

Book Reviews

The Man Who Changed China: The Life and Legacy of Jiang Zemin. By ROBERT LAWRENCE KUHN. [New York: Crown Publishers, 2005. 688 pp. + two 16-page photo inserts. \$35.00. ISBN 1-4000-5474-5.]

Robert Kuhn's lengthy biography of Jiang Zemin sets out to tell the inside story of this unlikely leader of China from 1989 to 2004. An American investment banker and television producer with business interests in China, Kuhn was given access to many of Jiang's closest friends, aides and political allies. Yet the long-anticipated result is short of expectations. Much of the book is a dry rehashing of Jiang's official schedule from year to year, with Trollopian chapter subtitles like "How could I not know?" The occasional glimpses into the inner political and personal world of the man are so fleeting as to leave the reader more frustrated than gratified.

To be sure, the careful reader will turn up a host of interesting facts here that enhance our understanding of Jiang: for example, he began his life as an anti-drugs protestor not aware that the protests he joined were organized by the CCP. There is also a vivid James Bond-like scene of Jiang speeding a friend to safety in Shanghai at the wheel of an American jeep in 1948. And there are glimpses of real world politics. Jiang's chief mentor, Wang Daohan, commented candidly to Jiang in 1989 on the "many complications and contradictions" of politics in Beijing "especially all the subtle conflicts between different interest groups." His sister notes of his elevation to Party chief: "We certainly didn't celebrate. His appointment wasn't worth celebrating." Later, Jiang's wife, Wang Yeping, is quoted as saying she was always dismayed by the files on her husband's desk that suggested a daily crisis of governance. "Explosions here, rioting there. Murders, corruption, terrorism – little that was nice." Unfortunately, these factional conflicts and governance crises are nowhere to be found in the narrative, which offers instead a steady diet of Jiang's meetings with foreign leaders and "important" speeches.

Also notable are the examples of Jiang's frequent resort to personal telephone calls to obtain information or order policy changes. These are presented as evidence of his personable ways, but they more likely reflect the muddle of a sclerotic system. Jiang telephones CCTV to rearrange the evening news, he called the Changchun party secretary to vent his anger over a *falun gong* hijacking of the local television station, and often telephones friends to find out the real state of the economy. "President Jiang has the personal telephone numbers – office, home, cell – of each director general of every department in the Foreign Ministry," comments the ex-foreign minister, Li Zhaoxing. "He likes to get information directly, not filtered." Jiang also relies heavily on a long-standing friend, Wang Huijiong of the State Council's Development Research Centre, who says: "I have nothing to gain, no agenda to promote, no position I'm seeking ... I give him an honest assessment – the facts as they really are."

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Kuhn is at pains to stress that Jiang is not a dictator or a rights-abuser. Yet the narrative does nothing to convince otherwise and much to reinforce these images. It reveals his role in persecuting “rightists” at his power plant department in the Changchun Autoworks in 1957 – one for being religious and the other for having commented that an American-made lathe was quieter than a Russian version. Jiang, Kuhn writes, “remained haunted with guilt” by his actions. If so, he has certainly never had the courage to say so. Even as head of the Party, he is tongue-tied by what to say to friends and colleagues persecuted during the Cultural Revolution, which he managed to ride out with relative impunity. It points to his crucial role in the persecution of the *falun gong* (death toll 700 and counting), mainly because he saw it as a security threat.

His own youth was spent in political protest and the book shows how he frequently responds to his world with emotional outbursts of poetry and words. Yet popular protest and emotion are resolutely crushed as appropriate responses to political issues under his own regime, an irony that Kuhn notes but does not explore. When Jiang’s planned visit to the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia in 1997 was cancelled because of protestors appalled by the idea of the head of the world’s last great communist dictatorship going near the symbol of free and tolerant societies, Kuhn can barely contain his disdain for them, “screaming through bullhorns and banging without rhythm on cheap drums.”

Contrary to Kuhn’s claim, the protection of human rights written into the Chinese constitution in 2004 was not “China’s first legal guarantee of human rights.” Those rights have been contained in every Chinese constitution since 1954, except that of the Cultural Revolution. Jiang, like all Chinese leaders, simply ignored them in a single-minded belief that, like Platonic philosopher-guardians, they had divined the true course to follow. Jiang’s own voice on this issue suggests some doubts. It comes in very late, in the conclusion, apparently the only interview Kuhn was allowed. “There are far more variables in the social sciences than there are in engineering. Therefore social sciences are more complicated. The more I learn, the more I realize how much we have yet to learn. As for political issues, they are more complicated still.” Despite these doubts, Jiang argues for the need to uphold the Party’s attempts to engineer society. Individual freedoms and democratic government are the usual response to the complicated nature of the social world. But Jiang’s response was a new slogan called the “three represents,” an empty and irrelevant response – a focus on *who* to represent that entirely ignores the issue of *what* to represent.

Jiang, the book reveals, had made plans to take up a position in engineering at Shanghai Jiaotong University when he was unexpectedly swept into power in 1989. Kuhn offers the conclusion that Jiang “changed China” by surviving at the top and nudging the country away from the post-Tiananmen freeze and back onto the reform path. Yet, proving that Jiang was the critical cause of this requires disproving that it would have happened anyway. The impression from this biography, and others, is that Jiang did little harm and allowed China’s structurally driven reforms to

continue. But he did not resolve the systemic problems it faces. The conceit of every leader and every age is to believe that he or it has been “critical” or “a turning point.”

This book then seems a lost opportunity. Kuhn, as his other writings have shown, shares with Jiang the predilection for “scientific governance” and a fondness for business and engineering. China’s well-read autocrats with their developmental visions and highbrow official culture seem to have overwhelmed Kuhn’s senses. Nowhere do the poverty, social anomie and inequalities of China cloud the utopia he finds. “I root for China, like a loyal fan of a local sports team,” he writes.

However, even a determined biographer would have been hard-pressed to tack against the strong winds of the information he was blown. Its purpose was to burnish Jiang’s reputation. Many of the interviewees had their careers or personal welfare materially assisted by Jiang and appear eager to repay the kindness with glowing remarks. Kuhn would have done well to take a page out of Jiang’s book and make his own phone calls to get unfiltered information.

The real Jiang remains a mystery and our best information on him is confined to the several existing biographies written by outsiders. Indeed, a glimpse at the notes reveals how heavily Kuhn relied on these and other outside accounts of Chinese politics to put together a narrative amidst the largely glowing commentaries of his interviewees.

Of course, even a mildly insightful work on elite politics in China is to be welcomed given the dearth of work in this area. We are certainly better off with this book than without it. And I can only agree with Kuhn that we will all miss the exuberance and good nature of Jiang as the era of the unrelentingly dull Hu Jintao dawns. But the real story of Jiang still remains to be told.

BRUCE GILLEY

The Chinese Journalist. By HUGO DE BURGH. [London, RoutledgeCurzon, 2003. 248pp. £65.00. ISBN 0-415-30573-X.]

One can obtain as wide a range of views on the state of health of the Chinese media as on any other subject these days. Chinese journalists who remember the press up to 25 years ago will assert how much greater freedom exists now. Even the reporting of traffic accidents was forbidden, as Hugo de Burgh points out, “until the taboo was broken around 1980” (p. 36). (In Shanghai, I was told, it was broken when the *Jiefang ribao* reported that a trolley bus had caught fire on Huaihai Road.)

Younger journalists are more likely to chafe at the limits still imposed upon the media. Many seek to pursue media studies abroad, explaining that they hope to be better qualified if or when there is a new breakthrough in China. Others continue to push at the limits, sometimes getting sacked but often able to move on to another media outlet in another province. Those working for web-based media are often bolder than their

print counterparts – including journalists on the *People's Daily* website who exposed the notorious Nandan tin mine disaster in 2001.

This is a timely book which, as its title suggests, focuses on the Chinese journalist rather than on Chinese journalism – a distinction that would have been impossible to draw until recent years. It is based on fieldwork as well as wide reading although the value of some interview material is reduced by the necessity – revealing in itself – to mask the interviewees' identity.

De Burgh identifies several factors which have transformed journalistic practice in the past two decades. First and foremost, the Chinese media has benefited from being given economic independence. Newspapers and other organs directly controlled by the Party struggle to make up for the loss of subsidies and compulsory subscriptions. Those with more autonomy, and especially the new tabloid entrants to the field, have seized the chance. Sometimes the two forces are combined as in Shanghai where, de Burgh notes, the “distinguished but dull” *Wenhui bao* was conglomerated with the popular and profitable *Xinmin wanbao* tabloid (p. 31).

Controls have been relaxed except over the most sensitive stories – although the resulting uncertainty can increase rather than lessen the journalist's burden. “Since the rules are no longer clear-cut,” writes de Burgh, “there are often muddles and clashes” (p. 21). Yet, even the less adventurous journalists no longer accept Party direction as a simple top-to-bottom process but see themselves in a mediating role. De Burgh concludes with the revealing quote that “we speak for the people and we speak for the government” (p. 193).

Many journalists, according to a large-scale survey quoted here, see themselves as performing an “information role” while entertainment – in which the majority of them end up working – is the least popular field. All have “a passion for that journalism which scrutinises authority and delves into the failings of society. They call it investigative journalism and they admire it even if they themselves do not practice it” (p. 142).

It would be a mistake to idealize the Chinese journalist today: its practitioners vary in ability and integrity as widely as in the West. “Red envelopes” with a modest sum inside are routinely handed out at business press conferences and much more serious money is paid over to obtain favourable coverage of a firm's products or knocking copy against a rival. Speakers at government press conferences are almost always fed easy questions by journalists from the main media – and no one (except foreign journalists) complains if they refuse to take questions at all.

