

## Book Reviews

*China's New Rulers: The Secret Files (Second, revised edition)*. By ANDREW J. NATHAN and BRUCE GILLEY. [New York: New York Review Books, 2003. 280 pp. £8.99. ISBN 1-59017-072-5.]

*China's New Rulers* purports to represent what “lengthy internal investigation reports prepared by the [Chinese Communist] Party’s highly trusted Organization Department” say about China’s “new leaders’ personalities, how they came to power, and what they intend to do in office” (pp. 3–4). It claims to provide its readers with “evidence from the internal reports of the Party’s Organization Department [that] allows for a major advance in our understanding of Chinese politics” (p. 5). And yet its *authors*, as they themselves admit in their introduction, have never seen – much less read – even a single such report. All they have is faith in a particular “consistent” “version of Chinese politics” shared with them by a pseudonymous Chinese informant “Zong Hairen” (his name can be read as a strangely ominous-sounding pun on “invariably doing harm to people”) who, they explain, has told them that he was at one time given access to “long sections of working drafts” of such reports (pp. 29, 32–33). What Nathan and Gilley’s book amounts to, then, is a rendition into “more accessible English” of what “Zong” convinced them of and has himself either written and published in Hong Kong or “broadcast in Chinese on Radio Free Asia” (p. 30, 38). *China's New Rulers*, in other words, is neither a book the contents of which *are* the “secret files” mentioned in its subtitle, nor a book by political scientist authors who themselves have accessed such files.

Unlike the authors, I have myself actually read well over a hundred original classified reports similar to those which they admit to not having seen but nonetheless advertise their book as being based on. What I learnt from those reports about the structure and content of cadre evaluations prior to promotions or demotions, provokes serious misgivings about the ultimate trustworthiness of *China's New Rulers*. I find it impossible to treat what I find between its covers as actionable, in the words of Jonathan Mirsky, “revelations of what kind of men the new leaders are” (p. iii). Most of what Nathan and Gilley have to say about Hu Jintao, Wen Jiabao, Zeng Qinghong, et al. is unremarkable and undoubtedly “makes sense,” including to me. But political science, not to mention rigorous empirical scholarship, is not about what at one point or other in time does or does not “make sense” to large numbers of people, but about the truth. It is about the supremacy of evidence. When it is not, and to the extent that its practitioners fail or refuse to share with their audience independently verifiable evidence of the claims they make, it is at best powerful political propaganda.

The first edition of *China's New Rulers* was a bestseller and this edition is likely to become one as well. Perhaps that should tell the critical reviewer something. But I cannot but wonder if in another

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hundred years it may not end up being remembered by historians as the 21st century's *China Under the Empress Dowager*, and Nathan, Gilley, and "Zong Hairen" as latter-day equivalents of the infamous trio of Backhouse, Bland and "His Excellency Ching-Shan." Hailed when it appeared in 1910 as a unique "insider's story," their work was for a time immensely popular, influential, and trusted as an insightful "source" by foreign observers of Chinese politics. In due course, of course, it was exposed as something much closer to fiction than to fact.

MICHAEL SCHOENHALS

*Elite Dualism and Leadership Selection in China.* By XIAOWEI ZANG.  
[London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004. xix + 244 pp. £65.00; \$114.95.  
ISBN 0-415-32234-0.]

Xiaowei Zang writes frequently on the nature of the Chinese political elite from a sociological perspective. This book serves as a summary of many of his research concerns. Put simply, he argues that within one political hierarchy, the Party and the government have significantly different personnel systems (elite dualism). Both value loyalty and expertise, but the government system pays more attention to expertise, and the Party to loyalty. He demonstrates these views with extensive data drawn from *Who's Who in China Current Leaders* (1988 and 1994). He sees his approach as reflecting and demonstrating the utility of neo-institutional concerns in analysing elite formation in China.

While the data is usefully presented, I have many difficulties with Zang's approach and argument. First, I find his overall discussion of separate Party and government institutions confusing. It is never clear when these two institutions definitely came into existence and when they developed their own norms, values and so on. He spends two chapters (three and four) showing the precursors to elite dualism, but concludes on p. 60 that it was only in 1982 that leadership transition began. One must question then how well established were the norms, values, and other markers of institutional boundaries when he uses the 1988 and 1994 *Who's Who*. If leadership transition only began in 1982, then what is the purpose of discussions of elite dualism dating back to the Jiangxi Soviet? It is one of the properties of formal organizations and bureaucracies that they have a functional division of labour. Given predictable recurring patterns of such a division of labour, it is not surprising that people are recruited into different functional specialities on the basis of their background. But while Zang demonstrates this point well, to argue that there are separate Party and government hierarchies as a result seems to go too far.

A second problem concerns the nature of the elite being examined. Zang explicitly excludes the military, the foreign affairs establishment, judges and legislators from his survey (pp. 177–78). He argues that this

is justifiable because the political influence of these actors is mainly confined to their area of jurisdiction. But is this any different than a vice-minister in any functional branch of the State Council? Does a vice-minister of health really have broader influence in the political system than does a vice chief-of-staff of the People's Liberation Army, or a judge? How does Zang know? Moreover, Zang fails to note an inherent bias in his sample. There are about twice as many elite members in the government than there are in the Party according to his calculations. For example, of the 740 elite of 1988, 490 are identified as government officials and 250 as Party cadres (p. 141). But are these 490 really the elite, or as much of the elite as the 250 Party officials? Is the exclusion of other top leaders mentioned above introducing a profound selection bias into his findings?

A core issue here is how one treats the nomenklatura system in China. Zang references all the key works, but he fails to discuss how it is dominated by Party decision makers, and he fails to discuss how politics might affect outcomes. Maybe from a sociological perspective, gaining access to the elite (at the level of a vice-minister, deputy governor level and above) is critical, but for political science, one might want to know who makes it further up the elite ladder – especially to the politburo or even higher – and why among many candidates for elite positions with similar backgrounds, some are chosen and many are not? Background characteristics and institutional selection mechanisms will only take us so far.

Thirdly, Zang sometimes ignores findings that contravene his arguments. A useful part of this study is the division of college education into four sub-variables: keypoint universities vs. ordinary universities, and science, engineering, and business majors vs. liberal arts majors. He suggests that the government will recruit more heavily from the science majors, particularly from keypoint universities, while the Party will opt more for liberal arts. Yet he presents tables that complicate such a view (pp. 123–24), revealing that a science degree from a key university has the least effect on the 1994 elite on mobility, while an arts degree from a key university has the highest.

The book is marred by an inordinate number of typographical and factual errors. Zang consistently refers to the Party Congress held in 2002 as the 17th Party Congress (it was the 16th). At one point, he even refers to the 18th Party Congress. He states that Zhu Rongji (p. 64) was the third prime minister of the PRC, when in fact he was the fifth.

DAVID BACHMAN

*Witness Against History: Literature, Film, and Public Discourse in Twentieth Century China.* By YOMI BRAESTER. [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003. 264 + xii pp. ISBN 0-8047-4792-X.]

Do not be fooled by the modest, precise, and careful tone of Yomi

Braester's prose. In *Witness Against History*, he makes a powerful contribution to the transformation of scholarship on modern Chinese culture. In recent years, scholars such as Leo Ou-fan Lee and David Der-wei Wang have argued that the focus on the May Fourth movement has been too singular, obscuring important schools and authors that do not fit that agenda. Braester takes this argument home to May Fourth culture and its inheritors in literature and film. This work has been assumed to uphold the standard of modernity as nationalism, realism, rationalism, and humanism. This makes it part of a larger reform or revolution effort to reinsert China into "history," understood as Hegelian progress. Braester understands the shock of the modern new as trauma, and this is reflected in all the works he has chosen.

On this foundation, Braester finds much greater ambivalence about modernity in the texts. His ability to reread them in this way depends on a methodological shift. Against the domination of the field by social science and area studies models that assume all discourses transparently reflect society, Braester works from a comparative literature approach. This highlights how the emphasis on textuality in artistic discourses produces an insistent gap between them and history. Therefore, even when artists claim they are bearing witness to history, close attention reveals internal contradictions, tensions, paradoxes, and slippages that demonstrate a crisis of knowledge and representation. It is in this sense that they are what Braester calls "witnesses against history."

In addition to an introductory chapter, *Witness Against History* divides its wide-ranging chapters into two sections. The first, "May Fourth and its discontents" has work on Lu Xun, 20th-century rewritings of the Pan Jinlian story, the 1937 horror film *Song at Midnight*, and the Maoist aesthetic. The second section, "Wounded memories," contains chapters on counter-Maoist cinema of the early 1980s, scar literature and in particular the work of Zhang Xianliang, Taiwanese literature of the 1980s, mainland avant-garde fiction with a focus on Yu Hua, and *In the Heat of the Sun* – the 1995 film adaptation of a Wang Shuo text. Each chapter is theoretically ambitious and clearly argued. Most admirably, Braester eschews hyperbole or tendentious judgment in favour of careful textual analysis that reveals the full complexity and richness of these "witnesses against history."

For example, Braester notes how Ouyang Yuqian rewrites the story of Pan Jinlian in his 1926 play of the same name to change her from an unforgivable adulteress into a Chinese Nora, speaking out against the oppression of women in feudal culture. Yet, although Pan gets to speak as a modern subject, she cannot escape her historical fate. Indeed, her testimony as a modern subject constitutes the confession required before she can be executed according the legal requirements of earlier times. As such, the narrative demonstrates a total failure of rational public discourse to produce social justice. The chapters on Maoist and post-Maoist cinema function as a pair. In the first, Braester selects a series of films about codes, in particular *The Red Lantern*, and unpacks a tension between their narratives about transmission that "defies all barriers" (p. 119) and the

total control of the codes being transmitted by the Party leadership. In the second, he focuses on the filmic equivalent of scar literature, in which the totalitarian assertion of control over discourse by the Party is parodied. However, instead of instituting a new public sphere as a result of exposing this obstacle, many of these films undermine faith in the very possibility of stable meaning and communication.

With readings like this, *Witness Against History* moves scholarship on Chinese modern culture to a new plane of sophistication. I also find that Braester's quiet attention to the complexity of the texts is a kind of scholarly witnessing in its own right. Rather than trying to judge them, his work seems driven by a determination to listen carefully to the irresolvable paradoxes and double binds that constitute here the traces of traumatic modernization. *Witness Against History* deserves to reach beyond the China field itself to those interested in the vicissitudes of modernity in general.

CHRIS BERRY

*China's Telecommunications Market: Entering a New Competitive Age.*

By DING LU and CHEE KONG WONG. [Cheltenham and Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2003. 177 pp. £45.00. ISBN 1-84064-431-1.]

During the past two decades China has grown into one of the most significant telecommunications markets in the world and any book on this field has the potential to draw serious interest. *China's Telecommunications Market: Entering a New Competitive Age*, by Ding Lu and Chee Kong Wong, is well timed.

