISBN 0-295-98588-7.]

This book is a welcome and timely analysis of the shape tourism has taken on in China. The well-chosen title "scenic spots" directs the

focus of the reader to the ways in which contemporary developments in tourism are historically and culturally rooted in the tradition of literati travel in China. The author also shows how the evolution of the Chinese concept of "tourism" since the Dengist reforms in the late 1970s is intimately related to state policies in various ways: directly, as scenic spots are recognized, developed and classified by the state and because the state imbues "scenic spots" with pedagogical values; and, indirectly, as the development of scenic spots is part of state policies aimed at the opening up of "underdeveloped" regions, and of economic policies such as the stimulation of consumption through the allocation of holidays and creation of holiday-destinations.

Scenic Spots makes a clear distinction between Chinese and Western concepts of tourism and travel, without regressing into mere stereotypes. Whereas Western notions of tourism were built on modern, romantic, exploratory and self-bettering discourses after the Enlightenment, in late socialist China, the notion of scenic spot has been appropriated by the state's nation-building project.

Enhancing the accessibility of the argument, the analysis is preceded by a whole chapter of anecdotal examples and photographs of scenic spots based on the author's fieldwork in various tourist destinations in China, such as Mounts Emei, Jiuzhaigou and Songpan. The main argument, as described in this and the third chapter, maintains that Chinese tourism requires the participation of the tourist as admirer and performer of scenic spots through, for instance, dance, poetry, local delicacies and other amusement. This behaviour contrasts with the objective gaze of the Western tourist, who looks for the authentic whether in the shape of "unspoilt" nature or through feelings of nostalgia for lost culture.

At this point, the author seems to polarize Chinese and Western culture artificially. After all, Brighton's pier shows that not everyone in Britain, at least, has the poetic gaze of Lord Byron and Wordsworth. But it soon becomes clear that the existence of a sharp distinction between high and low culture, parallel to that between travel and tourism in the West, is actually an important part of Nyíri's explanation for the differences in the (non-unilineary) evolution of concepts of tourism in China and in the West. Nyíri's comparison of the development of Chinese concepts of tourism with those in Japan, Russia and Macchu Picchu, I believe, is crucial to his argument about the existence of Chinese type of tourism, and indicates that there is no single form of mass-tourism. Instead, there is "a series of staggered configurations, each of which arises through a confluence of related and unrelated historical and contemporary, material and discursive conditions" (p. 95).

The author's argument, then, is sensitive to cultural difference, the different roles of the state, and the homogenizing influences of modernity. Compared to Tan Chee-Beng et al's edited volume *Tourism, Anthropology and China* (White Lotus, 2001), it is lucid, consistent and critical. Nevertheless, Nyíri's multiple sensitivity may

also be a weakness in that an extended comparison could have pinpointed some obvious economic factors responsible for the different concepts of tourism, which now appears to be cultural and political. Although the author concedes that in future Chinese tourism may start to resemble Western tourism, it may not sufficiently take into account the financial circumstances of the population in the Chinese countryside, where the Chinese majority (c. 70 per cent) resides. The claimed absence of dissent around the meaning of scenic spots, i.e., the "unproblematic internalization of sites' hegemonic narratives" (p. 97) could partly be explained by the fact that the majority of people in China cannot afford a holiday and do not prioritize arguments on the authenticity of scenic spots related to what is historically regarded as gentry travel. In this light, the acclaimed absence of the high/low culture distinction in present day China may be exaggerated. Nevertheless, the book comprehensively illuminates the state's various roles on a local level, and the provided comparison with tourism in different nation-states is a useful contribution to comparative studies of the development of nation-states. As such, I recommend the book as undergraduate and graduate teaching material in the social sciences and in Asian and Chinese studies.

MARGARET SLEEBOOM-FAULKNER

China on Screen: Cinema and Nation. By CHRIS BERRY and MARY FARQUHAR [New York: Columbia University Press, 2006. xi + 313 pp. $24.50; £16.00. ISBN 0-231-13707-9.]

Chinese-Language Film: Historiography, Poetics, Politics. Edited by SHELDON H. LU and EMILIE YUEH-YU YEH [Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005. vii + 413 pp. $29.00. ISBN 0-8248-2869-0.]

One of the most important debates in Chinese film studies concerns the very object that defines this growing field. In past years, cultural critics such as Rey Chow, Yingjin Zhang and others have attempted to elucidate various economic, political, and social markers gathered under the term "Chinese." Now, observers of the diverse filmmaking landscape that encompasses mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan are beginning to turn their attention to a question that has long begged asking: what is "Chinese cinema," anyway?

Together, these two works signal an effort to remap the field of Chinese film studies, and clear the way for future scholarship that will bring the "Chinese case" (Lu and Yeh, p. 21) into dialogue with global film studies as a whole. Their shared point of departure, and obvious contribution to this larger field, is a re-examination of "national cinema" as a heuristic concept. Chris Berry and Mary

Farquhar's introduction to *China on Screen: Cinema and Nation* opens the charge, demonstrating that the "old" national cinema model has anachronously privileged notions of cinema (national and otherwise) as an object capable of producing a singular, stable cultural identity. In an era of "cultural flows, multiculturalism, increasing migration, and the World Wide Web" (p. 3), they argue, *Chinese* cinema can only refer to patterns appearing in Chinese-language films of the last century, or to the transformation of these patterns according to different ideas about nation and nationhood that have "appeared in different Chinese places at different times" (p. 10). Thus, in opposition to national cinema studies, Berry and Farquhar propose approaching film from a "transnational" perspective – that is, by examining how "a variety of regional, national, and local specificities impact upon each other in various types of relationships ranging from synergy to contest" (p. 5).

Similarly, *Chinese-Language Film: Historiography, Poetics, Politics* editors Sheldon H. Lu and Emilie Yueh-yu Yeh offer a cogent rebuttal to uni-accentual notions of the national. Their overarching concept of "Chinese-language cinema" refers instead to a pluralistic terrain of multiple state-regulated industries, multiple Sinophone dialects, and multiple markets or audiences. Nevertheless, the nation remains a dominant motif. Like Berry and Farquhar, Lu and Yeh are concerned with those means by which film "preserves, renews, and creates a sense of nationhood as an imaginary unity through an artful combination of images, symbols, sounds, and performance" (pp. 2–3). At the same time, their attention to film's *linguistic* properties highlights the degree to which elements of "Sinophonic" cinema also challenge identification with the nation-state (as in the case of "regional" or "dialect" cinema), or envision communities that exceed national boundaries (as in the case of action genres unfolding in spaces that are "fluid, deterritorialized, global, [and] pan-Chinese" [p. 6]).