Yet an increasing number of journalists aspire to higher standards and, as the author puts it, are trying to “wrest control of their work from external domination,” while many display “a sense of social responsibility or altruism” (p. 121). Of course, their ideals have to be tempered by political realities. De Burgh conducted an interesting survey of news values among journalists in Hangzhou, showing that while they are keen to expose “unhealthy social phenomena” (examples include the sale of illegally prepared pork and problems with gas supplies), there is never

any criticism of “leaders in action.” Nevertheless, his conclusion that “[Chinese] journalists in the future are likely to be ever more iconoclastic” (p. 192) is a reasonable one.

JOHN GITTINGS

Energy Policy and Regulation in the People's Republic of China. By PHILLIP ANDREWS-SPEED. [The Hague, London and New York: Kluwer Law International, 2004. vii + 405 pp. €135.00; £94.50; \$159.00. ISBN 90-411-2233-8.]

Phillip Andrews-Speed has written a timely book. China's rapid economic growth has generated an enormous appetite for energy. Over the past decade, China has become an increasingly important factor in global energy markets. China was responsible for about one third of the increase in daily world oil consumption in 2003, and China's demand for oil and coal has contributed to the recent higher prices for both of these commodities. Consequently, the decisions Beijing makes – and does not make – about energy will have an increasing impact not only on China but also on the rest of the world.

Energy Policy and Regulation in the People's Republic of China surveys energy policy formulation, implementation and regulation in China. The book is primarily based on research previously published by the author, and reads more like a collection of parts than an organic whole. Nonetheless, two themes loosely bind the chapters together. First, China lacks a coherent energy policy. Secondly, China's powerful state-owned energy companies exert considerable influence over energy decision-making.

Andrews-Speed argues that China's energy policy incoherence can be explained, in part, by the fragmented institutional structure of energy decision-making. China does not have a Ministry of Energy to oversee the formulation and implementation of policy. Currently, this responsibility nominally falls to the Energy Bureau within the National Development Reform Commission (NDRC). Yet, the Energy Bureau lacks both the manpower and the authority to play a major role in policy making. Both the Chinese and Western media indicate that the Energy Bureau's small staff of 30 is so overwhelmed with projects in need of approval that it has little time to devise and co-ordinate broader policy objectives. The Energy Bureau's ability to shape policy is also limited by the fact that it is only one of many actors involved in energy matters. Energy decisions, according to Andrews-Speed, are the result of bargaining and consensus-building among the stakeholders in any given initiative and do not reflect an overarching strategy for energy.

Andrews-Speed also argues that this fragmented structure of authority has allowed the state-owned energy companies to dominate the policy-making process at times, with the result that the formulation and implementation of policy – or the failure to do so – reflects the corporate interests of China's energy firms more than the national interests of the Chinese state. The energy companies derive their power from both the

close ties of their management to senior officials and their profitability. *Energy Policy and Regulation* contains several examples of how these companies have apparently successfully supported the formulation of policies that served their interests and stymied the implementation of policies that would harm their interests. For example, Andrews-Speed maintains that the Chinese government did not launch a campaign to close tens of thousands of village and township coal mines, long justifiable for safety and environmental reasons, until they threatened the health of the large state-owned coal mines (chapter five). Similarly, he argues that the slow progress in the reform of the electric power sector can be explained, in part, by the State Power Corporation's persuasion of its bureaucratic master, the now defunct State Economic and Trade Commission, that it could restructure itself (chapter 12). Andrews-Speed also speculates that a key reason that the Chinese leadership did not form a Ministry of Energy during the March 2003 government restructuring is because China's energy companies opposed its creation (p. 56), a view supported by an article that appeared in the 20 April 2003 issue of *Caijing* magazine, famed for its investigative journalism.

Energy Policy and Regulation highlights the need for further research into how decisions about energy are made in China and the roles played by the various stakeholders, especially the state-owned energy firms. Andrews-Speed employs the concept of "fragmented authoritarianism," developed by Kenneth Lieberthal and Michel Oksenberg in the mid-1980s, as a starting point to understand how decisions are made. (It is a good place to begin; I have also employed this concept in my work on Chinese energy decision-making.) How relevant is it 20 years later? The larger number of actors involved in the policy-making process and the power of some of these actors suggest that energy policy-making in China is more fragmented and less authoritarian than it was in the 1980s. A series of detailed case studies of recent energy projects, such as the West-East natural gas pipeline and the overseas investments of China's oil companies, could help illuminate an area of Chinese policy-making in which the impact of Beijing's choices likely will be felt far beyond China's borders.

ERICA S. DOWNS

China's Poor Regions: Rural-Urban Migration, Poverty, Economic Reform and Urbanization. By MEI ZHANG. [London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003. 205 pp. ISBN 0 415 32145-X].

On the Move: Women in Rural-to-Urban Migration in Contemporary China. Edited by ARIANNE M. GAETANO and TAMARA JACKA. [New York: Columbia University Press, 2004. 368 pp. Hard cover \$69.50, £46.50, ISBN 0-231-12706-5; paperback \$29.50, £20.00, ISBN 0 231-12707-3.]

China's Poor Region is based on the author's PhD thesis and has a foreword by Peter Nolan, the distinguished scholar at Cambridge. It is

a questionnaire survey plus two-ended interviews of subjects in Shanxi province. It is important to point out that the subjects of the investigation are migrants *internal* to Shanxi and are mostly male workers at coal mines or construction sites. This is very different from the subjects of the second book reviewed, which deals only with women, but also involves migrants from across China.

After a survey of theories of rural poverty and rural to urban migration, Zhang goes on to describe the poverty in China and discusses the Chinese government policies to tackle rural poverty. In chapters three to five, Zhang describes the methodology and results of a case study of three sampled counties of 200 households. The final chapter is a very brief conclusion which suggests, among other points, that rural migration has played – and will continue to play – a positive role in social development and in resolving rural poverty.

Reading *On the Move*, the first question that came to my mind was: why women? What are the gender issues that make researching female migration as a separate study worthwhile? The informative introduction chapter not only discusses the aims and rationale of focusing on women, but also contains a brief survey of modern migration in China and brings together a whole range of gender issues to the subject. For example, “Outmigration may provide an important avenue of escape for women suffering gender oppression or violence,” such as the above average rate of suicide among rural women. Women suffer – or suffer more – from the patriarchal authority of parents or in-laws, and migration has an impact on that. One chapter in the book suggests that migrant women make more independent and informed decisions on who to marry and how to spend money. Even for those women who stay at home, having a migrant in the family changes the status of the women in the household as they take up new duties and responsibilities. There are other issues such as the emotional ties between mothers and children, and returned migrant women may also find themselves in a different emotional and social situation from that of the men.

On the Move consists of four parts. Part one deals with the identity of rural women after they have become migrant workers in the city. Chapter one discusses the life and emotional state of domestic servants and how they manage to present themselves with modern identities even though domestic work is associated with servility. Chapter two demonstrates how migrant bar hostesses, while being the sexual prey of male urbanites, manage to exercise agency for financial and career gains. There is also a chapter on the media discourse that presents women as morally and socially inferior.

Part two contains a chapter exploring rural women’s dilemma between changed attitude/desire (modern, city life and free choice of marriage) and structured reality (*hukou*, and obstacles that are almost impossible to overcome). There is also a chapter on rural women who marry urban men as a result of migration and who, in general, find life much better. Part three of the book deals with returned women migrants and the effect migration has on villages. The three chapters seem to suggest that

migration is generally a positive experience and empowers women, although creates emotional difficulties for them in reconciling their changed outlook to the rural reality upon returning to their village. Finally, the book has translated stories that depict the lives of seven individual migrant workers.

It is interesting to compare the two books reviewed here. *China's Poor Regions* involves more statistics as a result of its quantitative research while *On the Move* uses rich narrative and life stories to approach the topic and therefore is focused more on qualitative research. *On the Move* is more sympathetic in tone to the migrants. Whereas Zhang says that a migrant worker's wage of 550 *yuan* (US\$68) a month "... is not bad in comparison with normal city residents" (p. 160), Gaetano and Jacka state, rightly, that migrant workers work for "the lowest wages in poor and often unsafe conditions in occupations that urbanites shun." It is also interesting to note that Gaetano and Jacka's research indicates that many women, and according to one survey over half of the women, migrate not primarily to earn money, but to experience life and to be "modern." This contrasts with Zhang's underlying assumption that migration is to escape absolute poverty.

Although both books are positive (*On the Move* achieves this largely by projecting agency on to rural migrant women), Zhang concludes that migrant working has raised living standards and reduced poverty. However, the book itself does not set out to prove this and nor does it. In any case, what are the criteria for better living standards? Better housing? Better education and health care? We all know that the clever design of questionnaires can provide us with any result we desire, and I found the questionnaire design in the book to be problematic. For instance, one of the questions asks the subject to agree or not (strongly or not) with the statement that "Moving a tree will kill it, but moving people is always positive." What would any answer to that cliché prove? One can have a miserable life as migrant worker but still agree with the statement. The same applies to the statement "If there is a migrant in the household, the whole family will not be poor." How would anyone answer that? What does it prove? A migrant worker may be able to buy a Western style jacket or even a tie and a pair of sunglasses – is that an improvement of living standards? An average annual remittance of 2,000 to 4,000 *yuan* by a migrant worker may or may not reduce poverty in the family depending not only on the cost of sustaining the family in any given year, but also depending on whether that amount is enough to stop the cycle of poverty. What if the migrant worker loses his job or is unable to work?

It is probably fair to say that Zhang assumes urbanization reduces poverty. With that assumption, Zhang can then proceed to set up questions to prove that rural-to-urban migration has that positive role. But the fundamental problem with the Chinese situation is that although urbanization is growing at a considerable pace, the hundred million or so migrant workers are not part of this process and do not enjoy the benefits that urbanization brings. They are in the cities only because work is

located in or near a city. They don't have families in the city and they do not enjoy the health care and education urbanites enjoy – in many places, they even have to pay more than an urban resident for a monthly bus pass.

While *China's Poor Region* may only be of interest to a professional economist as a case study and as a methodological illustration, *On the Move* is more suited for classroom adaptation in tertiary institutions for a number of disciplines in the field of China studies.