This book consists of six chapters, aiming at "not the features of an established framework but changes after changes in an evolving system" (p. xiii). With strong backgrounds in economics, the authors have used intensive economic statistical data to analyse and explain the changes, while integrating institutional dynamics into the analysis. This economics-oriented approach distinguishes this study from previous books on similar topics, including *China in the Information Age: Telecommunications and the Dilemmas of Reform* by Mueller and Tan (1997) and *Chinese Telecommunications Policy* by Yan and Pitt (2002).

The first chapter successfully documents recent telecommunications growth in China by citing a wealth of official statistics and subjecting them to statistical analysis. The next chapter analyses the drivers of this growth, especially capital investment. Chapter three argues that China has followed the global trend of liberalization and competition in telecommunications with "Chinese characteristics" by introducing government-guided competition. Chapter four examines the new Chinese regulatory framework, which lacks a basic law, and has many unforeseeable dynamics. The next chapter links China's telecommunications field to the global

economy by analysing the impact of WTO membership on China's telecommunications sector since November 2001. The last chapter presents the status quo and extrapolates future scenarios by trying to combine most of the current changes into a meaningful comprehensive framework.

Data for this book are derived mainly from the yearbooks published by China's National Bureau of Statistics. While the authority of this data source is unquestionable, its accuracy has been under constant attack. In general, data from statistical yearbooks help to present a macro-level picture, while detailed insights regarding changes are neglected. The strength of Lu and Wong's book is the statistical analysis of this secondary information, and this is their main research method. The authors have interacted with researchers in China, collected and presented statistical data regarding telecommunications, and have used statistical analysis to alleviate concerns about the limitations of data collection and research methodology.

The book's weakness lies in the insights and details beyond the statistics. The authors focus on description and documentation of the changes, but fail to seek a clear and concise explanation of these changes. Moreover, the book lacks a chapter setting out a theoretical framework that puts China in the context of recent telecommunication market dynamics in other parts of the world. *China's Telecommunications Market: Entering a New Competitive Age* will be of considerable interest to researchers, industrial professionals and regulators. However, it is hard to visualize how it could be adopted as a textbook. A valid approach might be to recommend this book together with the other two books mentioned in the second paragraph of this review.

ZIXIANG (ALEX) TAN

*Resource Management, Urbanization and Governance in Hong Kong and the Zhujiang Delta.* Edited by KWAN-YIU WONG and JIANFA SHEN. [Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002. viii + 307 pp. ISBN 962-996-026-5.]

This book is a collection of 14 articles from a workshop held in Hong Kong in May 2000. While the greatest number of papers comes from urban geographers, there are a smattering of chapters by economists, sociologists, political scientists and physical geographers. The editors have grouped the papers according to the three topics stated in the title with a good numerical balance among them. Three of the contributions are the opening addresses, a keynote speech, and a summation paper.

In many ways, the summation chapter by Alvin So functions as a good overview of most of the contributions and there is little need to again go over the ground thus covered. Even a reading of this summation reveals the key problem of the book: it is still a series of conference proceeding

papers rather than a fully integrated volume. As evidence of that point, So's summation makes no reference to the two entries by physical geographers that fall into the resource management section of the book. Both of these very thorough reports deal with vegetation in Hong Kong. Neither, however, makes any contribution to our understanding of resource management of the Zhu (Pearl) River Delta as a whole. So also makes no reference to the third paper in this section on a comparison of waste management between Hong Kong and Guangzhou. Thus one whole section of the book is ignored in the summation, perhaps because So is a sociologist but also because none of those papers addresses issues of the Delta as a whole.

The four essays in the governance section place heavy emphasis on Shenzhen's growth and its relationship to Hong Kong, or employ the Delta as an example within overall governance issues in China. In some ways this section does not distinguish itself clearly from the urbanization and regional development papers at the start of the book. In that first section, we find specific essays dealing with fertility in Dongguan and Meizhou, migrants and the labour market in Guangzhou, conditions of migrant enclaves in Guangzhou, and an essay written by the conference organizers that deals with uneven regional development in the Zhu River Delta. It comes as no surprise that this last essay on regional development comes closest to fully covering what should be addressed in a book with this title.

Thus there are many good essays here on very valid research topics, but what holds the book together is that all the essays cover some topic within the Zhu River Delta since 1980. Many go to the local scale, some make comparisons between two places in the Delta, and even try to draw inferences for the Delta as a whole. Despite these inconsistencies, a picture emerges of uneven growth, unco-ordinated development, and an administrative geography that needs to be modified to deal with the realities of these changes. Major topics only thinly covered include how the Delta fits into China and the global economy. Moreover, the social relationships and social networks that accompany the development of the Delta are only weakly developed outside of the paper on migration patterns.

That said, the book is a must for anyone interested in the recent administrative geography of the Delta and the specific topics covered. The writing is clear and well edited, although the volume would have benefited from a glossary of acronyms, and sources for tables data in all cases.

RICHARD LOUIS EDMONDS

*One China, Many Paths.* Edited by CHAOHUA WANG. [London: Verso, 2003. 368 pp. £16.00. ISBN 1-85984-537-1.]

This is a remarkable selection of recent debating essays between two



camps within Chinese intellectual circles – Chinese New Leftists (*xin zuopai*) and Chinese Liberals (*ziyou zhuyi*). The publisher Verso is an imprint of the New Left Review in London. The editor, Chaohua Wang, however, is remarkably even-handed. Five leading Liberals and four celebrated New Leftists are given ample space to air their views; another seven who take different stands on various issues have sufficient opportunities to explain their particular subtlety. The essays are well-chosen, and the fairness makes this book a basic document for understanding contemporary China.

There has not been much Western attention to this important debate that has been raging in China since the late 1990s, let alone a collection of relevant essays. In fact, even in Chinese there has not been a book that lets the two sides clash head to head. This volume stands out as the only source of information available in English about this most important debate.

As might be expected in modern nations, intellectuals, at least the most active among them, form a natural opposition to the regime. Before the early 1990s the political opposition in China was unified against powerful hardliners within the Communist Party leadership. The struggle was so intense that it became virtually cut-throat every time the students went to the streets, in 1983, 1986 and 1989. Therefore, in the 1980s almost all intellectuals shared a consensual agenda, and they preferred to call themselves the “enlighteners”.

The Tiananmen Incident was the watershed. After the “enlightenment” was crushed in the summer of 1989, the hardliners rode roughshod for a couple of years before they too were discarded as they were of no more use for the political balance. The non-democratic political structure seemed to be advantageous to the rapid success of wholesale marketization. Not until the mid-1990s did the new opposition, now more cultural than political, begin to rally upon two issues respectively. Those who were mainly opposed to marketization became the “New Leftists” and those who remained eager to push forward democratization were now called “Liberals.”

Since the regime has now won its new mandate through market success, and the majority of the new capitalists are within the Communist Party, the cultural opposition actually faces only one institution. Yet the opposition has split into two antagonistic factions which since 1999 have engaged in almost hostile debate.

Some people dismiss the debate as a storm in a teacup, as neither section exercises significant influence on the government’s policy-making. Western observers could even argue that they fight about the role of things that are as yet non-existent, for instance free trade unions, which are the foundation for both a viable liberalism and an effective leftism. However true this is at the moment, the question of which path China should take in moving forward is one that everyone will eventually have to face.

Although it is inappropriate to compare Chinese Liberalism with the



so-called Neo-Liberalism that is the foundation of institutionalized ideology in the West, there is no denying that the Chinese Liberals and the New Leftists have many spiritual relations with the West. From this book, we can see that the Liberals are fond of citing Hayek, Berlin or Nozick, while the New Leftists refer constantly to Jameson or Said. Events in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq have thrown the previously more or less academic debate between the two sides into chaos, and tensions over the Taiwan Straits make the debate even more difficult. But the debate is still essentially Chinese. This splitting of cultural opposition has not occurred on such a significant scale in Russia or India, countries which are also seeking a more viable path for development. There, the opposition is similar to that in Western countries – New Leftism. In China, there is something else in the Institution for intellectuals to oppose.

The debate cannot end until China has irrevocably embarked on one of the two paths – socialism or full-fledged democracy. Neither prospect looks likely in the near future. That is why this book commands and will continue to command the attention of anyone concerned about China's future, and indeed about the future of the world. When China suffers from a cold, the whole world coughs. How can people remain ignorant of the antibodies existing within China?

HENRY Y.H. ZHAO

*Cultural Nationalism in Contemporary China: The Search for National Identity under Reform.* By GUO YINGJIE. [London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004. 208 pp. ISBN 0-415-32264-2.]

Focused on the politics of cultural identity in contemporary China, Yingjie Guo's monograph is a detailed study of a major recent phenomenon, which he names "cultural nationalism." The "cultural nationalists" whom he identifies are from diverse intellectual backgrounds and have different ideological orientations. However, as Guo tells us, they all share a common goal: "to substantiate and crystallize the idea of the ethnic nation in the minds of the members of the community by creating a wide-spread awareness of the myths, history, and linguistic tradition of the community" (p. 5). According to Guo, cultural nationalism is "a reaction against the May Fourth iconoclasm, together with its discourse of Enlightenment scientific rationality and the CCP's Marxist ideology" (p. 23).

The author repeatedly illustrates how cultural nationalists question, directly and indirectly, the PRC authorities' and the Chinese Communist Party's national imaginary. The interaction and the ideological discrepan-

cies between two types of nationalism (on the one hand unofficial and cultural, on the other hand official and political) are a central concern of Guo's work. In Guo's words, how "the meaning of Chineseness is articulated by state and cultural nationalists, where they draw their frontiers, where and how antagonism emerges, how they hegemonize certain ideas and elements and exclude others, and to what extent the cultural nationalists' reconstructed national identity actually and potentially impacts on the Party-state's legitimacy and on China's future directions" (p. 1). The dichotomy is not as clear as we might imagine. Yingjie Guo shows that, while the ideological bases of the Party are grounded in Marxism, which is a revolutionary and universalist ideology, and consequently theoretically blind to the notion of cultural essence, since 1989 the Chinese party-state itself has greatly contributed to the rise of this nationalist discourse based on cultural and ethnic identity, and to the redefinition of what is meant by the term 'Chinese nation.'

By juxtaposing the CCP's historical nationalism, which is political and based on loyalty towards the state, and cultural nationalism, which is unofficial and focused on an *authentic* national community, the author questions the generally accepted idea that nationalism has always comforted central power: "nationalism does not just benefit the party, but it challenges it as well" (p. 45). The distinction is meaningful since it enables us to undermine the frequent and facile ideological identification of Chinese nationalist intellectuals with state power. As Guo notes, Chinese contemporary anti-imperialist postcolonialism, the neo-Confucian project of reconstructing the Chinese identity, and the new historians' contestation of orthodox historiography all challenge rather than support official nationalism.

Nevertheless, Guo's otherwise interesting theoretical distinction between political and cultural nationalism should not veil the fact that the culture of the past always has political implications when incorporated into the notion of national identity, a category which is nothing if not modern. If, over time, such discourses become more natural and more popular, and thereby become part of the national consciousness and imaginary, they could well cease to be mere discursive constructs and inventions. As another commentator of cultural nationalism, Allen Chun, has put it: "The self-effacing character of cultural discourse, in spite of its obvious authorial nature, is precisely what makes identity appear to be a value-free construct, when in actuality, it is quite the opposite" ("Fuck Chineseness: on the ambiguities of ethnicity as culture as identity," *Boundary* 23:2, 1996).