This is exceptionally rich work, and there is no doubt that the analytic categories and interpretive agendas emerging from both volumes will continue to inform discussions of Chinese cinema for years to come. As a product of the authors' sustained engagement with questions of nation and gender in Chinese-language film, *China on Screen* is perhaps the more coherent of the two. Berry and Farquhar divide their analysis into four thematic clusters, each of which introduces a critically-constructed means of approaching the relationship between cinema and the national: time and narrative, representational modes, gender, and relations of difference (e.g. ethnicity and colonialism). In their effort to establish a working definition *of* cinema, Berry and Farquhar seem to be suggesting that this term can be understood as the union of motion picture technology and representation with state-driven ambitions "to produce and maintain citizenry as a collective national subject in the face of competing and challenging forces" (p. 7). *China on Screen* concludes with a nuanced discussion of contemporary dilemmas related to

national – which, as under the older national cinemas model, can be taken to mean "non-Hollywood" – film production in an era of "transnational cinematic flow" (p. 195) and global markets. What is good for Hollywood (i.e. neo-colonization), however, may still be good for filmmakers, and Berry and Farquhar do not rule out the possibility that a recognizably "Chinese" cinema may yet survive.

A conditional optimism likewise informs *Chinese-Language Film: Historiography, Poetics, Politics*, one of the most comprehensive edited volumes on Chinese film to appear in years. This is clearly intended as a major statement concerning the "state of the field." Moreover, the volume's auteur-ish, often celebratory tone seems aimed at festival-goers, curiosity-seekers, and film studies scholars working in other areas, rather than Chinese film specialists only. This tone reflects the enthusiasm of the contributors for their subject matter – enthusiasm that is certainly deserved given the quality of research and breadth of material.

The term "Chinese-language film" primarily serves to indicate recent films by Sinophone directors and lead actors, and this focus seems appropriate for an era in which production duties and capital for big-budget features are often divvied up in ways that span national boundaries. Like Berry and Farquhar, Lu and Yeh seem to theorize cinema as a social technology that has assisted in "the maintenance and reinvention of nationhood" (p. 2) throughout the 20th century. In recent decades, however, *Chinese-language* cinema has functioned to construct "Chineseness" (p. 3), often among increasingly diasporic Sinophone populations, without strict adherence to the boundaries of nation-states. The volume is divided into three thematic units. "Historiography, Periodization, Trends" discusses new ways of analyzing Chinese cinema according to changes in directorial attitudes toward the present, the politicization of domestic and international film markets, and relationships linking genre to state regimes. Issues of *how* these films "represent" is taken on by the volume's second unit, "Poetics, Directors, Styles." Finally, the unit "Politics, Nation, Globalization" continues to explore issues of cinema's allegorical "slipperiness" in an age of seemingly rapid political and economic change. However, as Lu and Yeh note in their introduction, there exist additional connections linking the volume's individual chapters, and these exceed the tripartite division just described. Readers will thus find stimulating contributions concerning Chinese film poetics (David Bordwell, Mary Farquhar and Chris Berry, Emilie Yueh-yu Yeh); directorial style (Meiling Wu, Xiaoping Lin, Thomas Y. T. Luk, Gina Marchetti); genre history (Zhang Zhen, David Desser, Sheldon H. Lu); identity and citizenship (Chu Yiu Wai, Sheldon H. Lu); representations of past and present (Shuqin Cui, Darrell W. Davis); and gender formations (Shiao-ying Shen).

Taken as whole, these two volumes form part of a cornerstone for future studies of Chinese cinema, or Chinese-language film, which will transcend or substantially modify the "national cinema" model. Still,

there is clearly much work left to be done. One problem haunting both *China on Screen* and *Chinese-Language Film*, for example, is that there is no sustained attempt to define or theorize the cinema itself except as a functional tool through which national and communal identities become articulated. In this sense, Benedict Anderson's notion of "imagined communities" has yet to be refined by explorations of just how it is that cinema produces these effects, and what their social consequences might be. Additionally, there is undeniable evidence presented here for cinema's transnational qualities, along with its political, economic, and above all *historical* specificity. Yet it remains the case that comparative or interdisciplinary work –research that travels across boundaries of area and archival domains – is still a relatively scarce commodity here. If these volumes mark an end to the "national cinemas" paradigm, they also hint at the limits of scholarship that treats films simply as "cultural" allegory to be decoded by theoretically-informed audiences. It is thus the strength of each that their perspectives aim toward new vistas, while at the same time offering what has long been a staple of "old" film studies writing in general – compelling illumination of the themes, and representational modes that have distinguished the work of Chinese cinema's best actors and directors.

MATTHEW DAVID JOHNSON

Women in Tibet. Edited by JANET GYATSO and HANNA HAVNEVIK [London: Hurst & Company, 2005. xii + 436 pp. £20.00. ISBN 1-85065-653-3.]

Hanna Havnevik and Janet Gyatso, the two editors of this volume, have long engaged themselves in research in the subject of women. *Women in Tibet* is a valuable contribution and is certainly one of the most diverse study on women in Tibet. The book opens with an intelligent and stimulating introduction, which sets the theoretical ground for the reading. Eight essays, divided into two parts, follow. Part one focuses on women in traditional Tibet; the longer section, Part two, is dedicated to women in contemporary Tibet.

In the first essay, Helga Uebach sketches with little available information the lives of some noble women in imperial Tibet (seventh to ninth century). Some gained considerable power, such as Empress Trimalo, who acted as the regent of the empire. Her eight years of reign, however, is not mentioned by historiographers, which says something about the standing of women in Tibetan history and society. In the second chapter, Dan Martin continues with the search for accomplished women in the 11th and 12th centuries and notes that biographical data available for spiritually accomplished women during this time is about "one or two per cent, as compared to

ninety-nine or ninety eight per cent for the men'' (p. 51). Not only are women neglected in history, but the Buddhist ideology refers to women as being of 'low birth' and therefore ''unable to do the practices'' (p. 77). The solution found in the Buddhist scriptures is that women, in order to achieve enlightenment, should first transform their bodies into bodies of men.

In the last essay of Part one, Kurtis Schaeffer discusses the life of Orgyan Chokyi, a hermitess from the Himalayan region of Dolpo, who, against the will of her master, wrote down her life-story. It is the earliest datable autobiography by a woman known so far and reveals the injustices faced by a woman whose sole aim was to devote her life to Buddhism. Schaeffer writes that Orgyan Chokyi is unique in the sense that she was able to use her experience as a woman to teach to others the experience of *samsara*, the Buddhist view of human life.