MOBO GAO

Corruption and Market in Contemporary China. By YAN SUN. [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004. 272 pp. Hard cover \$49.95, ISBN 0-8014-4284-2; paperback \$21.00, ISBN 0-8-8014-8942-3.]

In *Corruption and Market in Contemporary China*, Yan Sun seeks to describe, in qualitative terms, corruption in post-Mao China and assess its consequences. Corruption is not, she argues, a unitary phenomena but rather consists of a variety of different forms of malfeasance whereby officials use the public authority granted them by right of their positions to seek private gains. Differences in form imply differences in result. Thus, we might presume it makes a difference if an official loots the treasury and absconds to the Cayman Islands or if she accepts a minor bribe in return for granting a business licence to an entrepreneur who goes on to establish a flourishing business empire.

In trying to describe Chinese corruption, Sun faces a Herculean task. Since 1979, the Ministry of Supervision and the Party's Discipline Inspection Commission have disciplined three million cadres and the judicial Procuratorate has prosecuted one million cases of economic and disciplinary crime. Even given detailed and systematic data, the task of cataloguing the multitudinous forms of corruption and then characterizing them into a manageable typology would be a formidable analytic task. Such data are, however, lacking. Sun is therefore forced to turn to case data drawn from a variety of compilations and collections. These data are problematic – as Sun recognizes – because of sampling error and selection bias.

Using her database (which consists of approximately 1,300 mostly senior-level cases), supplemented by data from official and unofficial Chinese sources, Sun breaks corruption down into two major categories, transactive and nontransactive, differentiating between exchanges between state officials and private interests (e.g. bribery), and the theft of state assets by officials (e.g. embezzlement). She then disaggregates these categories into 11 subcategories and 27 specific forms. She further differentiates between two periods (pre-1992 and post-1992) and breaks corruption down along regional lines.

Prior to 1992, she asserts, corruption was primarily small scale, frequently involved arbitrage between the plan and market, and often

provided a survival mechanism for struggling entrepreneurs in the township and village enterprise (TVE) and individual household sectors. As such, corruption helped undermine the socialist economy and nurture China's embryonic private sector, albeit at a price in terms of cadre integrity and regime legitimacy. Post-1992, according to Sun, corruption surged, spiralling upward within the Party-state hierarchy to infect more senior levels, spreading laterally to engulf ever-greater numbers of cadres and officials, and escalating exponentially in monetary terms. As corruption worsened it lost whatever positive gloss it might have had during the early reform period. In broad terms, corruption evolved from a form of malfeasance that broke through the bottlenecks of the socialist economy to an opportunism that exploited the loopholes of China's partially reformed economy, and then to a wholesale plunder that thrived in the voids of its incompletely marketized economy. As corruption worsened, its negative political consequences increased and its economic costs mounted.

Sun also finds significant variation. Poor areas, she argues, suffer from "top down" corruption wherein officials treat public office as a means of enrichment. In relatively wealthy, rapidly developing regions, by contrast, corruption tends to come from the bottom up as local business interests use bribery to forge collusive alliances with local officials and manipulate policy implementation to their economic advantage. In major cities, Sun finds that a combination of strong state institutions and strong business interests is apt to spawn a more balanced relationship that approximates the "crony capitalism" found elsewhere in Asia.

In attempting to characterize corruption and assess its temporal and spatial evolution, Sun has made an important contribution to the literature. Heretofore, most studies have relied on anecdotal evidence or gross quantitative measures of corruption. Sun's book moves the discussion away from these approximations of data by recognizing the importance of qualitative variations and drawing on the rich body of case material that has become available to researchers in recent years. Methodologically, of course, the narrow and obviously biased nature of her sample necessitates recognition that her typology and findings are tentative because they are extrapolated from a relatively small sample. Sun nevertheless provides a rich illustration of the contours of corruption in contemporary China.

The major shortcoming of the book is that it fails to resolve what Sun terms the paradox of Chinese corruption: high growth and high corruption. Throughout the book she argues that corruption has worsened since the advent of reform. Because Sun accepts the conventional wisdom that corruption and growth are negatively correlated, her claim finds itself contradicted by the high growth rates witnessed during much of the post-1992 period. She attempts to reconcile the apparent contradiction between her theory and the data by first pointing to claims that growth rates in the late 1990s may have been exaggerated and by then arguing that the issue is not growth but equality. Even though worsening corruption has not obviously cut growth, she asserts it has skewed income

distributions, allowed officials to get rich at the expense of society, and robbed that state of resources. Her claims, which are not supported by data on income inequality, may be true and it may well be that the focus on growth rates rather than equality is mistaken. Nevertheless, Sun sidesteps the fact that per capita gross domestic product increased over 500 per cent between 1979 and 2002, with the most robust growth occurring as corruption supposedly worsened. Sun provides a more nuanced picture of corruption in China, but it leaves the Chinese paradox unresolved.

ANDREW WEDEMAN

China, Sex and Prostitution. By ELAINE JEFFREYS. [London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2004. 212 pp. ISBN 0-415-31863-7.]

This book's primary theoretical targets are methodological problems and political biases in China studies, and it uses scholarly and administrative discourses about female prostitution in order to illustrate the field's shortcomings. As befits its embrace of the text-based "new humanities," its sources are scholarly debates, police and government reports, and secondary sources rather than ethnographic fieldwork.

Jeffreys argues that China studies suffers from several problems. First, it has methodological deficiencies: China studies is dominated by scholars who wrongly claim to have access to the "truth" about China because of their linguistic skills; as "nation-translators" they produce positivist, realist, empiricist works disconnected from the theoretically-oriented "new humanities." Moreover, scholars who do attempt to apply postmodern or postcolonial theories to China engage it as an object that can illustrate their theories, never as a subject that can generate theory. In short, Anglophone authors privilege the metropolitan discourse and ignore what Chinese people have to say. Secondly, the field suffers from political biases: China Studies is still mired in a Cold War ideological framework in which scholars accept the word of the CCP only "to turn it back on the CCP ... to show how and where the CCP and Chinese Marxism have failed" (p. 41). Their analytical reliance on the state/civil society dichotomy emphasizes the power of the state over and above society, with the implication that only non-state actors can speak truthfully. This "preclude[s] the possibility that there might be anything positive or productive about the operation of power in China" (p. 41). Jeffreys advocates replacing the state/civil society dichotomy with the Foucauldian notion of "governmentality," which forces one to examine the complex historical background and administrative networks in which government officials are enmeshed, and which creates the limits of the possible for them. Lastly, she argues that international NGOs and metropolitan feminists are fundamentally misguided when they push the Chinese government to recognize the validity of sex work because they have no idea what the actual ramifications of

this would be in the Chinese context. Such a policy would, unlike the commonsense efforts of the Chinese police, make life worse, not better, for prostitutes.

In my opinion, Jeffreys is on target with her criticisms of the political biases in the field. She is correct to condemn analyses of China that assume the government is always deceitful, hypocritical or blindly ideological. The state (though she would object to that usage) is far more complex than the totalitarian model would suggest, and looking at local governments' or other administrative bodies' incentives and structural limitations is a more fruitful way to understand their actions. Her discussion of political campaigns as a useful technology of policing rather than as a Maoist throwback is especially instructive in this regard. She is also certainly right that international human rights activists' advocacy of universal principles and programmes based on "travelling" theories can backfire and lead to terrible consequences on the ground in spite of activists' good intentions. These are important points that deserve to be made strongly.

Two methodological points in the book are more puzzling. First, in spite of the emphasis Jeffreys puts on historical and institutional limits to government action (i.e. governmentality), she includes little discussion of pre-1949 history. This is surprising because there are clear similarities between discussions of prostitution and policing methods during the PRC and those during the Republic, certainly not a coincidence. What possibilities were precluded in the PRC by Republican-era discourses and practices? Additionally, Jeffreys' disdain for fieldwork and its practitioners' truth claims (see pp. 4–7, pp. 115–18) is somewhat perplexing. Discourse analysis is absolutely a worthy undertaking, but it is unclear why that should mean that old-fashioned, first-hand observation is wrong or inauthentic. The discourse-centred approach means we learn much about what scholars and officials think about prostitution, but little of other key aspects of prostitution such as the experiences of the sex workers themselves. This is a missing piece that fieldwork could supply. People who fully accept the postmodern idea that there is no "reality" to examine will probably find this point less troubling than I do.

Readers interested in discourses about sex and prostitution will find good material here. Though framed primarily as attacks on metropolitan chauvinism, chapters three and four contain excellent summaries of Anglophone feminist debates and Chinese debates, respectively, about prostitution. Both would be especially useful readings for graduate or undergraduate courses discussing approaches to prostitution in comparative perspective. Chapter six likewise provides a nuanced view of Chinese government and police discourse about the object and aims of policing prostitution, effectively arguing that police policy is both more practical and more flexible than most analysts have claimed. Readers looking for empirical analysis of prostitution in China, however, must look elsewhere.

ELIZABETH J. REMICK

Falun Gong: The End of Days. By MARIA HSIA CHANG. [New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 188 pp. \$25.00; £16.99. ISBN 0-300-10227-5.]

Since 1999, *falun gong* has been one of the most burning and sensitive political and religious issues in China, brought to the attention of the public around the world by demonstrations and media reports. Until Maria Hsia Chang's book, *Falun Gong: The End of Days*, was released this spring, no balanced book-length account of the facts surrounding *falun gong* was available. Chang's book provides the general public with an informative summary of the development of *falun gong*, its basic beliefs, the history of its repression by the Chinese state, and its connection with millenarian and sectarian traditions in Chinese religious history. However, the journalistic style and sources of the book underline the need for a thorough academic study of the phenomenon.