The book can be split into two uneven parts. The first two chapters introduce us to the theoretical and terminological outline of the subject, and are followed by four chapters detailing and discussing a field in which cultural nationalism prevails. Referring to the concept of "crisis of dual legitimation" established by Anthony Smith, Guo first draws our attention to the major contradiction of nationalism: an ideology of modernity and modernization invoking the past and its traditions to

legitimate itself. Guo then evokes the “re-nationalization” of the Chinese state and the wave of patriotism encouraged by the authorities since the Tiananmen events: education in patriotism at school; revival of the veneration of Confucius; commemoration of the Yellow Emperor; and Jiang Zemin’s theory of the “three represents,” which shifts the political representative role of the CCP from the people to the nation as a whole. The CCP, whose unspoken political aim is no longer to achieve socialism but simply to modernize the country, has need of nationalism, as Guo writes, but cannot deny the Marxist ideology on which the state is founded without contradicting itself: “The Leninist state is but a ‘nationless state,’ an instrument of oppression of one class over another. It does not allow for a cultural nation” (p. 47).

In the second part, of the book, Guo discusses four diverse intellectual projects which he claims contribute to the achievement of the same goal: to “*nationalize* the state from the top by demolishing its systems of meaning” (p. 141). These are: the negotiation of the dogmas of traditional historiography and the political and ideological rehabilitation of Zeng Guofan, a historical character of the Qing Dynasty (chapter three); the reintroduction of the values and ideas of Confucianism (chapter four); the questioning of language reforms and the advent of a cultural linguistic discourse (chapter five); and finally the rise of anti-imperialist and anti-colonial criticisms borrowed from Edward Said’s thinking on Orientalism, and from postcolonial theory (chapter six). Through these projects, Yingjie Guo reveals a veritable ideological revolution in the Chinese intellectual world, which has major political implications even if it is restricted, for the moment, to the field of culture.

Yingjie Guo adds that some of the cultural nationalists’ ideas also transcend Chinese intellectual currents, from the New Left to the Liberals. The idea that there is room for cultural identity is common to both groups’ vision of China’s future.

Clearly pointing to the inconsistencies and weaknesses of cultural nationalism, it encourages us to further our criticism of such a discourse and to deconstruct the cultural homogeneity and historical continuity of the community to which the cultural nationalists claim they belong. New Confucianism, the foregrounding of Zeng Guofan, the defence of traditional Chinese characters and more generally the references to so-called *Chinese culture* promote Han culture to the detriment of the other ethnic groups of China. Pursuing this logic, it could also be said that cultural nationalists are concerned with a carefully selected Han past based on the mandarin culture, institutions and ideology of the old empire. Guo’s study constitutes a major contribution to the unveiling of the ideological dimension of current discourses of cultural nationalism. Were the book to be read in China, it might help avert the entrenchment of a new nationalism, over which would inevitably reign an old, smiling, and undisputed Confucius.

FLORENT VILLARD

*Intellectuals at a Crossroads: The Changing Politics of China's Knowledge Workers.* By ZHIDONG HAO. [Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003. 496 pp. \$29.95. ISBN 0-7914-5580-7.]

We are living in a period of maturation for scholarship on China by Chinese intellectuals writing in English. This is cause for celebration indeed. Zhidong Hao's book is part of this process. It offers a wide variety of readers a unique perspective upon the lives and dilemmas of China's intelligentsia today. This is at once an 'internal' perspective – skilfully, imaginatively culled from sources in Chinese, as well as an 'external' highly theoretical interpretation of the evolution of Chinese intellectual life in keeping with the latest literature in the sociology of knowledge.

Writing about Chinese intellectuals is always difficult – partly because of the convolutions of political censorship that have constrained self expression in the People's Republic and partly because there is a long-standing tradition of mutual contempt in Chinese scholarship about owners of socially contested knowledge. *Wenren xiang qing* ("literati belittle one another") was the curse of Confucian elites. Today's China is not much better off, although Party control muffles intra-intellectual debates. Zhidong Hao avoids this tradition of contempt by taking seriously what intellectuals themselves have to say about their own experiences in China, how they see their predicament, opportunities and future.

Well titled, the book portrays several dilemmas in the lives of *zhishifenzi* ("knowledgeable elements") who have had a problematic relationship to class struggle throughout the 20th century (and hence could become an "intellectual class" – *zhishi jieji* – borrowed from the Japanese *chishiki kaikyū*). Zhidong Hao uses a wide range of sociological theories (including Weber, Gramsci and Mannheim) to argue that China finally is ready for a new class of intellectuals, provided they have the appropriate class consciousness to define and defend their distinctive class interest. In developing this argument, Hao draws heavily upon the work of Alvin Gouldner, especially his 1979 book *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class* (New York: Seabury Press).

Unlike Gouldner, however, Zhidong Hao comes back repeatedly to the specific cultural and historical context of the Chinese intelligentsia and recognizes that no matter how much one wishes that they were a distinct class ready to fight for their own autonomy and interest, their actual social and political reality is far too complex to fit narrowly defined neo-Marxist categories. Thus, while sociologists will find this work especially useful for comparative study, historians and literary scholars will also find here extensive analyses of individual thinkers and works that are not found in any other recent book on Chinese intellectuals. This depth and range of information makes Hao's scholarship useful to many different audiences.

The greatest achievement of this book is its skillful digestion of the vast literature in on *zhishifenzi* published in China during the last two decades. One of the most unusual and well-used sources is Ding Cong's

*Fengci hua* (*Cartoons and satire*, Beijing, 1999), a four volume collection full of subtle “in jokes” that show how intellectuals talk-back to a society and to a political system that is not always open to rational critique. These cartoons, liberally sprinkled through Hao’s book, underscore the author’s own attentiveness to a discourse about power and knowledge that is often couched in circuitous terms. To emphasize this process, the author has developed his own lengthy and very insightful lexicon of Chinese expressions for the daily dilemmas of “knowledge workers.” No phrase is perhaps as apt as Hao’s use of *che lie* (p. 60) – a traditional expression for being “torn apart” (quite literally, a terrible form of capital punishment) – to describe the duality of power and powerlessness that faces Chinese thinkers who would like to make their own autonomous contribution to China’s rapid development.

In addition to providing a linguistic map of the inner world of Chinese intellectuals, Zhidong Hao’s book is full of useful statistics and analytical schemes for distinguishing those who work for the Party, those who work for industry, those who work in education, those who think of themselves as “organic” to a specific social class or strata, and those who cherish their status as outside critics. One need not accept neo-Marxist class analysis and discourse theory to treasure this work for its valuable insights on cultural figures ranging from rock star Cui Jian to the octogenarian philosopher Zhang Dainian. In the end, what makes this book unique is its informed, compassionate, nuanced appreciation of the difficulties involved in being an intellectual in China today.

VERA SCHWARCZ

“*Chopsticks Only Work in Pairs*”: *Gender Unity and Gender Equality among the Lahu of Southwest China*. By SHANSHAN DU. [New York: Columbia University Press, 2002. 237 pp. \$24.50. ISBN 0-231-11957-7.]

In *Chopsticks Only Work in Pairs*, Shanshan Du argues that feminists and academics problematically assert that gender-egalitarian societies do not exist. Du argues that the Lancang Lahu, a Tibeto-Burman speaking ethnic group living in Yunnan Province, present a case of gender-egalitarianism that disproves this claim. Du’s book is an extensive ethnographic description of the Lancang Lahu case, providing a welcome addition to the growing literature on the ethnic groups of South-western China. However, her depiction of feminists and academics within the discipline of anthropology is highly anachronistic. The assertion that feminists and academics claim gender-egalitarian societies do not exist refers to a debate (at least among anthropologists) that took place in the 1970s and is now settled. The debate began with Ortner’s now canonical *Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?* (Stanford, 1974), which assumed universal female subordination, and ended with Marilyn Strathern’s *No Nature, No Culture: the Hagen Case* (Cambridge, 1980). Ortner con-

ceded Strathern's point and, while the debate may rage on among the political scientists and philosophers Du cites, most anthropological and feminist anthropological work done since the 1980s is informed neither by the utopian ideals nor the Eurocentric biases to which Du refers.

The strength of Du's book lies in its detailed documentation of the Lancang Lahu. According to Du, the Lahu conceptualize the world in dyadic pairs. Men and women are likened to chopsticks; without either member of the pair, there can be no livelihood or social reproduction. Du traces Lahu beliefs to their origin myths and ritual practices in which the husband–wife dyad is conceived of as a singular symbiotic unit that is incomplete without either spouse. She argues that gender distinctions are “trivialized” in the sense that there is little essentialization of either sex in terms of morphological or reproductive differences. The dyad motif is supported by life stages and funerary practices that categorize Lahu in terms of their marital status, reproductive status and, most importantly, having reared children to adulthood and ensured that they, in turn, have reproduced and are following the same course. In other chapters, Du persuasively demonstrates that complementarity or unity between husband and wife informs the division of labour and that the Lahu share household leadership. The dyad motif is further supported by kinship idioms that suggest a husband and wife are conceived of as sharing the exact same kin.

According to Du, the Lahu practice gender egalitarianism in community leadership. Prior to 1912, community leadership was dyadic (husband–wife teams), rather than the exclusive province of males. However, during the Republican era only male heads of households were recognized, and male officials were appointed for purposes of local governance. We learn that after the founding of the People's Republic of China, women were allowed to hold office, but that in a given village cluster in the 48 years between 1948 and 1996 women held only three out of 55 leadership positions. Du informs us that in most Lahu areas in China, the dyadic husband–wife leadership “has been fundamentally disrupted or even eliminated since 1949.” In the 1980s the exception appears to have been a handful of Lahu villages, one of which Du studied, that reinstituted indigenous village organization and in which married couples share the roles of village head, spiritual specialist, and leading blacksmith (charged with the spiritual security for village agriculture). While this is indeed fascinating, it is not clear why after nearly a century of being substantially influenced by Chinese gender hegemony and corresponding practices of male leadership among the Lahu, dyadic leadership should spontaneously resume in these few areas. Unfortunately, we are not given the historical contexts that might explain the differences between these divergent Lahu communities. Du notes that communities are characterized by extreme environmental isolation (referring to the early 1950s), yet this conflicts with Du's other accounts of young Lahu watching kungfu movies and *Baywatch*. A weakness of this ethnography is its depiction of the Lahu (in chapters one through five) as seemingly unaffected by major historical transformations from 1940 to

1990 that must have shaped their lives. Although Du mentions the disastrous Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, in which labour was reorganized and the village organization transformed, we are not given any sense of how these transformations shaped Lahu constructions of gender. While the revival of dyadic practices in some Lahu villages suggests a resurgence of gender equality, one wonders if it is credible that a cultural system simply lay dormant for so many decades. Do contemporary practices have the same meaning as their historical counterparts?