The second part of the book starts with an essay by Hildegard Diemberger, who argues that female oracles have found within a male dominated society a space where they can actively take part in the process of decision-making. Diemberger also remarks that these women, by virtue of having gained a female experience of life, are more suited to serve as an oracle. The following chapter by Tashi Tsering introduces the life of some female physicians trained before and after the Chinese invasion. Isabelle Henrion-Dourcy looks at the lives of six contemporary performing artists ranging from folk singers to pop divas. Unfortunately, her survey is not updated with current (and known) female singers and ends with Dadon and Yungchen Lhamo, two pop-icons of the 1980s and 1990s.

Charlene Makley provides insightful information on the lives of nuns in Labrang, a Tibetan border-town in Gansu province, China. She states that there is ''an extraordinary antipathy for nunhood in general among Labrang residents'' (p. 267) and argues that this sentiment is related to the fact that the body of a nun symbolises ''the dangers (and allure) of a female body outside of the social controls of the household domain'' (p. 279). Some claims made by the author could be challenged. For example, the disparity of wages between monks and nuns for ritual services might not be gender related as suggested by the author, but might have also something to do with the reputation (and size) of a religious institution. The final essay by Robert Barnett looks at the role of Tibetan women in politics. Barnett groups them into two categories – the political activists, who challenge the authorities by using feminine ways of political protests, such as singing political songs, and women who participate in formal politics (and who seem to be trapped within the system).

The contributors to this volume introduce the lives of specific women who have achieved fame and status within a society replete with stereotypical and androcentric views. Some articles reflect a typical area studies approach and could be easily criticised for being too descriptive and lacking of any theoretical or comparative concern. The essays also vary considerably in length, some being too short and

others being too long. That aside, the editors and contributors should be applauded for singling out 'woman' as a subject of their study. The topic of Tibetan women is still under-represented in Tibetan Studies and the volume marks a significant contribution.

YANGDON DHONDUP

Taiwan's Defense Reform. Edited by MARTIN EDMONDS and MICHAEL M. TSAI [London and New York: Routledge, 2006. xxi + 231 pp. £65.00. ISBN 0-415-36802-2.]

This book is the fourth of a series of very useful volumes on Taiwan security – including one on Taiwan's defence, one on the Navy and one on the Air power – published in 2003–2004 by Routledge. As indicated in the title, this collection of papers concentrates on the difficult reforms of the island-state's armed forces in a context of a growing Chinese military threat. It is based on a conference organized by *Taiwan Defense Affairs* (*Guofang zhengce pinglun*), the first and only bilingual Taiwanese journal dedicated to security issues founded in 2000 by Michael Tsai, one of the few Democratic Progressive Party (DPP, president Chen Shui-bian's party) politicians to comprehend security issues (Tsai was Defence Vice-Minister from 2004 to 2006).

Edited by Tsai and Martin Edmonds, a British defence expert, the 13 chapters of this volume aim to cover, if not all, at least most of the facets of the reforms through which the Taiwanese armed forces had to go, in particular since the 1995–96 missile crisis. Some of the contributors, such as Dennis Hickey, Eric McVadon, Michael Pillsbury and Andrew Scobell, are well-know American experts of both the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and Taiwan. But most chapters have been authored by Taiwanese defence specialists, like York Chen or Ping-hsiung Lo, underscoring the renewed interest in and better local expertise on these issues.

On the whole, the result is a rather realistic but also worrying picture of the state of reforms of the Taiwanese armed forces and the numerous challenges that still need to be overcome. Although most contributors are quite positive about the reforms undertaken, they also submit some policy recommendations, emphasizing the final purpose of these multiple analyses as if they wished to speed up changes that have remained too slow and faced too much resistance, in particular bureaucratic and political obstacles.

Indeed, as this book shows, many reforms have been introduced in the last decade or so. Two important new laws reorganizing the relations between the political leadership and the military have been introduced (national defence law and organization law of the Ministry of National Defence). The armed forces have been streamlined and restructured. Less useful, the darting system is being shortened while

priority has been given to recruiting professional officers and soldiers. Many new weapon systems have been included in the arsenal. Command and control systems (C4ISR) have been modernized. The Navy and the Air Force have acquired an unprecedented importance in a strategy aimed at keeping the war as much as possible outside of the island.

Nevertheless, the sometimes too short contributions to this volume also list many "must-dos" that have yet to be implemented, underscoring the lingering weaknesses of the Taiwanese armed forces. The difficulty to attract enlisted men and women, to develop a strong NCO corps and to keep the best officers in the armed forces, in particular the Navy and the Air Force, are mentioned but no realistic solution is proposed. The most striking challenge stems from a decreasing defence regular budget since 1999 as the PLA threat and capability to project forces is rapidly increasing. This problem is somewhat underestimated, as the result of a necessary "trade-off between Taiwan's military policy and economic development" (pp. 67–68). Yet, there is some irony in the fact that Chen Shui-bian, the most independence-leaning Taiwanese president, invested so little in defence (until he decided in 2006 for electoral reasons to increase the defence budget again to reach three per cent of GNP). Not much discussion is devoted either to the "political football" that both the DPP and the opposition have been playing in Parliament since 2004 over the special procurement budget, a budget that is aimed at financing the weapons promised by George W. Bush in 2001 (anti-submarine aircrafts, submarines and Patriot missiles). This is a shame since it would have allowed the contributors to analyse in greater depth several issues related to Taiwan's combat readiness, e.g. the difficult relationship between the president and the high military command, the conflicts among the various branches of the military, and the crucial relationship with the US.

For instance, repeated military demands for an increase of the regular budget have been ignored by Chen Shui-bian; the traditional domination of the Army and Chen's indecisiveness have slowed down reforms, postponing the submission of the special arms procurement budget to the Legislative Yuan until Tang Yao-ming, an Army general, was replaced by Admiral Lee Jye in June 2004; too many in the Taiwanese military still pretend that Taiwan can defend itself, without US assistance, in developing in particular an illusory counter-strike capability; and the Taiwanese government has too often neglected to take into account and liaise with the Pentagon on military affairs, creating unnecessary frictions with the best disposed US administration towards Taiwan ever. McVadon sums up very well the latter difficulties: "Recognising that Taiwan cannot defend itself without the support of the US must be part of the strategic thinking. Consequently, Taiwan's strategic thinking should encompass how best to preserve and facilitate that American support, as well as the capability to persevere for a limited time if the US is tardy or less than lavish in providing support" (pp. 166–167).