Chapter one, "A religious sect defies the state," outlines the story of *falun gong* from its foundation in 1992 to its continued repression today following the Zhongnanhai demonstration of 1999. In chapter two, "Chinese religions and millenarian movements," Chang summarizes the history of Chinese religions, secret societies, and millennial and apocalyptic movements, including the Eight Trigram, Taiping and Boxer rebellions, and argues that the Chinese Communists tapped into China's millenarian tradition in order to gain power. She then stresses that *falun gong*, contrary to its claims that it is not a religion, draws heavily from Chinese religion, and particularly its millennial and apocalyptic strands. *Falun gong* teachings are described in chapter three, "Beliefs and practices," in which *falun gong*'s cosmology, theology and eschatology are outlined with ample reference to the writings of Li Hongzhi. The next chapter, "The state vs. *falun gong*," goes through the Chinese state's charges against *falun gong*. Chapter five, "The persecution of other faiths," begins with a critique of the "rule of law" purportedly called on by the CCP to deal with *falun gong*, and argues that the accusations made against *falun gong* could just as well be made against the CCP itself. It then discusses the vast social dislocations in contemporary China that create a fertile soil for the emergence of apocalyptic movements such as *falun gong*, and describes how the persecution of *falun gong* is part of a larger policy to eradicate underground religious groups, several of which are presented. Finally, Chang concludes that, in the face of widespread social dissatisfaction, the fear of millenarian uprisings is the main motivation for the CCP's fierce suppression of *falun gong* – but its intolerance of "heterodox" faiths only reinforces their politicization into oppositional movements, increasing the likelihood of the CCP "reaping the fate" it so dreads.

In its general lines, *Falun Gong: The End of Days* is accurate and balanced in its presentation of the *falun gong* issue. Short (a little more than 150 pages long) and well written, it will appeal to the general reader and to journalists and undergraduates. Unfortunately, while an editorial preference for accessibility to a mass audience – evident in the format of

the book itself (no bibliography) – is understandable, the book offers few pointers for readers interested in more in-depth research. Besides Li Hongzhi's works, almost all of the sources cited are Western media accounts. The small but growing academic literature on *falun gong* by authors such as David Ownby on the sectarian roots of *falun gong* (see the special thematic issue of *Nova Religio* 6, 2002), James Tong on *falun gong*'s organizational structure (*The China Quarterly*, No. 171, 2002, pp. 636–660), and Benjamin Penny on Li Hongzhi (*The China Quarterly*, No. 175, 2003, pp. 643–661), to name but a few, is never referred to or referenced. The same goes for her treatment of sectarian and millenarian movements, which, based on early authors such as de Groot and Chesnaux, completely ignores, with the exception of Naquin's book on the Eight Trigrams rebellion, four decades of more recent scholarship. The section on the "White Lotus Society," for instance, does not take into account Barend ter Haar's authoritative work (*The White Lotus Teachings in Chinese Religious History*, 1992) which has demonstrated how the so-called "White Lotus" became a label used by the imperial state to stigmatize a wide variety of otherwise unrelated unorthodox groups. Although there is as yet no book-length academic study of *falun gong*, Chang, a professor of political science at the University of Nevada at Reno, seems to be either unaware of almost the entire body of scholarly literature on the related issues she discusses, or to consider it irrelevant for her purposes. Either way, it is a disservice to readers who might otherwise have used her book as a gateway for more in-depth research. Chang's book thus can hardly be considered an academic work, in spite of its publication by a distinguished university press.

As a result of Chang's almost exclusive reliance on journalistic accounts, rather than first-hand research or primary sources (other than Li Hongzhi's major works), she departs little from the standard Western media "script" on *falun gong*, i.e. the brutal repression by a totalitarian state of innocent meditators with weird ideas. There is little critical evaluation of the sources used or of alleged but unverified "facts" used as critical weapons in the propaganda war between *falun gong* and the CCP. For example, the alleged self-immolation of *falun gong* practitioners on Tiananmen Square on 23 January 2001 was highly effective in turning Chinese public opinion against *falun gong*. Chang briefly mentions *falun gong*'s denial of involvement in the event, but makes no mention of the *falun gong* claim that the event was staged by the CCP, or of the attempts to back up this claim through a meticulous deconstruction of video footage of the self-immolation – even less does she attempt to evaluate the opposing claims or their use by the two camps' propaganda arsenal. Indeed, while it is easy to identify CCP propaganda for what it is, there is nothing in Chang's book on *falun gong*'s masterful use of a variety of propagandistic methods, both in the classical socialist Chinese context prior to the 1999 repression and on the global stage of cyberspace and human rights activism afterwards. This raises questions as to the avowed "apolitical" nature of the sect. The organizational effectiveness of *falun gong*, and the political consciousness of its leaders and activists, is a topic

still in need of research. Overall, then, Chang's book is a useful and relatively balanced synthesis of what Western journalists and human rights organizations have been writing on *falun gong* in the past five years. Readers should not expect new data or critical analysis.

DAVID A. PALMER

Chinese Scientists and Responsibility: Ethical Issues of Human Genetics in Chinese International Contexts. Edited by OLE DÖRING. [Hamburg: Institut für Asienkunde, Mitteilungen des Instituts für Asienkunde, 1999. 257 pp. DM 38.00. ISBN 3-88910-227-1.]

It has been more than 80 years since Chinese intellectuals, struggling with the complexities of "science and philosophy of life," debated the challenges of finding the moral wisdom needed to apply new scientific knowledge in ethically responsible ways. Could a moral compass be found? Would it be discovered in Chinese culture, or would it come from the West?

Advances in science and technology during the course of the 20th century have often outpaced progress in understanding "science and philosophy of life." Nevertheless, the importance of the ethical dimensions of science and technology has increased in all countries, and there is little doubt that the new technologies of the early 21st century are already bestowing on us new moral conundrums. As advanced technologies and scientific research capabilities diffuse around the world, the ethical traditions which inform moral choice seemingly become more heterogeneous, and the need for reasoned, cross-cultural moral discourse increases. The Institut für Asienkunde in Hamburg is therefore to be congratulated for convening the "First International and Interdisciplinary Symposium on Aspects of Medical Ethics in China," from which the 15 papers in this volume come.

There is no easy way to summarize the diversity of views presented in this provocative conference report. The authors include practising scientists from China and students of bioethics from China, Malaysia, Germany and the United States. But, the theme of eugenics – especially the ways in which advances in human genetics affect our moral stance towards eugenics – link a number of the papers. The atrocities of Nazi Germany strongly condition the views of the Western authors. Reacting, perhaps, to China's 1994 Law on Maternal and Infant Health Care, the latter seem to be urging Chinese researchers, medical practitioners, ethicists and policymakers to take the German experience to heart – even as China embraces the promises of the new genetic technologies. Thus, historian Sheila Faith Weiss' "Prelude to the maelstrom," an informative account of the origins of Nazi eugenics in the 19th and early 20th-century culture of German medicine, is not so subtly subtitled, "A cautionary tale for contemporary China?" The Chinese authors acknowledge this "cautionary tale," but also speak to the ethical challenges of new genetic

technologies from a tradition with its own understandings of how practical knowledge and moral purpose are related, and how individual and collective well-being are reconciled.

Discussions of that tradition appear in a number of papers, but are laid out most explicitly in a controversial chapter by philosopher Lee Shui-chuen on “A Confucian perspective on human genetics,” and in a paper by philosopher Qiu Renzong, entitled “Cultural and ethical dimensions of genetic practices in China.” The latter was originally written in response to a major international survey of geneticists described in a chapter by bioethicist Dorothy C. Wertz. In that survey, Chinese respondents had significantly different views on genetic screening and counselling, privacy and the balance between individual and collective interests in the treatment of genetic disorders, than those of their colleagues in other countries. Qiu’s comprehensive interpretation of these data is a highlight of the book.

Geneticist Yang Huanming, a leader of China’s Human Genome Project, notes that with its huge population and enormous health care problems, China is likely to be one of the biggest beneficiaries of new biomedical research, including genomics. But Yang and the other Chinese authors also realize that the potential for abuse is enormous, and that there is a long way to go in changing attitudes and developing institutions in China to ensure that the new technologies will be used responsibly.

What defines “responsible” in the Chinese context, though, remains elusive. For Wertz, China’s current approaches do “... not accord with the wave of individual autonomy that will eventually sweep around the world. Ideas about individual (patient) rights ... that predominate in North America and Western Europe will someday reach Chinese patients.” For Taiwan-based Lee Shui-chuen, the answers to the ethical challenges of modern human genetics are to be found in the reworking of Neo-Confucianism for the world of modern science. For Qiu Renzong, and others, “responsibility” will be found in a complex melding of individual rights, the norms of Chinese medicine (the “art of humanness” – *ren shu*), and the opportunities generated by new scientific discoveries and therapeutic technologies. Clearly, the “science and philosophy of life” debate continues!

RICHARD P. SUTTMEIER

Linguistic Engineering: Language and Politics in Mao’s China. By Ji FENGYUAN. [Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2004. 351 pp. \$50.00. ISBN 0-8248-2536-5.]

Can the nightmare of language control in Orwell’s *1984* work in reality? *Linguistic Engineering* offers a detailed look at Cultural Revolution slogans and draconian punishments for ‘incorrect’ speech, especially in schools and the workplace. Ji offers much-needed evidence from linguistics and psychology that, even for Red Guards, new vocabulary for ‘class struggle’ against ‘cow ghosts and snake gods’ could not produce a

complete or permanent change in thought. Language control is fortunately impossible, however much intellectuals or propagandists may wish. Mere exposure to a phrase does not mean people will learn it, much less believe it. Humans inevitably interpret the world by experience, context and possible rewards, using humour, subversion, indifference, and simple daily routine to find ways to live around even the most oppressive propaganda.

Linguistic Engineering focuses mainly on the spoken language of political discussion groups and propaganda between 1966 and 1972, with additional examples from school textbooks, and some model literature and operas. Once labels like ‘rightist,’ ‘bad element’ or ‘capitalist roader’ became linked with everything from ostracism to job loss to prison, passionate battles erupted. Traditional four character phrases such as “confess without being pressed” (*bu da zi zhao*) grew heavily politicized. Other new vocabulary, however, such as ‘tractor’ or ‘work unit’ was a more benign reflection of new technology and social systems, and remains part of everyday life.