There is a disjuncture between chapters one through five, which uncritically depict the Lahu gender system, and chapter six, which reveals its problems. We learn in chapter six that the dyadic ideals, combined with parental authority to arrange marriages, resulted in the prohibition of divorce and caused marital discord, elopement and love-pact suicides. Gender egalitarianism apparently came at a price. Dyadic ideals may translate into egalitarian relationships for those happy with their spouses, while proving repressive for individuals seeking dyads with someone of their own choice. It is only in chapter six that we are given a glimpse of how greater historical transformations impinged on the pre-existing Lahu gender system.

Despite these concerns, Du has written a rich ethnography that will be of interest to students and scholars of South-East Asia, China and Chinese minorities.

EMILY CHAO

*C. T. Hsia on Chinese Literature.* By C. T. HSIA. [New York: Columbia University Press, 2004. 544 pp. £26.50. ISBN 0-231-12990-4.]

First impressions matter when buying a book; they are less important when chasing up a reference in a library or following a reading list to a book shop. *C.T. Hsia on Chinese Literature* is a serious tome which looks like a biography – a bust portrait of the octogenarian author smiles out of a stark black and white dust jacket, and the playful title leaves ambiguous whether it is C. T. Hsia or his thoughts we are buying. One of the delights of reputation and seniority is the publication of a lifetime's collected essays. This produces a gift to the reader which takes its rightful place as a history of criticism as well as literary criticism, gathering 16 essays published between 1962 (in *The China Quarterly*) and 1990, a volume for celebration. As undergraduates of modern Chinese literature, we used to groan when C. T. Hsia appeared on reading lists, as much because the works containing the essays were dog-eared, smelly old volumes, as for their polemicism. Publication in a smart, single volume presents easy access and allows the essays to be contemplated for their merit and range. Since C. T. Hsia has been considered, as Patrick Hanan writes, "without



question the most influential critic of Chinese fiction since the 1960s," his essays remain important reading matter.

The 16 pieces cover traditional drama; traditional and early modern fiction; modern fiction; and literary criticism, demonstrating the range of Hsia's scholarship. Few volumes cross the traditional/modern divide with such ease or draw on such breadth of reading. They range from book review (a stringent criticism of Plak's *Archetype and Allegory in the Dream of the Red Chamber*), anthology foreword and introductions (e.g. Lau's *Chinese Stories from Taiwan 1960–1970*), to scholarly articles which are still cited for their critical value, such as Hsia's study of the military romance or his article on the late-Qing political theorists. With such a mix, this is evidently a volume which should be selectively mined. One controversial theme running through the work is the contention that Imperial Chinese literature somehow does not quite match up to Western counterparts. As a prominent critic, Hsia's advice to students to study Greek or Russian novels for content and classical Chinese for language purposes is provocative, and readers will remain divided as to whether Hsia is disrobing the emperor, or affected by May Fourth judgements and his own first attachment to English literature.

As the publishing blurb informs us, C. T. Hsia's writings "express a candour rare among his Western colleagues." We are frequently reminded how wont to criticise others Hsia was, and how self-confident of his own judgement on scholars and interpretations. Writing of the 1912 novella *Yuli hun*, Hsia attacks Perry Link, whose "failure to discuss any other novels at all adequately betrays his limited reading knowledge of this branch of fiction and also his superficial command of classical Chinese literature" (p. 270); the same Link whose work on butterfly fiction remains the classic volume on the topic. The preface is replete with autobiographical snippets that take us closer to C. T. Hsia, and to intrigues and scholarly disputes suppressed at the time. Hsia refers to four of his own studies as "refreshingly new," another as "very good," and one as "pioneering," but notes that his disagreements with critics David Tod Roy and Andrew Plaks have brought no rejoinders. The only wonder is that Hsia does not realise why this might be.

We are frequently brought up short by sweeping statements and suppositions, such as the very first sentence of the volume: "In this essay I am not concerned with modern Chinese literature, a literature both formally and ideologically indebted to Western literature and in that sense less uniquely Chinese" (p. 3). This is contrasted with a traditional literature "expressive in the main of the dominant Chinese culture in the service of a despotic government supposedly Confucian in character" (p. 4). Let the historians and anthropologists loose, with literary critics barking at their tails. Robert Hegel is quoted on the book's cover as noting that Hsia's essays have "always provoked," taking this to be a positive element stimulating others to a critical response. While each essay could be taken apart (and some have, by critics of equal stature), the long-range perspective offered by this collected volume makes evident their historic import. The publication of this academic biography

irritates and stimulates in equal measure: descriptive and opinionated pieces are offset by flashes of critical insight and the bringing to life of a great range of Chinese literature.

CHLOË STARR

*Hong Kong's Tortuous Democratization: A Comparative Analysis.* By MING SING. [London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon. 2004. 303 pp. \$124.95. ISBN 0-415-32054-2.]

This book tackles two research problems. First, why has Hong Kong constituted a rare anomaly to the popular modernization theory, i.e. achieved a high degree of socio-economic development without attaining a high degree of democracy? Second, what have been the constraints on Hong Kong's democratization, especially between 1980 and mid-2002? Given that the pre-handover Hong Kong and British governments had attempted to democratize Hong Kong since 1984, and that for a long time Hong Kong had levels of socio-economic development favourable for developing democracy, why was it so lacking in Hong Kong between the mid-1980s and mid-2002, and why has full democracy been precluded?

Drawing insights from some recent cross-national research, this book presents a "bargaining perspective" that stresses the explanation of democratization as the outcome of political bargaining of multiple actors. Through a historical-comparative analysis of several important phases since 1980s, the book demonstrates that Hong Kong's democratization has consistently been a product of implicit and explicit bargaining between different state and societal actors. It emphasises that attention should not be given just to two actors – the Chinese and British governments – but also to societal actors, including civil society, political society, and the political culture of the public. The varied unity and mobilization power of pro-democracy civil society and political society, as well as changing public support for democratization from 1984 to mid-2002 have, Sing argues, been crucial and yet neglected factors in shaping their bargaining power vis-à-vis the Chinese government and the subsequent final outcome over democratization.

Chapter three highlights six environmental factors embedded in Hong Kong's post-1945 historical development which shaped the democracy movement and democratization during the mid and late 1980s. The first two are external factors: the Chinese and British governments. The other four are domestic factors: Hong Kong's powerful and depoliticizing bureaucratic government under a quasi-bureaucratic authoritarian, political structure; a politically feeble civil society; a political culture with political powerlessness and a lack of commitment to democracy; and a moderate level of political support for the existing political institutions. These factors were also the constraints thwarting both top-down and bottom-up democratization from 1946 to 1984.

Chapters four to eight examine different phases from 1984 to mid-2002, focusing on the mobilization strength of civil society and political society, as well as support among the public for democratization. This book shows that along with the high level of economic development, Hong Kong experienced a strong rejection of democracy from China; a politically weak civil society; a weakly institutionalized party system with some small “cadre” parties; a mutually suspicious relationship between pro-democratic society and civil society; and the absence of strong and sustained public support for democracy among the populace.

From a comparative perspective, chapter nine argues that Hong Kong’s local capitalists have offered less support for democratization than their Taiwanese and Korean counterparts. The Chinese government has thus secured a powerful ally in its efforts to restrain Hong Kong’s democratic development. The book concludes that unless Hong Kong experiences a severe and large-scale suppression of civil liberties or sustained economic hardship, public support for greater democratization will be inadequate to produce a successful democratic breakthrough in Hong Kong in the short and medium term.

Despite not sharing the pessimistic conclusion of this book, I find it well written and highly informative. Its bargaining perspective and comparative focus have shed new light and raised new issues on Hong Kong democratization. It has also presented many valuable surveys and interview data to support its arguments. All in all, this book has made a significant contribution to Hong Kong Studies and should be of interest to any researcher on democratization.

ALVIN Y. SO

*Chine–Taiwan, la guerre est-elle concevable?* By JEAN-PIERRE CABESTAN.  
[Paris: Economica, 2003. 463 pp. €55.00. ISBN 2-7178-4734-0.]

Strategic issues and Beijing’s military strategy toward Taiwan have long been the focus of valuable research works. Jean-Pierre Cabestan is one among few scholars researching strategic issues from the point of view of the Republic of China. In his latest book, *China – Taiwan, Is War Conceivable?* he analyses in depth the way China’s threat is perceived in Taiwan.

The book has a double focus. First, it evaluates the China threat and the military, as well as political, economical and psychological, capacity of Taipei to resist. Second, in a more speculative way, it weighs the risks of war and considers the different possible scenarios, with or without American involvement. The author does not aim to analyse recent economic and political developments in the Taiwan Straits. Neither does he consider different scenarios of peace building (this will be the subject of his forthcoming book, *Chine–Taiwan: Peut-On Construire La Paix?*

co-authored with Benoît Vermander, director of the Taipei Ricci Institute.)

According to Cabestan, war is conceivable, but its cost would be very high for the three belligerents involved, Beijing, Taipei and Washington. Keeping the balance of power is the only way to dissuade Beijing from launching a military attack. If Taipei and Taiwanese society were to decrease their vigilance or Washington to loosen its security system, that would increase the chance of conflict. Crucial to the *de facto* independence of Taiwan is a credible capacity of defence; and it is also the only way for the Republic of China to negotiate on an equal footing with its rival.

Of particular interest in Cabestan's book is the use he makes of rarely-cited sources. There are few reliable serious sources of information on the ROC army and Taiwan security issues because of secrecy combined with a general lack of interest in Taiwanese military affairs. But the situation has recently improved. Cabestan, for instance, uses the *National Defence Reports* that have been published every two years since 1992, and gathers many useful figures and maps. He has also conducted in-depth interviews with a number of Taiwanese military sources.

The book is divided into three parts. It first analyses the strengths and weaknesses of the ROC's defence policy and army in facing the China threat. The second part puts it into a broader perspective: the international status of the island, its economic assets and vulnerabilities, its political and psychological trump cards and weak spots. The third part systematically considers various war scenarios, from limited to widespread conflict. Cabestan thinks that the cost and the uncertainty of international consequences of any conflict will dissuade China from triggering a military confrontation. His main conclusion is that in the near future, China should still be expected to favour economic integration as its main strategy to bring Taiwan closer, as well as to intensify psychological warfare.

The most interesting part of the book deals with the recent revision of Taiwan's defence policy. Since 2000, Taipei's goal has been to move any possible conflict (and the main battle) off the shores of the island. It aims to develop the means to launch pre-emptive attacks against PLA air bases and missiles sites. The new strategy tries to dissuade the PLA from crossing the medium line of the Straits in order to defeat it before it can set foot on the island. To reach this goal, Taiwan has launched a significant effort to adapt its equipment and its organization. Taiwan's army has drawn up a wide-ranging modernization plan. Although Chen Shui-bian has failed to raise the army's official budget over 3 per cent of GDP, a ratio that is usually considered a minimum, purchases from foreign suppliers (mainly the US) have increased rapidly. During the 1990s, Taipei also modernized the military institution itself: reducing total numbers, restructuring organization (notably in its relationships with the political powers), improving the quality of military staff, and better preparing the whole of society for the possibility of war. In short, Jean-Pierre Cabestan's latest book provides a most useful picture of the

state of Taiwan's military, and of the society at large, facing a still-possible conflict.