In spite of its global pro-DPP spin, this volume is a must-read for anyone interested in the security and the future of the Taiwan Strait.

JEAN-PIERRE CABESTAN

Remaking Citizenship in Hong Kong. Edited by AGNES S. KU and NGAI PUN [London and New York: Routledge, 2006. xxiii + 261 pp. £65.00. ISBN 0-415-33209-5.]

This book contains a collection of essays delineating the development of citizenship in Hong Kong. It is organized into three parts. Part one, preceded by Bryan Turner's foreword and the editors' introduction, comprises four chapters. Denny Kwok-Leung Ho explores the evolution of citizenship in Hong Kong from the combined perspective of governance and history. Iam-Chong Ip examines social citizenship by using the case study of early resettlement housing. Thomas Kwan-Choi Tse discusses civic education and the making of "deformed citizenry" from the colonial to post-colonial era. Anita Kit-Wa Chan attempts to analyse the making of the "ideal citizen" in the processes of schooling. Part two is composed of three essays. Hon-Chu Leung explores the interrelationships between citizenship and immigration. Barry Sautman contends that Hong Kong is a "semi-ethnocracy" in which a dominant ethnic group controls the political arena and racial discrimination persists. Ngai Pun and Ka-Ming Wu describe how Chinese migrant women perceive their citizenship rights – the rights to work, welfare, housing and childcare. Part three comprises five chapters. Agnes Ku emphasizes how citizens in the civil society organize resistance movements against the state for the sake of protecting the rule of law, human rights and citizenship. Lai-Ching Leung attempts to adopt a "feminist" perspective to comprehend the changing dynamics of citizenship in Hong Kong. Day Wong describes the development of homosexual rights movement and its strategies. Po-Keung Hui attempts to use case studies to reflect on the implications for "communal" and "economic" citizenship. Finally, Alvin So compares and contrasts the development of citizenship in Hong Kong with that in both the People's Republic of China (PRC) and in Taiwan.

The book represents an admirable and bold attempt to address the relatively under-researched concept of citizenship from a multiplicity of perspectives. While the volume's strength lies in the diversity of the approaches adopted by the editors and contributors, it simultaneously suffers from conceptual and organizational problems. Conceptually, citizenship is defined as a set of civil, social and political rights by Turner; nonetheless, the editors and contributors have not adequately used their findings to reflect upon the triangular relationships between civil, social and political rights. Strictly speaking, the editors should have summed up various dimensions of citizenship in a more systematic way

so that the book could have clarified the conceptual complexities. The concepts of "deformed," "enterprising," "lived," "welfare," "economic," "social," "colonial," "socialist," "market," "ideal," "engendering" and "global" citizenship appear in various chapters. Yet, they should have been defined very clearly at the beginning of the introductory essay, laying the groundwork for further empirical elaboration.

However, two chapters are particularly insightful, including Sautman's discussion of the racial bias and class nature of the Hong Kong city-state, and Day Wong's focus on the strategies of homosexual rights movement.

While the brief concluding discussion on the PRC's development of citizenship deserves a separate chapter, the mainland Chinese view of the concept of citizenship in Hong Kong has been swept under the carpet. Ideally, a mainland Chinese scholar should have been invited to explore the PRC view of Hong Kong citizenship. Another weakness of the book is that none of the authors utilizes any survey data to back up the claims. For example, the claim that the Hong Kong people perceive themselves as politically "powerless" remains to be substantiated by statistical data. The volume has perhaps also paid insufficient attention on the emergence of environmental groups in Hong Kong. The making of the "ideal citizens" in schools actually reflects the capitalist, chauvinist and sexist values of Hong Kong's society. From a feminist perspective on citizenship, women have been portrayed as a sex symbol exploited by men – a serious phenomenon in Hong Kong neglected by the contributors.

Despite these weaknesses, the book represents an innovative attempt to comprehend the transformations of citizenship in Hong Kong. Scholars interested in the study of Hong Kong's society will find this book useful and insightful.

SONNY LO

Zhou Enlai: A Political Life. By BARBARA BARNOUIN and YU CHANGGEN [Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2006. vi + 397 pp. $25.00. ISBN 962-996-280-2.]

Zhou Enlai was one of the most powerful and influential politicians of the 20th century; he was an active member of the Chinese Communist Party for 55 years and Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China for more than 26 years. Surprisingly, there are very few biographies of Zhou in Western languages and every new publication should be studied carefully.

This new volume has three main parts: one is devoted to the first 50 years of Zhou's life, one to the years between 1949 and 1966 and one to the last decade of his life. The first part covering the Republican period is particularly weak. As a young man Zhou Enlai lived in

Japan, France, Germany and Russia, but in this book there is very little information about his activities in these countries and foreign influences on his political views. Readers will also be disappointed by the lack of analysis regarding Zhou's contacts with the Communist International and Stalin. There are numerous factual errors and *pinyin* is often incorrect. The second part – covering the early years of the PRC – is slightly better; but one of the most important problems of this period, the competition between Liu Shaoqi and Zhou Enlai (and between their followers), is not discussed in detail. In the final part about the Cultural Revolution there is more detail but little analysis of the relations between Zhou, Mao, Lin Biao and Kang Sheng. As the account of Zhou's early career is very superficial, readers will not realize that Zhou already knew Zhu De, Kang Sheng and Lin Biao in the 1930s and without that knowledge it is very difficult to understand Zhou's role and activities in the 1960s and early 1970s.

The book ends with Zhou Enlai's death; there is no analysis, conclusion or summary. In general, Zhou is described as a positive character with some flaws; as there is little criticism of the late prime minister, even censors in the PRC might find this account acceptable. On the other hand, Mao Zedong is described as a paranoid (p. 95) despot (p. 217) and tyrant (p. 317).

The bibliography includes numerous older, biased and journalistic publications (by Chang Kuo-t'ao, Han Suyin, Roxane Witke, Ye Yonglie, etc.), but many of the more recent and relevant academic books by Kenneth Lieberthal, Roderick MacFarquhar, Michael Schoenhals and Frederick Teiwes are missing. There are many Chinese sources but hardly anything rare or exciting. Considering that Zhou Enlai lived in more countries than most Chinese of the 20th century, the lack of German, Japanese and Russian sources is surprising and regrettable.

All in all, this book is quite disappointing, there are no new arguments, ideas or sources. Scholars will be annoyed by the numerous errors and the lack of Chinese characters. As there are no maps, tables, photos or other illustrations this volume is not suitable for the general reader or university students. Still, because of the lack of biographies of Chinese politicians in English, it should be bought by a few major libraries.