Lazy research mars what should have been a better book. Most of the Chinese examples are lifted from English language secondary sources by political scientists, then back-translated (well) into Chinese. Other examples come from English language memoirs of former Red Guards. They are rather unevenly chosen and cited, but most examples have already received meticulous discussion over the past 30 years. This book uses the term ‘Maoist worship,’ for example, very simplistically, ignoring the extensive literature on the distinctions between religious rites and political rallies. The term ‘linguistic engineering’ itself, comes not from Stalin, but from his propagandist, Zhadnov, who said writers are “engineers of human souls.” Other sections are original, but less compelling (e.g. the heroine of the model opera, “On the Docks,” gets 42 per cent of the dialogue).

Readers need to have a detailed familiarity with the Cultural Revolution to follow discussion of examples such as “The Gang of Four Anti-Party Clique.” Social history is sketched, but not in a timeline coherent enough to make sense to anyone not already a China expert.

Sino-centrism is a more important flaw in the assumption that the Maoist era lacked precedent or parallel. Yet, ferocious attempts at language control are sadly common: in the Spanish Inquisition, in militarist Japan, in Taiwan under martial law, and in modern Iran, where university students have been jailed, tortured and executed for blasphemy or anti-Islamist words. Beijing once targeted ‘class enemies;’ the US government coined the term ‘enemy combatant’ deliberately to deny legal rights to ‘prisoners of war’ imprisoned in violation of the Geneva Accords.

The book’s limitations are too bad, because the writing is clear and appealing, the examples numerous, well translated and listed with enough instances (and romanized originals) to give a feel for the range of concepts – including humorous, sarcastic or subversive jokes and variants. The author is also sympathetic to the real world constraints on

Chinese citizens struggling to keep farms and classes running with illiterate peasants and angry students in turbulent times. Even so, *Linguistic Engineering* would be hard to assign to undergraduates or as a textbook. It does make the valuable contribution of modernizing and updating the understanding of China scholars of social psychology and the limits of rhetoric on mind control.

MARY S. ERBAUGH

The Communist Takeover of Hangzhou: The Transformation of City and Cadres, 1949–1954. By JAMES Z. GAO. [Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004. x + 339 pp. ISBN 0-8248-2701-5.]

In *The Communist Takeover of Hangzhou*, historian James Gao provides the first book-length re-examination of the CCP's military and political conquest of China since Kenneth Lieberthal published *Revolution and Tradition in Tientsin* in 1980. This reappraisal comes none too soon, since there has been a revolution in the last 24 years in the quantity and quality of primary sources available on the early years of the PRC. Recently published memoirs, newly opened government archives, and interviews with former CCP cadres all contribute to Gao's richer and more nuanced portrayal of this key period in the Chinese Communist revolution.

Gao argues that the CCP's moderation in the early 1950s was not the typical cooling of utopian fervour that most revolutionaries have experienced upon seizing power. He also disagrees with scholars who have characterized the early 1950s as a sharp break from the radicalism that both preceded and followed it. Instead, Gao maintains that this period represents a strategic pause in the Chinese Communist Revolution, engineered by opportunistic Party leaders in order to consolidate their new hold on power. While this focus on the problems of regime consolidation may not be new, Gao's emphasis on the cultural aspects of this process is innovative. He argues that one of the most important facets of the Chinese Communists' consolidation of power was their effort to incorporate elements of urban elite culture into the rural revolutionary culture of the wartime base areas, and thereby transcend the limitations of their earlier political practices.

The tea party is one of Gao's more colourful examples of these new hybrid political practices. Apparently, tea parties were initially quite uncomfortable for all involved. Hangzhou businessmen, long accustomed to the lavish dinner parties favoured by the Kuomintang, suddenly had to learn how to press their interests without the aid of alcohol, culinary delicacies and less subtle forms of bribery. Rural cadres used to dealing with local elites in struggle meetings had to manoeuvre through the grey area between their disgust with bourgeois lifestyles and their dependence on bourgeois resources and expertise. But both groups rapidly adapted to the new ritual, even shedding their military uniforms and Western suits to don matching Sun Yat-sen jackets.

The most successful part of the book is this focus on cultural change. In addition to analysing the development of political rituals, Gao draws a rich portrait of the culture shock experienced by the southbound cadres, with attention to the way in which gender complicated their responses. Moreover, Gao's treatment of Hangzhou's landmarks, temples and *yueju* opera in the chapter entitled "Geneva of the East" breaks new ground in exploring the cultural politics of this period. The top CCP leadership, local cadres on the ground, and intellectuals and other elites outside the Party all struggled to shape the revolutionary culture of the new regime, and in some ways the differences within the Party seemed to be as deep as the divisions outside of it.

Gao's effort to place this period in a larger comparative context with other revolutions is commendable, but less convincing. Rather than explicitly laying out the basis for his comparison, Gao frames his argument as a critique of Maurice Meisner's *Mao's China and After*. Meisner's passing comment on the decline of revolutionary fervour in the French and Russian revolutions is a thin reed to support an analysis of this complexity, and at times the comparison seems to raise more questions than it answers. For example, Gao attributes the CCP's moderation in the early 1950s to the opportunism of its leaders, and roots this opportunism in Chinese peasant culture. Were the Jacobins and the Bolsheviks really less opportunistic than the Chinese Communists? Does opportunism explain why the Chinese Communists chose the path of moderation earlier than their predecessors, only to abandon it later on? The deep divisions within the CCP that Gao describes may go further in explaining the stop-and-go pattern of the Chinese revolution than the strategic foresight of its leaders.

In sum, the new sources Gao uses to advantage in this book supplement, rather than supplant, earlier generations of research.

NARA DILLON

Narcotic Culture: A History of Drugs in China. BY FRANK DIKÖTTER, LARS LAAMANN, and ZHOU XUN. [Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004. 319 pp. \$35.00. ISBN 0-226-14905-6.]

In the burgeoning sub-field of narcotic history in China, *Narcotic Culture* stands out as a revision of the revisionist literature. Most scholars now concur that the nature and extent of China's narcotic "problem" has been grossly exaggerated over time, and recent scholarship has reinterpreted opiates as key components of social, economic and political developments in the late Qing and Republican eras. But *Narcotic Culture* goes well beyond this reassessment in an interpretation that relies on a wide range of archival and other primary sources, as well as a methodology that successfully blends history and anthropology. Dikötter, Laamann and Zhou take issue with the "narcophobic discourse" (p. 2) that has characterized the rhetoric of drug use and abuse in China and, even more

significant, they dispute the assumption that various attempts to prohibit opium and other narcotics were positive developments that reflected state strength or rising Chinese nationalism. Instead, the authors build a strong case for their contention that it was prohibition that generated a social and economic disaster for many Chinese.

The first half of the book is devoted to debunking what the authors term “the opium myth,” the idea that opium caused more harm than good and was largely responsible for the downfall of Chinese civilization. They establish that opium use was not confined to China, most Chinese opium smokers were not addicts, and many smokers sought the drug’s valued medical benefits. They hypothesize that opium abuse in China was largely prevented by a smoking culture that valued decorum and encouraged complex and time consuming rituals. The authors also note that any valid historical examination of narcotics in China must have a global focus and should seek to extricate the drug from the multilayered socio-cultural meanings that have, at various times, transformed a legitimate medicine into a moral problem.

The second half delves into far more provocative territory as the authors set out to prove that prohibition was far more harmful to the Chinese than the narcotics themselves. Criminalization and a series of suppression campaigns produced innumerable arrests that led to prison overcrowding, the spread of infectious disease and even executions of those perceived as incorrigible. Detoxification centres tried to rehabilitate opium smokers into model citizens through moral exhortation and forced labour. Because the suppression campaigns ignored the medical rationale that prompted most opium smoking, many Chinese sought relief from physical and psychological pain in other narcotics or suffered through “cures” for opium smoking that ranged from ineffective to toxic to bizarre (e.g. the “goat shit cure”). *Narcotic Culture* explores the rise of less expensive opium substitutes, like heroin pills, and the history of injectable drugs in China, particularly morphine. Despite the popularity of needles as a “modern” method of narcotic consumption, injected drugs brought the risk of contaminated syringes and adulterated solutions.

The only shortcoming of the volume is that in its determination to debunk myths about the detrimental effects of opium and opium suppression, it downplays evidence of the damage wrought by genuine opium addiction and the existence of considerable popular antipathy towards the drug despite its undeniable medical benefits. Along the same vein, so to speak, the authors are rightfully sceptical about the moralistic condemnation of opium by Western missionaries who then liberally dispensed opium “cures” containing opiates. However, the missionary stance also derived from the appeal of that anti-opium rhetoric to many Chinese Christian converts who sought relief from addiction themselves or that of a family member.

In sum, Dikötter, Laamann and Zhou have produced a well researched, nicely written and provocatively argued book that should attract a wide readership and stimulate scholarly discussion for some time. The volume features an exhaustive bibliography of archival, primary and secondary

sources that will be indispensable for other scholars of narcotics in China. It is an important book, and the innovative perspective rightfully calls on those scholars (myself included) who have not explored the negative consequences of opiate prohibition to radically rethink this issue.

JOYCE A. MADANCY

Trust in Troubled Times: Money, Banks, and State-Society Relations in Republican Tianjin. By BRETT SHEEHAN. [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003. 269 pp. £30.00. ISBN 0-674-01080-9.]

Trust in Troubled Times is an important addition to the still relatively small body of literature on banking and finance in Republican China. In this careful and thoughtful study of the development of banking and paper money in Tianjin from late Qing to the eve of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937, Brett Sheehan analyses the rise of modern banks and the growth of social trust in such financial institutions, and examines their relations to the process of state-building. The work is solidly based on a wealth of primary sources including newspapers published in Tianjin, Beijing and Shanghai, archival materials in China, Taiwan and the United States, as well as interviews with individuals who had worked in Tianjin banks in the 1920s and 1930s. Indeed, one of the main contributions of this book is the tremendous amount of data amassed by the author that illuminates the complexity of the problems associated with banking and finance in the pre-1949 period.