GILLES GUIHEUX

*Is Taiwan Chinese? The Impact of Culture, Power, and Migration on Changing Identities.* By MELISSA J. BROWN. [Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004. 333 pp. \$24.95. ISBN 0-520-23182-1.]

Taiwan's identity has been constructed and described in a variety of ways by politicians seeking to demonstrate that Taiwan either is or is not Chinese. Those who wish to prove Taiwan's Chineseness emphasize the dominance of Han culture and the lengthy relationship between China and Taiwan. Those who argue that Taiwan's identity is distinctly un-Chinese tend to focus on the influence of Aborigine culture and ancestry on the Han population, the influence of Japanese culture, and the fact that Taiwan has been politically separate from China for most of the 20th century. Melissa Brown's *Is Taiwan Chinese?* investigates the merits of these claims through ethnographic study. She offers an excellent analysis of the shifting identity of Taiwan's plains Aborigines, which she supplements with a comparative analysis of Tujia identity in China's Hubei province that demonstrates that Taiwan's identity shifts are not unique.

Through ethnographic case studies and analysis of historical data, Brown concludes that Taiwan's plains Aborigines have undergone three identity shifts, from plains Aborigine to Han, in the first two cases, and from Han back to Aborigine in the last instance. Brown studies three foothills villages that by the early 1990s identified themselves as Han, but that had previously been Aborigine. She finds that because Qing economic and social policies had eroded boundaries between Han and plains Aborigines, these two groups already shared numerous cultural practices in the early 20th century. However, it was not until the Japanese banned footbinding, thus opening a range of new marriage options, that plains Aborigines began to take on Han identity, and to claim it on the basis of cultural similarity, rather than ancestry. Brown further finds that the impact of Aborigine culture on Han culture during this period was minimal, and that Han cultural practices supplanted Aborigine practices among those people who underwent the identity shift. In the late 20th century these same people underwent a second identity shift from Han back to Aborigine, one that was again spurred by changes in the political environment and one that, Brown argues, has been counter-productive to Taiwan's claims to uniqueness.

By contrast, an identity shift in the early 17th century, which Brown describes as having occurred as a result of frequent changes in government that gave people windows of opportunity to reclassify themselves, did lead to a desinicization of Han culture. Fewer women among this group bound their feet, and there was a lower rate of minor

marriage, for example. Moreover, claims of Han identity among this population were made on the basis of ancestry and continue to this day. Brown concludes from these three shifts that identity claims based on ancestry seem more enduring and more convincing to people than those based on culture.

Her study of Tujia people in Hubei demonstrates that Taiwan's identity shifts are not unique. Tujia, who like Taiwan's 17th-century plains Aborigines encountered a long series of waves of Han migration into their area, shifted identity as well, so that by the mid-20th century most residents in the area could identify Han ancestors and thought of themselves as Han. In this case, too, local Han culture was desinicized. It was not until after the PRC was established that local Han in Tujia areas were reclassified by the state as ethnic minorities in large part because they were not culturally Han enough.

Based on her studies of Taiwan's plains Aborigines and China's Tujia people, Brown concludes that shared social, political and economic experience, rather than culture or ancestry, defines identity in terms of the way that people self-identify, but that identity is nonetheless generally defined by states and the public in ideological terms that emphasize culture and ancestry. She further concludes that Taiwan's early 20th-century identity shift makes the strongest foundation for claims to uniqueness in that, unlike the 17th-century shift and the Tujia shift, it led to increasing Sinicization of the Aborigine population. Moreover, she suggests, for Taiwan's government to employ this argument as it describes Taiwan's identity would more closely link the ideological narrative to people's actual experience, thus making the ideological narrative more compelling.

*Is Taiwan Chinese?* offers a balanced treatment of a politically charged topic. However, the book's somewhat inflammatory suggestion that Taiwan's identity is distinct from China's in that Taiwanese are, in fact, more Han than Chinese, may not be well received in the political realm on either side of the Straits. The volume is well researched and its argument is based on thoughtful analysis of important and unique sources. It contributes considerably to our understanding of the role of culture, power and demographics in shaping identity. Anyone interested in Taiwan studies, the Taiwan-PRC question or questions of regionalism and identity in China should read this volume.

J. MEGAN GREENE

*Steps of Perfection: Exorcist Performers and Chinese Religion in Twentieth-Century Taiwan.* By DONALD S. SUTTON [Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Asia Center and Harvard University Press, 2003, xiii + 418 pp. ISBN 0-674-01097-3.]

This book is an "ethnographic history" of *jiajiang* ("Infernal Generals" as translated by the author), a peculiar type of ritual dance troupe that has long been an eye-catching feature of southern Taiwan's temple festivals



and pilgrimages. Based on extensive ethnographic and historical data collected by Sutton in southern Taiwan between 1988 and 2001, the two main questions that he addresses in this book are framed squarely within the decades-long paradigmatic problematique of Sinology. The first question is “Why and how are the diverse forms of Chinese culture generated from a shared groundwork?” More precisely, in contrast to many attempts to discern a unitary “Chineseness” from extensive variations between local Chinese culture forms, the author aspires to examine how one single tradition in Chinese culture evolved into various local styles. The second question is “Why do local religions keep on thriving in Taiwan despite the fact that the island has modernized to become a world-known industrial economy?” Put differently, why and how does Taiwan’s experience repudiate Max Weber’s hypothesis on disenchantment?

To highlight the importance of agency or local creativity seems to have become a cliché for answering questions such as the first. However, Sutton amply demonstrates his scholarship by illustrating the agency and creativity of local *jiajiang* performers with considerable historical and ethnographic evidence. Through defining *jiajiang* tradition realistically as a genre of religious drama continuously performed by *jiajiang* halls (troupes), which are either voluntary as offshoots of established temples or occupational as commercial enterprises, the author rightly posits the agents of the tradition in a multi-dimensional context that enables us to appraise their autonomy and creativity with greater accuracy. Sutton then meticulously relates the origin, mythology, iconography, rituals, choreography of this tradition and its evolution in Fujian and Taiwan since the late 19th century up to 2001. Consequently, he concludes that the current diversification of *jiajiang* tradition is made possible primarily due to the void of sacred texts that may constrain its evolution. Later, due to suppression by the authorities and poor transportation conditions during the colonial era (1895–1945), mutually isolated troupes based in different locales gradually evolved into distinct regional schools. Finally, the improvement of infrastructure and overall economic condition during the military rule of the Nationalist (Kuomintang) government (1945–1987) plus the hands-off stance by the government towards folk religion jointly created a prosperous religious market in post-war Taiwan. As a result, escalating market competition between occupational *jiajiang* troupes triggered further innovations and subsequently further diversification.

Regrettably, Sutton’s attempt to answer the second question is far weaker than his answer to the first question. He suggests that gods and ghosts are still relevant to the everyday life of numerous Taiwanese as the principles regulating human–superhuman relationships are somehow like a “natural extension” of the ethics of favours/gifts exchange governing modern-day Taiwan’s social relationships. People can gain various kinds of pragmatic and private advantages from religious participation. Furthermore, folk religion functions as the crucial realm for native Taiwanese to assert their power and identity against the dominant Nationalist government and mainlanders’ cultural hegemony.

The plausibility of the above arguments are made suspect by omitting



some key aspects of Taiwan's modern history. For example, even if we accept that there used to be one encompassing set of economic ethics governing simultaneously human–superhuman transactions and mundane social relationships during some ‘good old times,’ how could such social–religious ethics remain unchanged through the urbanization, changing class structure, and marginalization of rural/suburban communities undergone in Taiwan since the 1960s? Since the strictly local-based, obligatory “ceremonial circles” have been increasingly replaced by voluntary, non-local “belief circles” in Taiwan, how can the *raison d'être* of Taiwanese folk religion still rest on the ‘sacred landscape,’ locality, or community? Elsewhere, Sutton implies that the popularity of self-mortifiers is due to the need of native Taiwanese to release their hatred and resistance toward the “foreign” Kuomintang regime and mainlanders. However, self-mortification didn't become endemic until the late 1980s when native Taiwanese started to monopolize Taiwan's presidency, and the heavily Hokkien-accented Lee Teng-Hui became the President of both ROC and the Kuomintang. If it is symbolic resistance targeting mainlanders and the Kuomintang regime, why did it become fashionable only after both had lost their dominant status?

Nevertheless, as the most comprehensive English work on Taiwan's *jiajiang* tradition, this book may interest anthropologists, historians, or specialists in Chinese religion, ritual dancing, or religious performance. Students interested in the methodology for studying dancing or other performative traditions may find it especially useful.

YANG DER-RUEY

*Religion in Modern Taiwan: Tradition and Innovation in a Changing Society.* Edited by PHILIP CLART and CHARLES B. JONES. [Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003. x + 333 pp. \$49.00. ISBN 0-8248-2564-0.]

Religion is profuse in Taiwan, and this is reflected in publications. In the last chapter of this collection, Randall Nadeau and Chang Hsun point out that Taiwanese academic publications on religion in Taiwan have increased hugely in the last two decades. Taiwanese anthropologists have probably been most prominent in this study. But this book contains only one chapter by an anthropologist writing as such. He is Huang Shiu-wei. Typical of an old anthropological habit, now that Chinese, according to Nadeau and Chang, are more studied than aboriginal inhabitants (*yuanzhumin*) by Taiwanese anthropologists, Huang's chapter is on the Ami. It stands awkwardly among the others, which are by historians and teachers in religious studies departments, with its use of anthropological concepts of culture and identity and its concentration on ritual and avoidance of a discrete concept of religion. One other chapter is about “religious culture.” It is by Julian Pas, the justly renowned editor

of the *Journal of Chinese Religions*, who died before he could polish his chapter. The book is dedicated to him. But honouring his efforts to enrich the study of religion in China and Taiwan and sympathy for his state of health at the time will not prevent a reader from noticing how short and thin his chapter is, precisely because he misses so much that anthropologists have written. The book as a whole shares this failing. The introduction does not make the conceptual and informative links to provide a social analysis of the remarkable cultural and religious changes that each chapter describes within its own narrow remit. The editors simply state that religion is dynamic, that modernization includes the fact that traditions change, and that the aim of the book is to chart those changes. They introduce each chapter without linking it to the others.

Jones's own chapter attempts a classificatory clarification, borrowing (from a book on Japanese religion) a distinction between locative and adventitious religious institutions and practices. He rightly stresses the former for the period before the Japanese occupation (1895). This is a useful backdrop to the change noted in the last chapter, that territorial cults – which had been a distinctive institution of social and cultural life – are no longer purely local but have become island-wide networks referring back to a locality. Both chapters stick to their narrations of modernity (from local ascription to individual choice) too closely, without noting that networks of Daoist and Buddhist masters of ritual expertise, of masters of militia and musical arts, not to mention those of pilgrimage to root temples had always linked local temples and their areas and were to some extent matters of choice.