THOMAS KAMPEN

Marxism in the Chinese Revolution. By ARIF DIRLIK [Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto and Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2005. x + 330 pp. £49.00. ISBN 0-7425-3069-8.]

Arif Dirlik's new book consists of 12 essays, written over a period of 30 years, which relate to aspects of Chinese Marxism. They are

organized into four sections that deal, respectively, with the origins of Marxism in China, Mao Zedong Thought, the Cultural Revolution and "Postsocialism." The author's admirable aim in republishing the essays is to confront what he calls the "intentional forgetting" (p. 2) of China's revolutionary past in both the PRC and the West over the past decade. Such forgetting is not innocent: "the preoccupation of our day is to erase revolutions so as to bring forth histories that justify the present; whether we call it development or civil society" (p. 216). The range of the book is impressive and it is studded with insights. One of its strengths is that Dirlik's expertise in the early history of radical thought in China allows him to trace themes in Chinese socialism across the entirety of the 20th century. One such theme was the construal of socialism as an "instrument of national economic and political development which … allows for the possibility of capitalist methods within socialist development as long as they further the national interest" (p. 19). This highly contemporary theme was already adumbrated in the debate between Liang Qichao and the Alliance Society after 1905, when Liang argued that capitalism was the best way to achieve rapid growth, while some Alliance Society members argued that socialism was necessary to avoid the social divisions that capitalism had engendered in the West. Another enduring theme, already evident long before the rise of Mao Zedong, was of socialism as an "alternative that promised national liberation from capitalist hegemony, and the possibility of entering global history not as its object but as an independent subject" (p. 80). The two chapters on the origins of Marxism have worn well. The discussion, for example, of Left KMT thinking on national development and social revolution is still unsurpassed. The three essays on Maoism deal, respectively, with the "sinification of Marxism"; modernism and anti-modernism in Mao's thought; and Gramscian themes in Mao's conception of revolutionary consciousness. In the first, Dirlik resists the dichotomy between Maoism as a form of nationalism and Maoism as a pristine form of Marxism, contending that it was "the articulation of Marxism to a historical situation of which Chinese society was the terrain, but a terrain in the process of transformation by global forces" (p. 78). In the second, he argues that the centrality of contradiction in Mao's thought – "the epistemological key to understanding the world" (p. 118) – was linked to his ambivalence towards modernity which, again, he links to an enduring theme in Chinese socialism: "a sense that modernization was something happening somewhere else" (p. 116) that constantly served to reproduce China's backwardness. The third essay tries to yoke Gramsci to its thesis – surely unsustainable in the light of post-Mao developments – that revolutionaries can create socialism "without waiting for the foundation of an advanced technological base … even where the class basis for socialist revolution is missing" (p. 126). This puts terrifying power into the hands of revolutionary leaders who claim to be able to adjudicate between what Dirlik calls

"revolutionary consciousness" and "consciousness in general" (p. 131), a danger of which anarchists, about whom the author has written so illuminatingly, were all too aware. Dirlik explores the distinctive accents of Maoism – the emphasis on contradiction, consciousness, self-reliance – intelligently, but more recent research suggests he exaggerates the originality of Mao's ideological contribution and underplays the extent to which this was influenced by Stalinist philosophy as mediated by close collaborators such as Chen Boda (on the Sinification of Marxism) and Ai Siqi (on contradiction and dialectical logic). The three essays on the Cultural Revolution are the weakest part of the book. Dirlik pleads, not unreasonably, for "recognition of the ambiguities of Mao and the Cultural Revolution," but he deals with the event at an extremely rarefied level and his central theme – that the "problem with the Cultural Revolution was that it not only took as a given the political structure that had emerged with the revolution, but tried to use the same political structure to achieve its own ends" (p. 155) – is unpersuasive. More incisive are the final three chapters, which include a lively essay that reflects on Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1888), a novel about the socialist utopia set in 2000, one of the first texts to inspire socialism in the late Qing. Altogether, then, while not of the same quality as the author's writings on anarchism, these essays convincingly reaffirm the importance of the Chinese Revolution and attest to the author's standing as one of its outstanding historians.

STEVE SMITH

Shanghai and the Edges of Empires. By MENG YUE [Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2006. xxx + 295 pp. $46.95. ISBN 0-8166-4413-6.]

This ambitious work seeks to write a history that escapes the binary of capitalism versus Communist socialism by recovering what has been "untranslatable" into either of these triumphalist historical narratives. In their place, Meng Yue proposes a narrative centred on histories of "noncapitalism," an orientation that repositions capital as one among other forces transforming the cultural and social world of late 19th- and early 20th-century China. *Shanghai* begins with the proposition that Qing salt monopoly policies, the breakdown of the Grand Canal, and the great rebellions of the mid-19th century shifted the loci of cultural production (theatre, literati culture, consumption) from the Jiangnan interiors of Yangzhou, Suzhou and Hangzhou to the coast at Shanghai. As a site for the creation of a "boundary culture" between the Qing and foreign imperialism, Shanghai became a focal point, thanks to its foreign concessions and extraterritorial privileges, for a host of unruly and iconoclastic activities. This shift of cultural

production from an old interior to a new coastal city informs each of the three parts into which the book is divided.

Part one takes up changes at the semiotic level that were undertaken by the displaced literati of the Jiangnan region as they promoted new publishing practices. Meng traces a succession of displacements and inversions that resulted in the privileging of "Western" science and the erasure of traces of indigenous forms of knowledge as scientific materials were translated into Chinese. Yet, in one of the many reversals that highlight various sections of the book, the exclusion of the indigenous opened a new space for novel forms of philology and compilation. In a powerfully argued chapter, Meng explores a locally specific semiotic modernity through the careful study of the strategies of a group of compilers at the Commercial Press in Shanghai. We see them, for example, debating pedagogical issues related to new-learning textbooks; and re-inserting Chinese terms and descriptive nomenclature into Japanese translations of botanical texts. Attention to "re-translation" away from the European conventions favoured by Meiji modernizers not only highlights a politics of translation, but provides the material for writing a non-capitalist history.