Drawing on Western theories on banking and social trust, Sheehan begins his study with a discussion of a theoretical framework which provides not only a foundation for the analysis of developments in Tianjin, but also the basis for comparative studies of institution and state-building in different political, social and economic milieus. He then examines a series of financial crises, from the moratorium on exchange in 1916, the bank runs under the warlord governments, the financial instability created by the Japanese attack on Shanghai in 1932, and the monetary reforms of the Nationalist government in 1935. The responses of government officials, bankers and the local elites to the crises, the strategies they used to establish and promote impersonal trust in Tianjin banks, and the impact of these crises on the elites, the banking profession and state-society relations constitute the main body of the study. The story is both encouraging and disheartening: encouraging because by 1937, trust in Chinese-owned and operated banks was indeed established; disheartening because the banks failed to gain the autonomy that could have shielded them from the abuses of the government.

The state had always played a crucial role in the development of a modern financial system during this period – from late Qing financial reforms to ensure the viability of the monetary system and to meet the fiscal needs of the state, to the warlord governments' machinations to gain access to financial resources and the Nationalist regime's imposition

of its authority over the financial system in 1935 – the state had the power and means to affect the fortunes of the banks and the allocation of resources. Certainly, as Sheehan points out, by the 1920s and 1930s, state–bank relations were, to some extent, governed by established “rules of the games.” But when the Nationalist government took advantage of the balance of payment crisis in 1934–35 to nationalize much of the banking system and the money supply, Sheehan claims that it changed the rules. The assertion, however, does not sufficiently explain the imperatives of state-building – increased centralization and the extension and consolidation of control over agencies and institutions vital to the fulfilment of the state’s objectives – and the financial system was indeed critical to the success of Nationalist efforts.

By focusing on the Tianjin elites and the bankers’ responses to a series of crises, Sheehan has provided a detailed and revealing picture of the emergence and nature of new professionals who, despite their weakness vis-à-vis the state, managed to survive in an often hostile environment. In fact, Xiaoqun Xu has demonstrated in his recent study, *Chinese Professionals and the Republican State* (2001), the symbiotic dynamics in the state–society relationship, and the influence local society had on state transformation. Sheehan’s book contributes to that growing body of scholarship on class formation and state-building in a modernizing society, and provides important data for comparative studies of developments in major urban centres in pre-1949 China.

This pioneering study will be of great value not only to China specialists but also to historians, political scientists and economists interested in the history of banking and finance, state-building, class formation and modernization in general.

KA-CHE YIP

A Bitter Revolution: China’s Struggle with the Modern World. By RANA MITTER. [New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. 357 pp. \$30.00. ISBN 0-19-280341-7.]

In *A Bitter Revolution*, Rana Mitter offers a broad-brushed interpretive essay intended for a general reader rather than a focused academic study. Because of his target audience and the expansiveness of his topic, Mitter’s prose is informal and he frequently inserts textbook-style passages. Mitter intermittently offers his own illuminating readings of primary source material and throughout the work he engages with an impressive range of recently published scholarly research findings but, in the main, this book’s originality lies in its integrative and sweeping narrative reading of China’s modern revolutionary history.

Mitter’s account is organized around a number of biographical sketches (most prominently of Zou Taofen and Du Zhongyuan) and several key historiographical contentions. Cumulatively, those contentions serve to open modern Chinese history to a range of new approaches and questions. First, Mitter argues that Chinese historians

must resist the habit of centring their interpretive focus on the Communist story given the relative brevity of the Communist revolution and the fact that three very important decades have passed since its high point. This leads to the second contention – namely that in important ways contemporary Chinese politics and society share more in common with the May Fourth period than they do with the Maoist era. As Mitter sees it, the May Fourth movement, and the political and cultural pluralism of the pre-war Republican period more broadly, have remained highly relevant over the course of modern Chinese history. For this reason, he chooses to weave his narrative around that generation's passage through life during the 20th century. Thirdly, interpreters of modern Chinese history must do more to foreground the complex and multiple ways that the broader international political environment influenced China's revolutionary process over the course of the 20th century. And fourthly, it is as important to understand daily life and how it has changed over time as it is to study the large, abstract forces that shape society. In recent decades these historiographical ideas have steadily gained ground within the field of modern Chinese history, yet Mitter is among the first to build a sustained narrative statement on 20th-century China around them. In presenting this synthetic account, Mitter has performed an important and very useful service to the field.

For all the light and fresh air that he brings to his subject, though, there are other ways in which Mitter's rendition of 20th-century China is cramped, for what he presents is history as understood almost exclusively from the vantage point of the Beijing and Shanghai intellectual elite. Mitter's overwhelmingly urban and elite focus reflects a widespread tendency in the field and there is little doubt that Shanghai and Beijing, and the class of people about whom Mitter writes, did in fact impact the course of modern Chinese history to a disproportionate extent. Nevertheless, rather than simply embrace the current vogue for treating the Beijing and Shanghai elite as the main authors of Chinese modernity, one wishes Mitter would spend more time explaining to his readers how, in practice, those two cities and their elites actually exerted a shaping effect across the sprawling cultural, political and social geography of China in the modern period. How, after all, do we trace and account for cosmopolitan China's influence on the vast, varied – and for the most part decidedly provincial – Chinese hinterland in the modern period?

Mitter's privileging of Beijing and Shanghai intellectuals is most clear in his focus on the May Fourth movement. His attention to that movement's darker legacies in addition to its more positive ones usefully complicates the standard celebratory version of May Fourth as a moment of enlightenment. However, by returning time and again to May Fourth and by insisting on its ongoing thematic centrality, Mitter reveals his own close identification with urban Chinese intellectuals, for whom, as he puts it, May Fourth has had something akin to talismanic power (p. 273). One can agree with Mitter (and with Chinese intellectuals) that themes introduced during the May Fourth era – pluralism, cosmopolitanism, secularism, science – have retained their relevance across China's 20th

century without losing sight of the fact that May Fourth's enduring relevance has as much to do with rhetorical strategizing and intellectual positioning as it does with anything intrinsic to the May Fourth movement itself, an important point that, although he addresses it, Mitter might treat more rigorously to positive effect.

These concerns aside, Rana Mitter is to be applauded for taking on an ambitious project and admired for his ability to skilfully blend discussions of cultural, intellectual, political and social history in a single highly readable narrative account. *A Bitter Revolution* will provoke scholars to think about modern Chinese history in new ways, and it will almost certainly appeal to today's college students, for whom the Communist revolutionary experiment is a rather distant and anomalous series of events and for whom globalization might sensibly be considered the central theme of modern world history.

TIMOTHY B. WESTON

In The Name of Harmony and Prosperity: Labor and Gender Politics in Taiwan's Economic Restructuring. By ANRU LEE. [New York: State University of New York Press 2004. xvi + 196pp. \$45.00. ISBN 0-7914-6033-9.]

Anru Lee's *In The Name of Harmony and Prosperity* examines the labour and gender politics in the latest phase of Taiwan's economic restructuring. The author argues that the conventional wisdom that regards the interaction between culture and economy as a static relationship is problematic, and she sets out to develop a dialectic approach to culture and economy. Lee has collected a huge amount of data from fieldwork interviews and observational skills, and the research outcome further affirms the idea that the cultural dimension has to be taken into account in order to understand fully Taiwan's economic success. The book is divided into seven broad chapters: Taiwan's great transformation; From sunrise to sunset; The waning of a hard work ethic; The meaning of work; Between filial daughter and loyal sister; Guests from the tropics; and Bringing the global and the local.

The author begins with a general description of Taiwan's economic transformation in recent decades, and then focuses on the latest changes in the textile industry in Homei, analysing how the local residents responded to and engaged in the changes. In chapter two, "From sunrise to sunset," Lee highlights the significance of the cultural ideal in Taiwan's decentralized production system. She argues that the "black-hand becoming boss" (*heishou bian toujia*) cultural notion helps to thwart the development of class consciousness in Taiwan's society and adds legitimacy to the factory owner's complaint of labour shortages and society's declining work ethic. Chapter three, "The waning of a hard work ethic," shows the paradoxical nature of the claims about the shortage of labour and explores the New Generation moral discourse, which involves a network value of hard work, equal opportunity and social mobility.

Chapter four presents the life stories of three women from different generations and discusses the meaning of work to them. The author argues that not only gender but also other social institutions (such as the patrilineal kinship system, family and relations in production) have to be examined in order to fully comprehend the relationship between the economy and the formation of women's subjectivity.

Chapter five, "Between filial daughter and loyal sister," tells the stories of young women from the families of small producers. These women are caught in the dilemma between better opportunities for personal advancement and increasing family needs for labour. The author aims to challenge the age-old impression of the Chinese 'corporate' family, and argues that this impression tends to misinform people's views towards Chinese families and ignores the gender and generational inequalities embedded in the Chinese family hierarchy. Chapter six, "Guests from the Tropics," focuses on the introduction of foreign workers and examines the intersection of government policies and business practices. In the final chapter, the author concludes that the recent economic transformation in Taiwan was deeply influenced by Taiwanese culture. It therefore suggests that "no capitalist system is free from the socio-cultural or political influence within which it is embedded" (xvi), and also implies the diversity of capitalism.

In sum, the wide range of personal interviews make this an impressive piece of fieldwork research. It makes a valuable contribution to the socio-economic studies on Taiwan and also offers an insight into the culture aspect of Asian capitalism. For these reasons, it is recommended to scholars and students interested in the field. In particular, chapters four and five, which show how young women have been central to Taiwan's economic development, are recommended to feminists.

I-RU CHEN

The Minor Arts of Daily Life: Popular Culture in Taiwan. Edited by DAVID K. JORDAN, ANDREW D. MORRIS, and MARC L. MOSKOWITZ. [Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004. vii + 278 pp. ISBN 0-8248-2800-3.]