Christian Jochim shows that intellectuals and government policy makers have adapted Confucian thought to the parameters of modernization. He cannot say what impact the intellectuals may have had on ordinary moral conduct, but he does conclude that since government schools have ceased to promote explicit Confucian virtues as the essence of Chinese character, the carriers of the Confucian tradition (apart from intellectuals) are spirit-writing syncretic sects.

Clart's own chapter is precisely on these sects, the subject of his doctoral research. But he chooses simply to contrast the records of two sects, one in Yunnan of 1921 and the other in Taiwan of 1989, in order to show what we are to understand are changes that have come with modernization: acceptance, within a continuing gender hierarchy, of women being active outside the home and of a mutuality, rather than strict obedience, in the relation of woman to man.

Paul Katz contributes a chapter on a big *Wangye* (plague god) temple, its festivities being turned from exorcism to cultural entertainment and the temple itself into a charitable corporation. Lee Fengmao, by contrast, writes that non-monastic Daoism has been able to preserve secret family transmission of Daoist cosmology at the heart of popular religion and has ignored the Daoist Academy formed in 1991 which is attended only by members of temple committees and corporations. The contrast would have been worth some elaboration in the introduction.

Change or no change with modernization is one big theme. The other

main theme is the politics of Taiwan's religions – not just control of religion and adoption of a kind of Confucianism for schools. Andre Laliberte contrasts three Buddhist organizations; the semi-governmental Buddhist Association of the Republic of China and the two biggest foundations of the Buddhism of engagement in the world, the Foguangshan and the Ciji foundations. The leader of the Foguangshan has identified himself closely with the most conservative Kuomintang elements, while the leader of the Ciji has scrupulously avoided every political party to receive the necessary support to build its medical and educational institutions. Barbara Reed's chapter on published narratives by men who in times of war and resettlement in Taiwan sought the aid and solace of the bodhisattva Guanyin contrasts with the more usual concerns of ordinary Taiwanese seeking her aid, and both contrast with the more active responsibility to be the eyes and arms of Guanyin advocated by the Venerable Zhengyan, leader of Ciji. All these Buddhists are in sharp contrast with the Presbyterian Church; Murray Rubinstein writes an admiring and absorbing story about their nearly 150 years on the island. The Presbyterians have not only established their own autonomy as a Taiwanese church within international Christian and mission organizations. They have also acted as advocates and protectors of Taiwanese political autonomy and democracy. Another less principled and more opportunistic side of Presbyterian evangelical politics comes to light in a passing observation in Huang's chapter. Presbyterian missionaries took advantage of the Ami sense of having been liberated from the Japanese by the US forces by calling their God, in the language of the Ami, the American God.

There is much intriguing detail of this kind and much food for connective thought about religious trends in Taiwan in this book. It is up to the reader to do the work. What the volume establishes beyond doubt is the importance of religion in Taiwan's politics and social welfare.

STEPHAN FEUCHTWANG

*Transformation! Innovation? Perspectives on Taiwan Culture.* Edited by CHRISTINA NEDER and INES SUSANNE SCHILLING. [Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 2003. 235 pp. €58,00. ISBN 3-447-04791-7.]

Taiwan studies in Europe are still underdeveloped and have largely concentrated on political issues rather than culture. *Transformation! – Innovation? Taiwan in her Cultural Dimensions* addresses this critical absence. It is a collection of 14 papers, compiled after an international workshop held at Ruhr University in 2001. This volume not only analyses literary and artistic expression, but also explores the drastic cultural change that has taken place since the lifting of martial law in 1987. The democratization of Taiwanese society in the 1990s led the old China-centric ideology and cultural hegemony that had dominated Taiwan under

Kuomintang (KMT) rule to be overturned within a few years. Rather than focusing on political reform, this book concentrates on cultural issues, such as the rise of indigenous literature, the changing status of traditional arts, and the impact of cultural policy during this period.

A central concern of the book is Taiwanese literature. Some articles look at the construction of Taiwanese indigenous literature, some examine a particular genre, while some analyse individual writers, their influence and literary significance. For example, Pei-yin Lin argues that the politicization of Yang Kui's works undertaken by both the KMT and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) governments is futile, and draws readers' attention to Yang's humanist love towards his people. Ya-chen Chen points out the anti-colonial feminist position of Wang Zhenhe's *Meigui Meigui wo ai ni* (*Rose, Rose, I Love You*), contrasting it to the opera *Madam Butterfly* and musical *Miss Saigon*. Miriam Lang takes the example of romantic writer Qiong Yao to challenge the current ethnocentric bias of romance theory, raising the possibility of establishing a non-Western discourse. Ines Susanne Schilling tackles the genre of the Taiwanese self-help book, arguing that its content, function, and categorization are unique and merit further investigation.

Issues of sexuality are also a concern of the book. Carsten Storm analyses the double alienation (both from 'normal' sexuality and traditional family ties) embodied in the homosexual protagonists of Taiwanese novels and film. Jens Damm explores the discourses on homosexuality in radical magazines and the development of "coming out" in Taiwanese society as a way of recognizing one's unique sexual/cultural/national identity. He also argues that the emerging homosexual discourse in Taiwan, while partly a result of globalization and cultural imperialism, is also a local phenomenon.

Although literary works are the focus of this volume, its underlying concern is the cultural trend of 'nation-building' in Taiwan. Most impressive in this respect are Jeremy Taylor's and Henning Klöter's papers, both based on original research employing primary materials. Using the example of Zuoying old city wall, Taylor demonstrates how the authorities use antiquity and heritage to "make history." Furthermore, he points out that the tactics of using heritage employed by both the KMT and DPP are similar, even though their political ideologies differ. Henning Klöter examines the development of different systems of written *Taiyu* (Taiwanese language), and also explores their relationship with Taiwanese identity.

This collection of essays examines numerous aspects of Taiwanese culture from a variety of angles. A passion for establishing a discourse on Taiwanese culture is strongly expressed, as is an anxiety to reconstruct Taiwanese history and a national narrative. The articles by Peng Hsia-yen, I-wen Miao, Sao-Wen Cheng and Shih-Ying Chang demonstrate an enthusiasm for the prospect of building a new Taiwanese culture, an indigenous literary canon, and most of all, the constructing a national narrative. Nevertheless, concerns about a total de-Sification process and the instrumental use of culture are also raised. For example, Christina

Neder worries that the ideological tendency of building “correct” literary canons risks an irrational glorification and mystification of “blood and soil” literature; Lloyd Haft talks about the illusory nature of a fixed identity; and Katie Su of the bitter struggles between traditional art forms competing for resources under different political regimes.

This volume not only shows the complexity and multifaceted nature of Taiwanese culture, it also demonstrates, that a versatile process of nation-building is underway.

BI-YU CHANG

*Banking in Modern China: Entrepreneurs, Professional Managers, and the Development of Chinese Banks, 1897–1937.* By LINSUN CHENG. [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. xvi + 277 pp. £47.50; \$65.00. ISBN 0-521-81142-2.]

*A History of Modern Shanghai Banking: The Rise and Decline of China's Finance Capitalism.* By ZHAOJIN JI. [Armonk, New York and London, England: M.E. Sharpe, 2003. viii + 325 pp. \$69.95. ISBN 0-7656-1002-7.]

The unstable banking sector presents great challenges to the economy in contemporary China: state-owned banks carry large portfolios of non-performing loans and China's increasingly affluent population produces a rising flow of deposits, but foreign banks are still seriously restricted in their ability to take deposits. Two recently published monographs on the history of banking in modern China put current economic and financial reforms in context by explaining the historical development of modern Chinese banks, their management, and political manoeuvres, especially in the old and new financial capital of China, Shanghai.

In *Banking in Modern China*, Linsun Cheng focuses on banking institutions from the founding of the first modern Chinese bank in 1897 to the beginning of the Japanese invasion and occupation in 1937. During those 40 years, China encountered many political and economic crises impacting on the growth of banks. Whereas earlier studies have to some extent acknowledged the achievements of modern Chinese banks during the Republican period, Cheng's contribution lies in the documentation and analysis of these banks' financial performances, managerial structures, and business practices based on previously inaccessible archival records and bank documents held in Shanghai and Nanjing.

In the first three chapters Cheng offers a concise and yet detailed survey of the transition from traditional to modern banking institutions. *Piaohao* dominated the interregional remittance business, *qianzhuang* specialized in money exchange and served local business communities while foreign banks introduced modern banking to China in the mid-19th century, quickly coming to dominate the financing of the export and import trade. However, capital required for the purpose of building

Chinese industrial enterprises and railroad construction exceeded by far the capital sources traditional financial institutions could provide. In the context of Chinese efforts to strengthen the national economy after defeat in the Sino-Japanese war in 1895, the Imperial Bank of China opened in Shanghai in 1897 as the first modern Chinese bank. In 1905 the Board of Revenue (*hubu*) and the Qing government founded the Daqing Bank as a central bank with the intention of controlling China's financial and monetary development. Like so many other areas of economic activity, the founding of private commercial banks was left to local officials and businessmen who were slowly able to convince people to invest money in these new institutions.

After 1911, China's modern banking sector expanded. Privatization and concentration saw the victory of private commercial banks over official banks. Not surprisingly, the Nanjing decade between 1927 and 1937 brought back increased government control over the economy and the Central Bank of China, resulting in new forms of co-operation between Chinese banks and the government, yet without diminishing the influence of professional bankers.

Chapters four to seven offer a closer look at the management of the core group of modern Chinese banks and their role in debt financing during the Republican period. In contrast to existing scholarly interpretation, Cheng argues that these banks were not successful primarily because they sold bonds for the government, even though they held more bonds during than before the Nanjing decade. In Cheng's opinion, modern Chinese banks were able to succeed as financial institutions by increasing savings deposits and offering attractive customer service. The last two chapters address issues related to managerial structures and the adoption of modern business practices that were combined with traditional Chinese business practices like native-place ties in the modern banking sector.

Analysing the roles innovative bank managers such as Chen Guangfu (Shanghai Commercial and Savings Bank) and Zhou Zuomin (Jincheng Bank) have played, Cheng offers valuable insights into banks as institutional entities, and personal relationships as tools to weather crises. In his evaluation of the entrepreneurial qualities of Chinese bankers, Cheng argues that we should not consider them robber barons but bankers whose "control of their banks was based on their professional knowledge, rather than on their holdings of stock shares or their personal wealth" (p. 211). However, taking the positive, self-promoting image of bankers and the published income and bonus figures at face value might be dangerous. As one would expect, no obvious evidence proves otherwise, but at the same time the necessary painstaking detective work has not yet been applied to the business and private accounts of these financial magnates.

*Banking in Modern China* stresses the emergence of a new class of entrepreneurial bankers and professional managers who ran modern Chinese banks through a successful combination of traditional business practices with modern corporate structures. Further research is necessary to analyse the banks' accounting procedures and their impact on the



presentation of financial results. Scholars interested in Chinese financial, economic, and business history will gain valuable insights from this study that rehabilitates the achievements of the Chinese modern banking sector before the Japanese invasion.