Part two focuses on carnival and the emergence of radicalism. Here again we see a movement of indigenous forms to the coast – in this case, local opera from east-central China into an "unruly and chaotic" area in Shanghai centring on Fuzhou Road. In a heady mix of itinerant opera troops, shady businessmen, sing-song girls and prostitutes, there emerges a theatre and tea house scene, creating a festive, around-the-clock urbanism. One result of this mixture is a radical search for a "habitable globe," a world free of the scourge of racism an imperial capitalism. In this quest, theatre combined with a globally oriented Chinese journalism to bring issues of the day to the Shanghai stage. A re-translation of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, for example, staged a nation-less world in which people of colour live in equality and harmony. Tracking the careers of some of those involved in the new theatre, Meng notes a trajectory from semi-literate actors to revolutionaries. In these careers and in the urban carnival, we see the birth of the public culture of Shanghai, as well as of the mass movements that boycotted American goods and ultimately defied European empires.

The last section of *Shanghai* looks at the aesthetics of new urban gardens and the instabilities of an urban economy primarily based on land-speculation and drug-dealing. Gardens became exhibitionary spaces for Chinese and foreign cultural translations, and eventually mutated into spaces of intense political activity. Meanwhile, efforts to exhibit the world in Shanghai produced a whole new cultural form, the over-the-top entertainment complexes of the "New World" and "Great World." At these sites, Meng argues, patrons were encouraged to observe and participate in a host of alternative subjectivities. The upshot was a globally unmatched cosmopolitanism that flared for a brief period between World War One and the White terror that

launched Chang Kai-shek's Nanjing decade. In that moment, Shanghai became *the* "city of refuge" in a world of anarchic nation-states and predatory capitalism.

Theoretically informed by debates in post-colonial studies, feminist scholarship on colonialism, Foucauldian genealogy analysis, and the writings of Bakhtin and Derrida, Meng demonstrates convincingly how an alternative cultural-political history of modern China can be assembled from "the untranslatable." The result is a history fraught with contradictions and truncated lines of development; a history ever conscious of the contingency of the past and undecidability of any engagement with its multiplicity. The implications of writing such a history in light of the current direction of China's political economy can be understood both as a work of highly original scholarship and as a critical intervention into debates in China. Meng asks us not simply to reconsider China's encounter with foreign imperialism, but to reassess the meanings of the Chinese revolution. In so doing, she has provided us with a new vocabulary, a sophisticated blend of literary and social theory, and an exhilarating set of new questions.

JAMES L. HEVIA

Street Criers: A Cultural History of Chinese Beggars. By LU HANCHAO [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005. xiv + 269 pp. $45.00. ISBN 0-8047-5148-X.]

Street Criers is the first English-language book which is devoted entirely to the cultural history of mendicancy in China. The author makes several interesting points in this study. Lu Hanchao shows, for example, that beggars were not necessarily homeless people in that many were "seasonal beggars" from the countryside, and that beggars sometimes included people from "elite occupations" in their ranks. He reminds us that in the eyes of intellectuals and politicians, beggars were higher in social status and better in reputation than prostitutes, and that the general public was commonly sympathetic to mendicants because of the influence of Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism. Beggars capitalized tactfully on their popularly constructed semi-divine image for alms. As a result beggars' guilds and gangs flourished and their ringleaders ascended to the status of a kind of lower-ranking gentry or petty police chief, and in return they ensured to keep local vagabonds in order and to supply to local governments with able-bodied beggars as *corvée* labour.

However, this monograph suffers some weaknesses. Firstly, many of the points raised and the examples cited have already appeared in earlier Chinese-language works on beggary by Chen Baoliang, Qu Yanbin and Wang Guangzhao, to name but a few. Secondly, the author uses too few primary or archival materials. Although the social

phenomenon of mendicancy may not have aroused the interest of intellectuals or officials, with Jiang and Wu's 1933 survey being a rare exception, it is difficult to understand why, given the serious extent of the problem of beggary in modern China, so few newspapers are cited. Instead, Lu chooses to refer to a substantial amount of "reminiscences" of old residents from different places, most of them published in official compilations of local history. Although these reminiscences are not necessarily untrustworthy – some even bring forward interesting arguments, such as the power of beggars' guilds and their ringleaders over local communities, or the popular customs of having beggars as "foster parents" – their credibility must not be taken for granted.

Thirdly, many examples used are not persuasive enough. For example, the anecdote about Yuan Shikai's mobilization of beggars to support the restoration, and the active participation of 20,000 beggars during the May Fourth movement, which are taken as signs of beggars' higher social status and better reputation than prostitutes, requires further corroborating evidence. Another example is from the section on legends, in which Lu cites the story of Confucius and Fan Dan to show the wisdom of beggars who, he claims, have cleverly turned general society into debtors and made mendicancy a justified request for the return of an overdue debt that society owed mendicants for generations. This, however, remains more an interesting thought than an established "fact" unless evidence on beggars' misappropriation of these legends is provided. Similarly, the interesting point about beggars' "clever" adoption of great historical figures such as Sakyamuni, Confucius, Wu Zixu, Han Xin and Zhu Yuanzhang to be their "patron saints," as a tactic to increase popular acceptance of their profession, also requires further proof. Did all beggars, including non-members of beggars' guilds, worship the same set of patron saints? Were all (or most) beggars organized in guilds or gangs, as the author's references seem to purport? Were unorganized beggars effectively prevented from begging? Also, the term "beggar tax" is problematic because the "tax" was more appropriately extortion money imposed on shopkeepers. What if a shopkeeper refused to pay and took the matter to the local authority? These questions should be addressed if the true extent of the power of organized beggars is to be revealed.

Interpretations of evidence are sometimes problematic too. For instance, to support his idea that mendicancy was popularly perceived as morally superior to prostitution, he cites the popular saying "Ridiculing the poor but not ridiculing prostitutes" (p. 37). One can detect two problems here: first, "poor" is not the same as 'beggary' and therefore the two terms must not be used interchangeably; secondly, this popular saying could well be a true reflection of popular feeling (acceptance of prostitutes) instead of a criticism of a degenerative society as the author suggests.

On the popular views of mendicancy in contemporary China and Taiwan, Lu argues that there are many cultural continuities between traditional and modern China. The story of Wu Xun in late Qing China and the story of beggar-turned-entrepreneur Lai Dongjin in 21st-century Taiwan, are taken as evidence of the continuous existence of a culture that holds beggars in high regard; Lai is even said to have become a role model for Chinese youth today. But it is highly dubious that today's youth would truly regard a beggar as their role model. It is more likely that it is Lai's spirit of perseverance, rather than his experience as a beggar, which is admired.

VIRGIL K. Y. HO

Manchuria under Japanese Dominion. By YAMAMURO SHIN'ICHI and Translated by JOSHUA A. FOGEL [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006. viii + 335 pp. $59.95, £39.00. ISBN 0-8122-3912-1.]