From the early 1990s, the study of Taiwan has flourished into what is almost a field in its own right. Yet, despite this growth, Taiwan Studies remains an unstable and inchoate area of scholarship. Beyond key issues like democratization, national identity and the "miracle economy," it has no dominant problematics, discursive structures or proscribed methodologies. And, unlike Chinese Studies, it is too small a field to be clearly demarcated into sub-fields.

As a result, the study of Taiwan is unusually open to any and all possible topics for study. Indeed, the free play of the range of subjects in Taiwan studies is one aspect of the continuing establishment and consolidation of the meaning of "Taiwan" itself, and of a Taiwanese identity, over the last ten to 20 years.

The Minor Arts of Daily Life: Popular culture in Taiwan is in the first instance an excellent contribution to this developing field, but it is also indicative of the challenges to producing legitimate academic knowledge of Taiwan.

The book begins with a review of Taiwanese history, which, even now, is a necessary opening step to establish the discursive boundaries of a scholarly project on Taiwan. The introductory chapter presents what has become a received history of Taiwan, organizing it by ruling regimes over the last four centuries. This history was established most clearly in English by the work of Thomas Gold in the mid-1980s and here it is filled out with much detail and nuance.

The body of the book is divided into four sections organized into generalizing categories: religion, the public sphere, economic life and popular entertainment. The methodologies include social history in Morris's chapter on baseball, anthropology in Katz's work on chicken-beheading rites, and media studies in Chu's chapter on talk-back television. Simon's work on gay and lesbian identity and Chin-ju Lin's chapter on Filipino domestic workers in Taiwan also add important critical dimensions.

All of the individual chapters are worthwhile contributions to the study of contemporary Taiwan. As a whole, the book suffers to varying degrees from an inconsistent application of social theorizing across each chapter. Chien-juh Gu's piece on Amway in Taiwan offers many remarkable insights into the socio-economic history of direct selling as it has been "translated" into a Taiwanese social experience, but applies the work of Foucault somewhat programmatically to fill out its descriptive analysis. Similarly, Shuen-der Yu's chapter on night markets can only acknowledge the broad theoretical categories of space and time, as well as the Taiwan-specific category of *xiangtu*, within a detailed account of social practices.

In contrast, Moskowitz's short concluding chapter on the film *Ghost Story* works with some pointed Freudian concepts drawn effectively from cinema studies and integrates them effectively into some anthropological insights. However, the chapter highlights a key issue in the study of Taiwan which the book fails to address thoroughly, which is where to set the boundaries of a specifically Taiwanese experience under scholarly analysis. Moskowitz's chapter begins with a rather cursory attempt to argue why a Hong Kong film should find a place in a book on Taiwanese popular culture. *Ghost Story*'s success in the Taiwanese commercial film market might make it a legitimate object of study as a film on Taiwan, but the underlying question is the specific basis upon which it can be classified as "Taiwanese." Moskowitz identifies it as a Hong Kong film, and it therefore posits the operation of a complex inter-cultural relationship which the chapter – and the book overall – does not explicitly address.

A fundamental issue in the study of Taiwan continues to be the discursive operations through which a specifically Taiwanese culture is being identified and inscribed, and the ideological implications for draw-

ing such a boundary in terms of the elaboration of Taiwanese identity. *The Minor Arts of Daily Life* is a valuable contribution to the study of Taiwan, but this larger question remains unaddressed.

MARK HARRISON

The Politics of Buddhist Organisations in Taiwan: 1989–2003. Safeguarding the Faith, Building a Pure Land, Helping the Poor. By ANDRÉ LALIBERTÉ. [London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004. xii + 178 pp. ISBN 0-415-32235-9.]

Establishing a Pure Land on Earth. The Foguang Buddhist Perspective on Modernization and Globalization. By STUART CHANDLER. [Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004. xvii + 371 pp. ISBN 0-8248-2746-5.]

In open contrast to the abundance of studies concerning the first millennium of Chinese history, many aspects of the institutional, intellectual and cultural history of Chinese Buddhism during the past one thousand years remain, with some notable exceptions, largely unstudied. In particular, Western language scholarly accounts of Chinese Buddhism since the end of the 19th century are still rare and, with regards to the first part of the 20th century, largely limited to the efforts of one individual, the late American scholar, Holmes Welch (1921–1981). During the last ten or 15 years, however, there have been signs of a reversal of this tendency as an increasing number of researchers began to devote themselves to the study of modern and contemporary Chinese Buddhism. The lion's share of this emerging scholarly trend belongs to studies of Taiwanese rather than mainland Chinese Buddhism. This choice can partly be attributed to the increasing international visibility of Taiwanese Buddhist associations, but I also suspect that funding opportunities and a comparatively more welcoming research environment may have something to do with it!

The two books under review are also concerned with contemporary Taiwanese Buddhism. Their authors adopt different but somehow complementary approaches. Whereas André Laliberté's instructive study of the attitudes towards the active political participation of Taiwanese Buddhist organizations focuses on the activities of the three main Taiwanese Buddhist organizations, namely the Buddha Light Mountain (or *Foguangshan*) monastic order, the Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Association (or *Ciji gongdehui*), and the Buddhist Association of the Republic of China (*Zhongguo fojiaohui*), Stuart Chandler's engaging study focuses on *Foguangshan* and the views of its founder and charismatic leader, Ven. Xingyun.

Laliberté's study examines the last 15 years of Taiwanese Buddhist politics, a period of increasing liberalization of governmental policies towards civic organization ushered in by new *ad hoc* legislation. Written from the point of view of a political scientist interested in exploring the Chinese side of the highly debated topic of "the political participation of

religious organizations” (p. 1), this study carefully brings out the differences in the political behaviour of Taiwanese Buddhist organizations and convincingly argues that such variations “reflect the differences between the view’s of each organization’s leader” (p. 107). Chapter one aims to offer some comparative perspectives on the topic. It surveys some of the prevalent views regarding the relationship between Buddhism and politics in East and South-East Asian countries during the late 19th and 20th century. While reading this section, I regretted that the author had decided not to provide a comparison with a non-Buddhist “specific religious organization,” this being his approach versus the “holistic view of religion and culture” (p. 14) on the topic at hand, and offered his thoughts on an organization of comparable wealth, international visibility and influence, say, for instance, the Catholic Opus Dei. Chapter two offers a brief survey of the relationship between Buddhism and the Chinese state in imperial and modern times. The remaining three chapters and the conclusions – the core of the book – are coherently arranged around the exploration of Taiwan’s contemporary Buddhist organizations’ goals, structures and political behaviour.

Laliberté’s analysis is particularly effective when examining the views regarding direct political participation of the founders and charismatic leaders of *Ciji* and *Foguangshan*, their relationships with the government, and their different or converging stances on issues of ethnicity and gender. Here, the reader gains some fascinating insights into the making of Buddhist political identities and the semantics of power relationships in contemporary Taiwan. My only caveat is that, on occasion, the author relies for his analyses on relatively outdated scholarship, for instance Ch’en (1964), Yang (1964) and other scholars of an earlier generation. The impression I formed from reading Republican period materials was not that “Buddhists did not get involved in politics” (p. 30) during that time, an allegation first voiced by Wing Tsit-chan in 1953 and eventually picked up by Ch’en and others.

Stuart Chandler’s study is the most thorough examination of *Foguangshan*’s doctrinal views and social and political practices to date. The author spent two years conducting fieldwork at *Foguan*’s headquarters gaining unusual access to its leaders’ and followers’ mentalities as well as many valuable insights into the organization’s own political agenda and proselytizing methods. I was particularly interested to learn about *Foguangshan*’s lore, about Xingyun’s views on music, sport and entertainment (pp. 184–188 and *passim*), and about the followers’ relationship with their leader’s ongoing – and constantly updated – diary (p. 35). One of Chandler’s foremost preoccupations is to understand “how one particular modernist religious group has understood and adapted to globalisation” (p. 5), and he offers many compelling examples of *Foguang*’s ambiguous articulation of the syntax of locality and globality. Chapters nine and ten contain a particularly valuable discussion of the organization’s various approaches to transnationalism and to building international relationships, including an examination of its relationship with a former vice-president of the United States (pp. 276–286).

Although one has the impression that the structure of the book has partly been determined by *Foguang's* and Ven. Xingyun's own concerns and views, as the chapters' headings illustrate, the author is certainly very careful to present the readers with discordant views, criticisms and variant interpretations of the *Foguang's* stance on a number of issues, ranging from monastic practice to local politics. In one or two cases though, I felt that a few more words could have been spent on putting *Foguang* followers' claims into some kind of perspective. Some discussion, beyond the standard references to Ven. Taixu (1890–1947) and to the work of Holmes Welch, of Buddhism's immediate past and particularly the decades from the late 19th century until the late 1930s, would have been useful. How many of *Foguang* proselytizing strategies, for instance, were already implemented by earlier generations of modernist clerics and laypeople, and with a modicum of success? And again, to what extent is *Foguang's* claim to “instituting a modernisation that revives Buddhism's original spirit” (p 70) indebted to earlier discourses by Chinese, Japanese and Sinhala Buddhist modernizers? I would have also liked more pictures in this otherwise carefully constructed and very well-written book. The lovely cartoons on pages 128–130 made me wish for more visual illustrations of the many intriguing topics discussed by Chandler.

In conclusion, Stuart Chandler's and André Laliberté's engaging studies offer many valuable insights into Taiwanese society in general and the growth of Taiwanese Buddhism organizations in particular, and I certainly recommend them to all those with an interest in modern Buddhism, modern religious movements, Taiwan studies and political sciences.

FRANCESCA TAROCCO

Lu Xun: the Chinese “Gentle” Nietzsche. By CHIU-YEE CHEUNG. [Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2001. 178 pp. £24.00. ISBN 3-631-38073-9.]