In comparison, *A History of Modern Shanghai Banking* by Zhaojin Ji leaves a much weaker impression due to a general lack of analysis and serious engagement with the existing literature in the field. That the author herself is not a trained historian might be why the book is not organized along a theoretical argument. Instead, the narrative unfolds in conventional chronology. Following a short, general introduction, Ji describes the origins of native banks in Shanghai, the rise of foreign banks and the introduction of Chinese private banks and their flourishing during the “Golden Age” before the relationship between these banks and the government became more problematic under Chiang Kai-shek in the Nanjing decade. It is laudable that Ji covers the wartime period and bridges the 1949-divide, addressing such important issues as wartime inflation and the collapse of the nationalist monetary system in 1949. The story of Shanghai banking ends with the nationalization of the private banking sector under the new socialist system in 1952.

The author’s discussion of Shanghai’s financial institutions and monetary policies focuses primarily on the relationship between the banks and the state, and how it changed during the various political and economic crises. Unfortunately, Ji doesn’t offer a theoretical framework for positioning her argument and therefore her historical evaluation of the development of Shanghai banking is highly descriptive. However, as the author comes from a family with serious involvement in banking in Shanghai for several generations, her book offers interesting details of the banking business and work environment of Shanghai banks based on reminiscences and anecdotes provided by older family members. Personal recollections of experiences in Chinese banking during the first half of the 20th century are extremely valuable for historians interested in China’s economic, business, and social history. One might hope that Zhaojin Ji will be able to document more of her family’s professional past through oral history interviews centred on specific themes such as hiring methods, career paths, and managerial structures in the day-to-day business of Shanghai banks.

With its chronologically organized narrative in highly accessible prose, numerous short entries of one to two pages introducing a large number of Chinese and foreign banks, many photographs of bank buildings, bankers, paper currency and even reproductions of old documents, *A History of Modern Shanghai Banking* certainly serves well as a reference book. Almost every Chinese and foreign bank doing business in pre-1949 Shanghai is covered with a biographical entry. Ji’s study contains useful information for readers without background knowledge in modern Chinese history but with specific interests as businessmen, investors, foreign policy makers or economists in the evolutionary process of China’s modern banking system. The author’s statement in the conclusion that the regulatory role of the Chinese state, its control over foreign banks and



private Chinese banks has historical roots is hardly in dispute. For a new analytical approach to the role of modern banks in terms of their financial policies and managerial structures and their response to economic and political interventions by the state in the early 20th century, readers will have to turn to Linsun Cheng's book and other sources instead.

ELISABETH KÖLL

*China Made: Consumer Culture and the Creation of the Nation.* By KARL GERTH. [Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2003. 445 pp. ISBN 0-674-01214-3.]

According to Karl Gerth, the author of *China Made: Consumer Culture and the Creation of the Nation*, this newly published monograph is “a study of nation-making through consumerism” (p. 5). Gerth claims that central to his argument is the pervasive tension between consumerism and nationalism. Such tension, he suggests, was an integral part of the creation of China as a modern nation (p. 1), and a critical examination therefore allows readers to connect all levels of Chinese society (p. 5). To further his argument, Gerth explains that in early 20th-century China an emerging consumer culture defined and spread modern Chinese nationalism. At the same time, the growing conceptualization of China as a ‘nation’ with its own ‘national products’ influenced and shaped its consumer culture (p. 3). By creating a “nationalised consumer culture,” the author argues, “notions of ‘nationality’ and China as a ‘modern’ nation-state were articulated, institutionalised, and practiced.” In Gerth’s words again, “the consumption of commodities defined by the concept of nationality not only helped to create the very idea of ‘modern China’ but also became a primary means by which people in China began to conceptualise themselves as citizens of a modern nation” (p. 3).

Regarding methodology, Gerth writes that he approached the study both from the top-down and the bottom-up to show “the broader institutional and discursive environments in which notions of nationhood were conceived, diffused, and enforced,” as well as to integrate “different levels of Chinese society and connecting diverse phenomena over time” (p. 5). The book is organized into four parts with an introduction and conclusion. In part one, under the heading “Context and case study,” Gerth examines the background and origins of the National Product movement in the first part of 20th-century China, as well as the emergence of a national uniform after the birth of the Republic in 1912. In part two, the author divides the National Products movement into two stages, 1905–1919 and 1923–1937, and shows how anti-imperialism was used as a vector by nationalists in provoking a National Products movement and how “national products” were standardized in the 1920s and 30s. Part three is a study on the emergence and development of industrial exhibitions in modern China, highlighting the 1928 exhibition in Shanghai as

the creation of a “nationalistic visuality.” Part four discusses the issue of gender, as well as the role of “patriotic capitalists” in forming a nationalized consumer culture.

One major problem of this volume is that it lacks ‘consumers.’ Although in the introduction the author argues vigorously for dynamic tensions between nationalism and consumerism, the study itself is one sided. It is concerned only with nationalism as the defining force of consumerism in China, and barely discusses the roles of consumers in shaping consumer culture. Even in chapter seven under the heading “Nationalizing female consumers,” the author argues only how various national movements helped to construct an image of female consumers in China. There is no discussion of the interests of female consumers themselves, or their role as active agents in defining and shaping a consumer culture in modern China. One is left with the impression that consumers were merely passive creations of nationalism and their only role was to spread nationalism, rather than to consume. Furthermore, by labelling them as “patriotic producers” or “capitalists with Chinese characteristics,” the book undermines the fact that by monopolizing the nationalistic sentiment and using it to recruit customers (by making consumers “Chinese citizens”), companies, producers and entrepreneurs in modern China – both Chinese and non-Chinese – were able to turn consumers into loyal customers. Not unlike today’s supermarket loyalty schemes.

One other defect of the book is the author’s bias in selecting source material. Despite an extensive bibliography, source material is clearly centred on institutional history, concerned mainly with ideologies and politics. The author ignores a huge amount of literature in modern China on what people consumed, how and why. Even more problematic is to use a fictional story (*The Lin’s Family Shop*) as the starting point and as evidence for the author’s central argument (p. 1), confusing representation and reality.

Nevertheless, for students and readers interested in Chinese nationalism, the book adds a different dimension and shows a varied approach to the subject. It is also worth mentioning that in part three, “The exhibitionary complex,” the book offers for the first time a detailed study on the relationship between industry exhibitions and creation of a national identity in modern China. It shows the importance of visual culture in nation building in the 20th century. For readers interested in visual history in 20th-century China, it is a book not to be missed.

ZHOU XUN

*The Power of Position: Beijing University, Intellectuals and Chinese Political Culture 1898–1929.* By TIMOTHY B. WESTON. [Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2004. xiv + 325 pp. \$60.00; £39.95. ISBN 0-520-23767-6.]

Timothy Weston’s study of Beijing University (hereafter, “Beida”)

spotlights how modern Chinese intellectuals positioned themselves politically and socially in the early 20th century. Weston relies on the Beida archives, dailies, journals, and many other sources, to make four contributions. First, Beida's early history shows how literati humanists repositioned themselves during a period of great uncertainty. New style intellectuals had influence because they mastered Western and classical learning. Secondly, Beida's complex history did not break sharply with the past. Earlier accounts of the May Fourth movement obscure the efforts of intellectuals since 1898 to redefine their role. Weston suggests that May Fourth amplified a continuing progression of new and old ways of doing things. Thirdly, political tensions emerged when the university increasingly radicalized after 1911. No more than 20 per cent of Beida students were involved in the New Culture movement. A strong conservative undertow continually challenged radical agendas. Often we hear only the voices of the latter. Finally, Weston assesses Beida's history in light of how the May Fourth movement played out in different locations. In the 1920s, Shanghai replaced Beijing as the leading venue for urban China's cultural and intellectual leaders. Beijing increasingly lost status under warlordism, and the Nationalist shift of the capital to Nanjing refocused Chinese intellectual life on the Chang (Yangtze) delta.

Weston describes how conservatives and radicals informed May Fourth political culture. Drawing on Lynn Hunt's work, he stresses collective practices and social context. May Fourth was not simply an intellectual event but more a series of moves by intellectuals to create a system of meanings, practices, values, and implicit rules that would condition political power in new ways. This effort climaxed at Beida under the leadership of Cai Yuanpei and other university directors, where the nucleus of the New Culture network took shape.

Along the way, Weston describes the scholarly luminaries that Cai's hiring policy brought to Beida. Cai appointed a New Culture community of progressive-minded professors, which encouraged an explosion of student societies, some in favour of anarchism, others nostalgic for the Imperial period and Confucian values. The communist movement also turned Beida into a centre for the northern revolutionary movement.

Until the 1920s, then, Beida was the leading voice of elite Chinese public opinion. "Movement fatigue" set in after May Fourth, however. Warlordism and financial crises forced the university to close. The faculty and students moved to Shanghai to work and teach in a more commercialized intellectual context. By 1927, the warlord Zhang Zuolin had destroyed Beida as a location for intellectual activity and political activism. When the Kuomintang revived the university in 1929, they turned it into a utilitarian national school focusing on science and technology. Even in Beijing, Beida now took a back seat to Qinghua and Yanjing universities, which both had American support.

Weston argues that in their struggle to maintain their elite status, Chinese intellectuals maintained a dialectical relation between older and newer ways of thinking that informed revolutionary political change after 1898. This useful contention, however, would have more explanatory power if Weston had not under-theorized the notion of "intellectuals" in

modern Chinese history. To explain how late Imperial Chinese literati elites transformed themselves into a nascent intelligentsia that eventually became modern Chinese intellectuals (*zhishifenzi*) requires some “splitting” as well as “lumping.”

By using “intellectual” to encompass both the pre-modern and modern, Weston underestimates the degree to which the modern socio-political role of the intellectual in China was an invention and not simply an echo of older literati roles. Beida’s status was analogous to the Imperial College (*taixue*) and School for the Sons of the Empire (*guozijian*). Under the late Imperial educational regime, the Qing state certainly sanctioned classical knowledge reproduced through Imperial civil examinations. But Beida’s role in inventing the Chinese nation after 1911 required constructing a national past and a new relationship between citizens and the state. They went further than earlier negotiations between literati elites and the Imperial government to share political power and social prestige – however much such negotiations still mattered in the 1890s.

To historicize Beida, Weston presents the standard account of conservatives versus dynastic reformers after 1865. Unable to reconcile the cultural battle between Chinese and Western learning, the Qing dynasty failed to graft science to the Chinese educational system. Copying Tokyo Imperial University after the Sino-Japanese War, the new reformers sought to encompass all learning at the Imperial University (*jingshi daxuetang*), Chinese and Western, which now included advanced science and mathematics. This tired narrative represents a post-1895 view of earlier reformers as failures. Readers should take a closer look at recent scholarship on the new journalism (Rudolph Wagner, Natascha Vittinghoff) and abundant science translations (David Wright, Michael Lackner et. al.) from the 1860s to the 1890s to get beyond the 1898 reformers and their invention of themselves as the generators of modern intellectual change.