Manchukuo was Japan's puppet state. It was created in 1932 in China's northeast, an area the Japanese called Manchuria. In 1934 the last living Chinese emperor, Puyi, was installed as the new state's Emperor.

Scores of young Japanese idealists rushed to the region to help build a country based on harmony between the various ethnic groups living there (the Han Chinese, Manchu, Koreans, Mongols and Japanese) and to promote a country governed on the principal of benevolent rule by a paternalistic monarch. Many of its largest cities (Mukden, Dairen, Harbin) became quite cosmopolitan, with a complete infrastructure of paved roads, sewers, running water and electricity. Impressive and brightly lit shopping streets and some well-funded universities helped to support a stratum of urban intellectuals, which included both Chinese and Japanese.

Manchukuo collapsed literally overnight when Soviet tanks invaded all along its northern and eastern borders in August 1945. Roughly 180,000 Japanese lost their lives as they tried to flee, machine-gunned by Russian tanks, set upon by angry Chinese, or simply unable to survive the lack of food, sanitation and medical help. The top Chinese officials in the Manchukuo government always knew they were merely puppets of the Japanese Kwantung Army officers who really controlled the country, and now they became traitors with nowhere to run, since Japan was in ruins and both the Chinese Communists and Nationalists wanted to execute them. Young Chinese intellectuals who had seen Manchukou as an area of stability free from the warlordism and civil strife of China proper, found themselves about to be labelled traitors for having lived and worked under Japanese rule.

The country collapsed in 1945, but it didn't disappear. It lives on in the memories of the Japanese, some of whom wonder why the idealism that publicly drove Manchukuo forward in the 1930s and 1940s is now dismissed as totally misplaced. It lives in the consciousness of the Chinese people, where the stories of Japanese military atrocities are widely discussed today. What took place in Manchukuo over fifty years ago is the topic of official notes and declarations, of TV news reporting and documentaries, and of debates among ordinary citizens in both China and Japan.

When Yamamuro's book was first published in Japan in 1993, it received acclaim, winning the Yoshino Sakuzō Prize that year and sparking wide debate on TV and in the print media. In 2004 the book was republished in an expanded version, which included an interview with the author and an appendix. The appendix is the most thoughtful and multi-faceted discussion of Manchukuo that has yet been published in any language. Yamamuro's writing is free from the pre-determined nationalistic discourse that has limited the insights of most Chinese and Japanese commentators, and he lays before the reader multiple points of view. For example, he paints the almost bumbling, but still deadly, moves of the Japanese Kwantung Army as they manoeuvred to control Northeast China. They wanted to protect the vulnerable Japanese home islands in the event of the major war with the world powers they saw coming, and Manchuria could be both a buffer and at the same time a source of food and raw materials for industry. They didn't want to create a new state. But the Japanese government in Tokyo and even their own Army Central command, both of which felt the Kwantung Army was too out of control, determined that a new state was far better window dressing for the rest of the world to see, so they forced the idea on their colonial army. Yamamuro strongly condemns the extreme ethnocentrism of the Japanese that allowed them to disrespect and devalue the lives of the Chinese and Koreans they ruled in Manchukuo.

Yamamuro also feels strongly the tragic unfairness that befell the Chinese in Manchuria whose land and labour was expropriated by the Japanese. In order to give farm land to the Japanese colonists moving into the area, the Chinese rural peasants were generally paid far less than the market value of their holdings, and were then told to move off the land, thus losing their very source of livelihood. When the war intensified in the 1940s, urban Chinese in Manchuria could expect to provide conscript, uncompensated labour in the factories and mines, on the railroads or docks. Such wanton misuse of the hapless Chinese causes Yamamuro to wonder how this aspect of Japan's occupation of the region is so totally overlooked by the Japanese public today when they talk about Manchukuo.

In spite of this comprehensive and extremely thoughtful study of Manchukuo produced by Yamamuro, the book has been virtually overlooked by Chinese and English speaking scholars. We should thus be doubly grateful to translator Joshua Fogel, who writes in the

preface that this was one of the most difficult of all the translations he has produced, because of Yamamuro's highly literate and accomplished prose style. Over the years Fogel has established himself as the translator *par excellence* of Japanese language scholarly works into English. This is a superb translation of an important book.

RONALD SULESKI

Confucianism and Women: A Philosophical Interpretation. By LI-HSIANG LISA ROSENLEE [Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006. ix + 200 pp. $65.00. ISBN 0-7914-6749-X.]

Is Confucianism inherently "sexist"? To refute this assumption, and argue that being Confucian and feminist needs no longer be an oxymoron (p. 160), Li-Hsiang Lisa Rosenlee has produced this work that attempts to outline a "Confucian feminism" (p. 2), in order to bring Confucianism into the 21st century as a viable path for the "liberation" (p. 4) of Chinese women. Rightly refusing the role of "the West" as sole moral arbiter and standard, she intends to reaffirm "the moral agency of the Others," who can "rectify themselves" by using their own cultural resources (p. 152). Specifically, disparity within Confucianism may be solved by using the relationship between friends as a model for the husband-wife relationship; at the same time, women should be allowed full and legitimate access to the outer (i.e. non-familial) realm, thus reforming the *nei*/*wai* gender-based division of labour which Rosenlee sees as the obstacle that prevents females from achieving complete personhood.

Unfortunately this interesting attempt to reconcile Confucian ethics and gender parity is relegated to the (short) last chapter, and scantly elaborated upon. Indeed, this study consists of a long *pars destruens*, with six out of seven chapters devoted to debunking (very old) received wisdom and demonstrating that Confucianism is not inherently sexist. Using a historico-philosophical approach, the author begins by showing the composite nature of Confucianism – or rather *Ru* –, which cannot be reduced to a static, ahistorical entity; she then looks at the concepts of *yin*/*yang*, *nei*/*wai* and their relation to gender attributes and distinction, illustrating how they suggest fluidity and negotiable boundaries, rather than rigid separation. Finally, she examines the theory and practice of gender propriety: didactic texts and the shifting virtues they proposed could simultaneously buttress orthodoxy and empower women, for they advocated literacy, while controversial social practices (concubinage, widowhood, footbinding) saw many women as active participants and not just passive subjects. A notable and needed background, to be sure, which however should perhaps not have become the core of the book, especially because it is not strikingly original, although it is convincing in underscoring female agency and the linkages between role performance and gender.