This is the first intellectual biography of Lu Xun (1881–1936) published in English in nearly 20 years. Arguably, it may be the first one ever. Cheung skilfully utilizes the prism of Lu Xun's interest in Nietzsche to examine not only his influence on the development of the Chinese writer's thought, but also a host of other issues from the interpretation of Lu Xun's works to his marital status. In order to do this, Cheung must first come to terms with Nietzsche's intellectual legacy, which he defines as that of the “gentle” Nietzsche – the Nietzsche sans *Nachlass* familiar to us through Walter Kaufmann, not the Nietzsche of the *Will to Power* created posthumously by his sister and others from fragments of the philosopher's unpublished manuscripts. In fact, it is best to read Nietzsche as rumination, Cheung tells us, or to pick up his *Leitworte* or main terms (p. 9). Cheung then asserts that Lu Xun was the “chosen one” to realize Nietzsche's influence on China (p. 17).

Central to all this was *Thus Spake Zarathustra* and Lu Xun's understanding of it as well as what he had gleaned from secondary sources during his years of study in Japan, probably Takayama Chogyuu's 1901 essay "*Bunmei hihyooka to shite no bungakusha*" ("The litterateur as cultural critic"), derived from Ziegler's *Die geistigen und sozialen Stroomungen Deutschlands in neunzehnten Jahrhundert* [*The German Intellectual and Social Movements in the Nineteenth Century*] (Berlin: Georg Bondi, 1911), which, Cheung informs us, is based on Nietzsche's *Untimely Meditations* (p. 23). If that is the case, the young Lu Xun is to be commended for his choice of sources.

Ziegler considered Nietzsche the spokesperson for 19th-century individualism, which continued the liberation of individuality begun during the Renaissance; he held that Nietzsche promoted the "culture of genius" which was derived from the Dionysian aspect of Greek culture. Cheung informs us that Nietzsche "was introduced to the Japanese directly from Germany in the wake of the Meiji Reform" (p. 19). Japan's victory over China in the first Sino-Japanese War of 1895 accelerated industrial expansion but at the same time exacerbated many social problems. "The pressure of these problems," we are told, "could no longer be contained by the ideologies of nationalism and militarism" (p. 19). This brought about intense intellectual disillusionment, creating a spiritual vacuum which nurtured a strong anti-war sentiment. The search for a new spiritual ideal led to the popularity of individualism and subjectivism, which were seen as the opposites of vulgar materialism and nationalism. In many respects this background was parallel to that in Germany, against which Nietzsche launched his "revaluation of all values" (p. 19). All this is good intellectual history, but it does not take into consideration the differences between the Chinese intellectual milieu and that of Japan. Lu Xun was interested in Byron, Shelley, Pushkin, Lermontov, Petofi, Heine, Stirner and Nietzsche because he saw them as men of letters whose lives combined ideals with action, and who sought to redress the wrongs of oppressed peoples in an unjust world of power imbalances. In that sense, Nietzsche may not have played such a singularly pivotal role in the formation of his thought as Cheung would lead us to believe. Indeed, at one point Cheung back-pedals on this, stating: "The title 'Chinese Nietzsche', therefore, refers to Lu Xun not so much as a disciple of Nietzsche but rather a Nietzschean equal in the Chinese context" (p. 6). In other words, the book's title merely signifies that Lu Xun was an innovative thinker and major intellectual force in China. Who could argue with that? But if that is the case, what are we to make of the other 177 bolder pages of text?

Influenced by Matei Calinescu, Cheung develops a central thesis, which posits the idea of two modernities: modernity as a product of scientific and technological progress of the industrial revolution, and modernity as an aesthetic concept which was related to romanticism. "In the first half of the 19th century, there was 'an irreversible split' between the two and since then the 'two modernities' have been 'irreducibly hostile' to each other" (p. 20). Cheung then adopts the term "cultural

modernity,” which he positions in opposition to “practical modernity.” He sees Lu Xun as an advocate of “cultural modernity” and a critic of “practical modernity,” although by the end of the book, he tells us that Lu Xun was in fact anti-modern, and praises “the ‘gentle’ Nietzschean anti-modern direction of Lu Xun” (p. 177). Cheung’s conclusion might cause more than a few readers to question his definition of modernity, as well as his deadpan assertion (p. 38) that Lu Xun was essentially a Ming loyalist (I am reminded of Ah Q’s fantasy of the 1911 revolutionists, whom Lu Xun sarcastically clad in “white helmets and white armor in mourning for the last Ming emperor”). It seems to be the general view (argued by Leo Oufan Lee and Sun Yushi, amongst others) that Lu Xun personified the modern consciousness. I would submit that those who doubt this need look no further than his stories, essays and prose poetry.

As Cheung himself points out (p. 34), it’s difficult to determine how much of Nietzsche Lu Xun actually read. I would speculate that this was limited to portions of *Zarathustra* and two or three secondary sources. Certainly, Lu Xun rejected the whole “will to power” part of Nietzsche (he says so in his written works) and the most famous quotation about Nietzsche’s ideas from Lu Xun in his mature period is where he writes them off as “*fin-de-siecle* fruit juice.”

Although this book may not convince the more sceptical reader that Lu Xun is in fact the “Chinese Nietzsche,” it is eloquently written, well-researched and refreshingly, as compared with David Pollard’s *The True Story of Lu Xun* (2002), well-documented. Much of Cheung’s scholarship is crystallized in the footnotes, which, fortunately for the reader and to the credit of Peter Lang Publishers, are presented in Turabian style.

JON EUGENE VON KOWALLIS

Rhapsody in Red: How Western Classical Music Became Chinese. By SHEILA MELVIN and JINDONG CAI. [New York: Algora Publishing, 2004. x + 362 pp. ISBN 0-87586-179-2.]

This is a delightful book. It opens up a cultural arena much neglected in scholarship on China. Nine engagingly narrated chapters take us through the history of Sino-foreign musical contact since the late 19th century, with one digression, which goes back to encounters since the 16th century (chapter two). The book follows the life story of three important institutions (the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra, the Shanghai Conservatory and the Central Conservatory) and three important men: violinist Tan Shuzhen, who was the first Chinese to join the orchestra in colonial Shanghai; conductor Li Delun, who was trained in Moscow and managed to serve the government before, during and after the Cultural Revolution; and composer He Luting, one of the most outspoken protagonists in China’s music world and long-time principal at the Shanghai Conservatory. The authors’ approach of choosing “white elephants” to present the history of classical music in China, although

unfashionable since Jauss, brings much cohesion and structural elegance to the volume.

The book is at its best when using material from interviews conducted by the authors. Based on this evidence, the book comes to one important conclusion: contact between Chinese and foreign musicians in China was generally not antagonistic, either before or after 1949. Foreign musicians did not behave in a condescending manner, as “imperialists” and Chinese musicians hardly ever perceived them to do so. For obvious reasons, few Chinese (and, surprisingly, few foreign studies) on China’s classical music scene have acknowledged this fact.

The authors have done a beautiful job in telling their story. They must be lauded for having gone through a great variety of sources including contemporary newspaper articles, propaganda magazines, Party documents, as well as films, recordings and some of the very recent, and mostly biographical, secondary literature on the subject published in China. Since the book is conceived as a collective biography, it lacks detailed musical and historical analysis and it would have benefited from a few closer readings. For example, what precisely is the meaning of “national style” for people as different as Tchernin, Mao Zedong or Guo Wenjing? Musical analysis would have provided an answer. Why do the authors not make more of the fact that Jiang Qing advised the musicians writing a model symphony to watch – and, more importantly, listen – to music in Hollywood films in order to improve their compositional skills? A more explicit engagement with the technical and musical styles of the model works (the term model opera should really be reserved for the operas in the set and not all of the pieces which also comprised ballets and symphonic compositions) would have been illuminating here, for it would have shown how indebted they were to the same principles of music-making as Hollywood film music on the one hand and the Butterfly Violin Concerto on the other – both officially condemned during the Cultural Revolution. It is sad, too, that the balanced account of the Cultural Revolution years – which describes both the pain it caused to many an intellectual and the benefits it brought for Chinese musical life generally – focuses almost entirely on the first set of eight model works and leaves out the second, equally important set of ten produced later (chapter seven). There are a number of non sequiturs in this book that are inevitable in any pioneering work of this size.

A few more serious caveats need to be kept in mind when reading this book. Its powerful personalized narrative, even in sections where the authors could not rely on interviews, comes at a price: it is not always clear whether the beautiful narration, full of intricate detail, is in fact reliable (especially when it is drawn almost entirely from a single source, as in chapter two, or when it occasionally takes propaganda writing or standard rhetoric (*tifa*) at face value, as in chapter six and seven). This suspicion is reinforced by the fact that some of the information on Chinese history is indeed flawed – for example, the discussion of the Shanghai park sign, “No Dogs or Chinese,” which never existed (see the essay by Bickers and Wasserstrom in *The China Quarterly*, No. 142,

pp. 444–466) – and by the fact that some original sources are quoted from rather inappropriate secondary sources (such as Liang Qichao from Witke's biography of Jiang Qing).

Although the authors wish to get away from black and white terminologies, they sometimes forget this when it comes to their own heroes. He Luting, for example, who emerges here as an outright and honest defender of classical music for music's sake was much less enlightened when it came to contemporary styles of music. Indeed, descriptions of him as a tyrannical principal by those who were attempting to compose in contemporary styles in the mid-1980s abound. Yu Huiyong, for example, the *de facto* composer of most of the operas in the model works, appears as the villain in this book for his unacceptable behaviour during the Cultural Revolution, although many now acknowledge his great contribution to the art of Peking Opera and even forgive his behaviour, which he himself deeply regretted.

On a more formal note it is unfortunate that the book was not copy-edited with greater care: there are numerous typos and many errors in the romanization (e.g. Cheng and Wei, gongchipu, Pu Yen Zhou, Guo Morou, Zhu Lan) which make some names and terms difficult to recognize, especially for the non-specialist – the most likely reader for this book after all. This may be the reason why there is no glossary of Chinese names, which is a pity as most of these are not household names even to China specialists.

There is much to be learned from this book. Whoever reads it is simply advised to double-check the details.

BARBARA MITTLER