Despite my caveats, Weston successfully locates Beida in its own educational history as part of the urban history of Beijing. He also fruitfully places the May Fourth movement in that local history. As the first modern Imperial university, Beida was the product of Imperial reformers who tried to establish a new-style institution at the pinnacle of an unprecedented nationwide system of public schools. Later, educators in the early Republic used its late Imperial status to turn Beida into an autonomous university whose graduates as modern intellectuals superseded the Imperial mandarin ideal.

BENJAMIN A. ELMAN

*English Lessons: The Pedagogy of Imperialism in Nineteenth-Century China.* By JAMES L. HEVIA. [Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003. xviii + 387 pp. £18.50. ISBN: 0-8223-3188-8.]

Cloaking its bullying of China in high morality, Britain in the 19th

century and the first part of the 20th aimed to teach China how to become more tractable, and more English. In describing this project, James L. Hevia follows Deleuze and Guattari by identifying capitalist power in China as “a kind of productive apparatus that oscillates between deterritorializing and reterritorializing new zones of contact” (p. 21). In other words, Britain enforced such wide-ranging and radical changes in the meaning and value of Qing authority and power that its actions in China effectively amounted to the “violent placement of China within a colonial world” (p. 281), creating a form of colonization even without formal institutional takeover.

These processes, which began in 1858–60 with the events that led to the burning of the Summer Palace and reached their apogee in 1900–01 at the time of the Boxer War, ranged in particular over four main areas. The first was trade, specifically in opium, which, at first in South-east China and then more generally, reoriented social and productive relations to “transnational marketing systems over which [the Qing] had no influence” (p. 52). The second was high-speed warfare, the lessons of which were indeed not lost on China, which after its initial defeats introduced modern military technology with startling rapidity. The third category was in the realm of translation, as Englishmen learned to deploy the Chinese language as a didactic weapon against China, for instance arguing over the genealogy and meaning of Chinese terms to teach their counterparts what they “actually meant.” The fourth category was sovereignty. The British sought to “make China perfectly equal,” in other words to destroy the sense of superiority China apparently felt over all outsiders, but the equalizing process, not surprisingly, ultimately made China more equal to other victims of British power than to Britain itself.

In my view, the best parts of this extremely interesting book are those on loot and on the “archive state.” The British (and other Westerners) removed vast quantities of treasure from the Summer Palace in 1860 and then from the Forbidden City in 1900 and shared it out in various ways intended to distinguish their acts of plunder from other people’s barbarity. The appearance of possessions special to the emperor on the international art market, and the later fashion for photographs of ordinary Westerners posing on the Imperial throne combined to “desacralize” Qing imperial power. Not only material goods but knowledge were part of this process. After 1860 the British systematically collected information about every possible aspect of China – geography, topology, history, ethnography, religion, “characteristics”, customs, and so on – and created a centralized network of knowledge, reclassified on their own terms, which was so comprehensive that it was akin to actual possession.

The “knowledge” of China thus gathered still informs much foreign understanding of China today, as Hevia shows in an enlightening chapter on the role in the real life world of Fu Manchu and other fictional and imagined conspirators of the 20th century. For me all this struck a chord, for some years ago, around the end of the Cold War, I was interviewed by a journalist who, as it turned out, wanted scholarly affirmation that

historical evidence made it likely that China would soon seek to take over the world. I repeatedly declined to agree to this proposition, with the result that the interview was moved from its intended prime time US airing to after midnight in Hong Kong.

Prodigiously researched, *English Lessons* combines readable theoretical analysis with terrific detail: the image of funerary services for Queen Victoria held in front of the Meridian Gate, earlier the site of countless celebrations of Qing power, is a particularly striking example. There are some lapses, however. Writing on British power in China, the author gets so well inside 19th-century British attitudes that he sometimes, surely inadvertently, portrays China and Chinese people as existing on a wholly different plane and as principally reactive. Also, in noting how the British drew connections between China and such other sites of their imperialism, such as South Africa and India, he omits to mention that so did the Chinese, as recent work by Rebecca Karl has demonstrated (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002). Nor do we hear much about the impact of Chinese overseas migration, which surely affected outsiders' opinions about China and Chinese people. No mention, either, of Regine Thiriez's work on Western photographers of the Summer Palace (Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach, 1998) or Jane E. Elliott's revisionist study of the Boxer War (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2002).

Notwithstanding, no one will be able to think about Britain in China, or China today, in quite the same way as before. By both describing, in much greater detail than has been done to date, such generally known episodes as the looting and burning of the Summer Palace and the 1900 occupation of Beijing, and by adroitly fitting seemingly disparate parts into a coherent whole, Hevia makes an entirely original contribution to the history of British global imperialism and of what Britain was really doing in China in the century before 1949.

JOANNA WALEY-COHEN

*Chinese Reportage: The Aesthetics of Historical Experience.* By CHARLES A. LAUGHLIN. [Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002. 334 pp. £16.95. ISBN: 0822329719.]

From early times, Chinese culture has taken language, literature, history, morality, governance, and cosmology to be shades on a spectrum and not easily separable. Twentieth-century "literary reportage" (*baogaowenxue*), despite some foreign influences in its origins, very much continued this Chinese tradition. Its purpose, in the minds of its creators and readers, was to enter the *sturm und drang* of modern Chinese history – to expose social ills, re-organize society, resist invaders, and so on.

The topic has not been well studied, either in China or the West. Yin-hwa Chou and Thomas Moran have written good dissertations on it,



and T.A. Hsia, Paul Pickowicz and others have published insightfully on related areas. But no one has published the full-length study that the field needs, and it is disappointing that Charles Laughlin's new book also falls short.

Laughlin writes in the fashionable language of contemporary Western academe. This special verbiage is often unclear or unnecessary, and the preoccupation with delivering it prevents the author from getting very deeply into his topic.

Although nearly every page provides examples, let us take page 30, where Laughlin defines "space" and "social space," two key terms in his book. Laughlin writes: "social space is not an empty, limitless void; it is the act of a human community inscribing itself through social activity." I am not sure what it means for a human community to "inscribe itself," but at least I can take from this definition that space is some kind of "act." What kind? Reading on, I see that "the contours of space shape the character of the action." But if space is an act, then it would follow that "the contours of an act shape the character of the action." This seems either nonsense or tautology, so I continue with the same sentence, hoping for resolution, and find "... and vice versa." No help there. Then, as if to sum up, the same sentence ends, after a colon, with "action, like perception, is in a dialectical relationship with the landscape." Can the magical words "dialectical" and "landscape" really swallow up all of the foregoing confusion? Other references to space, later in the book, do not help. On p. 75 we have: "This theatrical structuring of space functions as a medium through which space-time is realized explicitly as a system of signification." On p. 278 space (now written as "spatiality;" is there a difference here?) acquires consciousness, as we learn about "subjective spatiality, the motivated landscapes" of socialist reportage.

Laughlin's work does produce insights, and the reader can hope to see them explored, but then must watch as the ponderous language moves in to blanket and stifle the possibilities. For example, in chapter two we see how reportage on protest movements "dramatizes" history, and in chapter three how reportage on sweatshops "unmasks" reality. Here two different functions of writing are at stake: in one case the surface level is celebrated; in the other, it is ripped off to expose something else. Laughlin sees this interesting difference, but instead of exploring it with more examples or clear analysis, he makes it his task to restate the problem ponderously. He writes: "The widespread unmasking trope of labor reportage problematizes the theatrical perception I spoke of in the previous chapter as a paradigm for the ontology of reportage" (p. 145). This sentence delivers nothing more or less than the original insight, and as such may seem harmless. But it does incur a cost. The cost is in the author's apparent assumption that to re-state the problem in jargon is an intellectual achievement and that therefore his work is done. He leaves the interesting question and turns elsewhere.

At worst, the excursions into puffery insult the very heart of what *baogaowenxue* was all about. For example, the writer Fan Changjiang,



describing poverty in North-western Sichuan in the early 1930s, notices at a roadside:

... half an oil can that could be used as a pot for cooking rice. The hosts were two little girls, each about ten years old, their tattered clothes barely covering their bodies. When asked about their parents, they said they died in the fighting. To eat their fill they rely on that can: when someone passes through, they use the can to fix their meal, and these two poor girls might get to eat the leftovers. (p. 68)

What did Fan Changjiang feel here? What do *you* feel? What Laughlin finds is that Fan “creates a hermeneutic of observation by which the landscapes that surround him become overdetermined signs” (p. 72). This, I am sorry, is too much. There is no such thing as a “hermeneutic of observation.” It is an empty phrase. It is nothing compared to that oil can.

The artistically graceful and the artistically execrable get the same treatment in Professor Laughlin’s homogenizing jargon. He quotes from Wen Junquan and Shan Fu’s (misreading as Dan Fu’s) *Li Jinzhi: A Woman Technician in the Seamless Pipe Factory*:

She will use her own hands, her own labor and knowledge to produce large numbers of seamless steel pipes for her country. (p. 253)

As if deadpan, Laughlin comments that “she is utilizing nature in the process of production without taking away from its ultimate ontological priority in her consciousness.”

Laughlin’s “theoretical” language is entirely Western-based; he does not look into Chinese theories of literature. Since much of his theory – Marxism, post-colonialism – claims to speak for the colonized or “subaltern,” it is sharply ironic that the thoughts and sufferings of the subaltern are precisely what get pushed aside in order to make room for the theory. Modish anti-hegemonism turns out to be the latest Western hegemonism. Laughlin is so concerned about how “we” are doing our observing that he does not dig very deeply into China and makes some very basic mistakes.

On prisons, for example, he quotes Michel Foucault writing about “the isolation of persons at the bottom of the hierarchy” who are “watched by their superiors but cannot easily interact with one another” (pp. 143–44). This may be a fair summary of the European prisons that Foucault observed, but the considerable literature we now have on Chinese prison life paints a generally different picture: while isolation under surveillance by guards is sometimes used, the common pattern in China has been to organize prisoners to watch one another – nearly the opposite of what Foucault describes. Elsewhere Laughlin discusses Yan’an-era depictions of Mao Zedong in tattered clothing, accepting shabby haircuts, and treating his barber as an equal such that “Mao’s exemplary quality is actually stressed by his studied avoidance of vanity” (p. 242). Laughlin notes that “many other writers” who knew Mao at the time concur. These other writers apparently do not include Mao’s physician Li Zhisui, whose

famous memoirs, as it happens, go into detail specifically on Mao's barber. Li tells a very different story of how Mao devised an elaborate scheme to blackmail his barber precisely so that he could hold life-and-death power over the only man authorized to hold a razor to his own throat. To write about Chinese reportage on Yan'an having read Foucault, Bakhtin, Jameson, Derrida, and others, but not Li Zhisui, is unfortunate. Even on Laughlin's his chosen topic of reportage, he makes some puzzling mistakes. The reportage master Liu Binyan becomes "samizdat-style" (p. 263), although Liu never published samizdat, or wanted to. He prided himself on using the official media.

Laughlin has chosen a good topic, translates well, and – to be fair – is not the only writer who lets language fads divert his attention from deeper questions. For now, though, the field still needs that good book on Chinese reportage.

PERRY LINK