In fact, in the last two decades a substantial amount of scholarship has begun to provide a China-centred, more balanced view of women, showing the leeway that Confucianism did allow. And Rosenlee does rely extensively on previous, ground-breaking works on Confucian concepts and representation of femininity. Yet, in discussing biased portraits of Confucianism, she cites the likes of Olga Lang, Julia Kristeva (!) and several works from the 1970s (pp. 16, 68–69, 162 n. 1), that one would hardly define as current scholarship. Among recent non-sympathetic scholars, she lists Margery Wolf (p. 16), failing to mention the numerous contemporary studies that have adopted quite a different perspective, and of which she is apparently well aware for they appear in her bibliography and footnotes. Also, early foreign observers were not alone in equating Confucianism with rigidity and oppressiveness: Chinese modernist/nationalist thinkers did the same, as Rosenlee remarks in the beginning (p. 1) but inexplicably forgets later on.

Laudably, this work intends to do away with paradigms of Chinese women as helpless victims, and pleads for the necessity to locate gender within its culture – which for the author is Confucianism – instead of using the blanket category of "women" (or "men", one should add). Yet, vague generalizations abound. One wonders, for instance, what exactly is "the West." More importantly, by talking of "women's oppression" (e.g. p. 9, and throughout the book) or "the cruelty of female servitude in Chinese society" (p. 43), Rosenlee subscribes to two of the very myths she set out to dispel: the all-inclusive category of "women" without distinction of class, age or role, and the simplistic notion of females as invariably victimized. Furthermore, she frequently treats gender and women as if they were synonyms, which of course they are *not*. Also problematic is her view of Confucianism as the epitome of "Chineseness", as if other traditions – of which she acknowledges the existence – were not Chinese enough. This identification is apparently meant to highlight "the importance of Confucianism in Chinese self-representation of its intellectual traditions" (p. 2), except that such representation is chiefly a literati construct. Confucianism may well have been perceived as "the ultimate emblem of Chinese high culture" (p. 17), but "high culture" is not culture *tout court*, and literati cannot be held to represent China as a whole.

To conclude, this work – though successful in its challenge to stereotypical perceptions of Confucianism – misses a chance to fully express innovative contributions: hopefully, the author will develop her ideas further in future, since the elaborated articulation of a Confucian feminism would certainly be a noteworthy achievement. Finally, a more thorough editing would have been in place, in order to avoid the impressive quantity of misspellings, mistakes and incongruent romanization present in the text, notes and bibliography.

VALENTINA BORETTI

Women, War, Domesticity: Shanghai Literature and Popular Culture of the 1940s. By NICOLE HUANG [Leiden: Brill, 2005. ix + 276 pp. € 94.00. ISBN 90-04-14242-8.]

A significant change has occurred in recent decades in the study of China's War of Resistance against Japan. The focus prior to the 1990s was the political and military conflicts between the two nations, but attention has shifted since then to the war's wider impact on society, literature, the intelligentsia and everyday life in China. Nicole Huang's recently published *Domesticity: Shanghai Literature and Popular Culture of the 1940s* contributes to this new field of cultural research.

The book highlights the works of Eileen Chang, Su Qing, Pan Liudai, Shi Jimei and other women writers who dominated the cultural scene in Shanghai under Japanese occupation from 1941 to 1945, and also addresses the broader themes of domesticity and popular culture in times of war. Although the political and social climate in occupied Shanghai was oppressive, ironically, according to Huang, certain talented women writers thrived and found ways to narrate a new kind of wartime story centring on their own lives and their struggle to survive.

Unlike their May Fourth predecessors such as Feng Yuanjun, who viewed the image of women from a larger political and social perspective, Eileen Chang and her female contemporaries took control of their own destinies and wrote, often in autobiographical voices, about their daily domestic activities including urban pastimes (such as shopping and movie-going), women's fashion, family life, and sexuality.

For Huang, domesticity is neither a marginal discourse nor an enclosed space but took centre stage in the public life of 1940s Shanghai. Writing in popular journals of that period, such as *The Miscellany Monthly* and *Women's Voices*, women writers, Huang contends, openly discussed personal life, family, and marriage, and promoted their own images in roundtable talks and dialogues, generating immense interest in their private lives among middlebrow readers and earning them celebrity status.

The author's main focus, understandably, is on Eileen Chang, the pre-eminent writer of her generation. Huang echoes the writer Ke Ling's well-known observation in his 1984 essay, "To Eileen Chang from a Faraway Place," that Chang's "most brilliant literary productions lasted only two years, from 1943 to 1945." According to Huang, Chang responded to the constraints of Japanese occupation by constantly experimenting in her works with a richly textured literary language, especially in her essays, to write about such everyday subjects as apartment living and fashion in order to take on the larger, pressing issues of daily survival in the city. Chang's personalized writings on urban scenes, together with Su Qing's autobiographical novel and Shi Jimei's domestic fiction, gave rise to a golden era of women writings in modern Chinese history.

Huang has chosen an important topic and written a solid book. Placing her arguments in concrete historical and social settings, she argues convincingly that the chaos and uncertainties of war prompted Eileen Chang and her associates to find new literary strategies, developing a new aesthetic vision of life grounded in daily domestic struggles in wartime.

This book is, happily, free of the jargon normally associated with the works of literary history. It fruitfully weaves together many threads by showing that the contributions of Chinese women writers in occupied Shanghai are best assessed in the interdisciplinary domain of cultural studies, where literary criticism, print culture, and feminist study find common ground.

But the book is not without its shortcomings. The author may be straining credulity when she argues that these women who wrote about their wartime experiences in occupied Shanghai represented "a form of cultural resistance" (p. 31). It is especially implausible to contend, as the author does, that the mutual promotion between Eileen Chang and Su Qing in magazines constituted a form of opposition against Japanese occupation. Moreover, Su Qing's association with members of the collaborationist government undoubtedly puts her status as a resistance writer in serious doubt.

Huang maintains that, through their writings, women writers "fashioned themselves into public intellectuals" (p. 35). But Huang offers no definition of "public intellectuals," and she uses the term loosely. If public intellectuals are those who, according to Richard Posner, "opine to an educated public on questions of or inflected by a political or ideological concern," then Eileen Chang and her associates surely do not belong to this group.

The book ends rather abruptly, with an epilogue, not a conclusion. The results would have been far more fruitful had the author, at the end, returned to address some key issues inadequately examined in the book, for example: How might we assess the impact of different kinds of women's magazines and home journals in occupied Shanghai? Which literary form—the essay or autobiographical fiction—proved most effective in addressing issues of the daily survival in a turbulent time? And, just how influential were women writers in society in general?

CHANG-TAI HUNG