

BOOK REVIEWS

The End of Concern: Maoist China, Activism and Asian Studies

By Fabio Lanza. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2017. Pp. 280. ISBN 10: 0822369478; ISBN 13: 978-0822369479.

Aileen S. P. Baviera

University of the Philippines

As a budding China scholar in the late 1980s, I came across the journal *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* (BCAS) in one of the libraries at the University of the Philippines. I used some of the materials I found in it for my Master's thesis on China's post-Mao rural reform program, which had just started in the early 1980s. I gave no thought to the title of the journal, nor paid particular attention to where it stood in the ideological spectrum.

Many years later, in the late 1990s, I met Edward Friedman of the University of Wisconsin, whose name appears on page 1 of chapter 1 of Fabio Lanza's book, at a dinner on the sidelines of a conference held in Beijing. What to him would likely be a most forgettable encounter was a memorable one for me. Trying to strike up conversation among strangers, I started speaking about my work at the time, which involved promoting cooperation between development organizations in the Philippines and China. Friedman, who by then had spent far, far many more years as a China researcher than I, and who was actually immersed at that time in studying rural villages, took one look at my face (I am sure I was wearing red lipstick at the time) and wryly said, "You know, the Chinese are very conservative people." Full stop. I figured what he meant was that one simply doesn't wear red lipstick and expect to understand the real China, as if these were two different worlds.

Aileen S. P. Baviera (1959–2020)

It was with great sadness that the editors learned of the sudden and untimely death of Aileen S. P. Baviera due to severe pneumonia caused by COVID-19, on 21 March 2020, in the process of the production of this issue.

With the publication of this review, we wish to celebrate Baviera's achievements as a leading scholar in the Philippines in the fields of China studies and security studies.

As a tough defender of the position of the Philippines in the maritime dispute over the last decade, all major Philippine newspapers and television networks reported the tragic death of the "China watcher for forty years" as a "tremendous national loss." However, it is emphasized that tributes also did come from China. Baviera had established friendship with Chinese researchers, too - like those of Fudan University - through collegial frank talks even during the years of the disputes. To her, "There is the State, and there is the 1.4 billion thinking, breathing, living people" in China. No doubt, such a perspective was nurtured by her experience in both Beijing and in the countryside of China in the early 1980s as a student. She then quickly realized the "shallowness of political propaganda ... Mao's as much as Marcos's."

Baviera was a dear friend of the community of scholars in Japan, too. She was a member of two research projects hosted by the faculty members of the University of Tokyo. Eventually, she contributed an article to a Japanese edited volume, "China Impact: Threat Perception in the Asia-Pacific Region" (Shigeto Sonoda 園田 茂人 and David Goodman eds., *China Impakuto: Kinrin kara mita "Taitō" to "Kyōi" チャイナ・インパクト: 近隣からみた「台頭」と「脅威」*, University of Tokyo Press, 2018).

Baviera studied at the University of the Philippines and Beijing University, and was a Fellow at the Japan Institute of International Affairs. She was a professor at the University of the Philippines and Dean of its Asian Center from 2003 to 2009. She was also the editor-in-chief of *Asian Politics and Policy*; the founding president and CEO of the think-tank Asia Pacific Pathways to Progress Foundation; a co-founder and the ex-president of the Philippine Association for Chinese Studies. Her publications include *Regional Security in East Asia: Challenges to Cooperation and Community Building* (2008) and *Comprehensive Engagement: Strategic Issues in Philippine-China Relations* (2000).

Michiyo Yoneno-Reyes

Review Editor

© Cambridge University Press 2020

The intersection of two different worlds is what this book, *The End of Concern: Maoist China, Activism and Asian Studies*, is all about. There is the world of theory and the world of practice, the world of scholars and the world of activists. It is also about the manner by which political transformations in Asia were shaking the foundations of thinking in the West.

I begin this book review on this personal note, because this is exactly the tone Fabio Lanza uses as he traces the development of China studies in the United States (with some references to France), by examining the fate of the journal BCAS and the intellectual journeys of the people behind it. These were the scholar-activists who founded the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars (CCAS) during the tumultuous sixties, as the American war in Vietnam raged and the Cultural Revolution was unfolding in China. They were mostly advanced graduate students and young faculty members in various institutions. Eventually, some of their intellectual journeys ended abruptly; some chose to become only scholars; a few remained activists; but against the backdrop of America's involvement in the Cold War and hot wars in Asia, all found that it was difficult to be both.

Lanza's tone is personal, as he himself reflects deeply on his subjects and their experiences, yet his book is a story of how the vicissitudes of international politics intertwine with academic life. He explains his purpose: "... I examine the case of CCAS to shed some light on a larger moment of transition in Cold War international politics, the history of Asian studies in the United States and the connections between scholarship and activism" (p. 4).

He writes that what was happening in China and in other parts of Asia created a need "for thinking alternative political praxes" (p. 43), and that revolutionary China "came to constitute a foundation for a transnational discourse of intellectual and political change" (p. 7). For Friedman, writing in 1974 and quoted by Lanza: "The experience and creations of some 700 million Chinese this century provides a basis for asking and probing the most pressing human questions" (p. 36).

The Cultural Revolution was a watershed for these young American scholars because of what it represented for their careers as well as their political commitment. It was the moment in time in China when intellectuals lost "their privileged access to theory and pedagogy." After all, Maoism during the Cultural Revolution venerated the role of workers and "destroyed the place of the educator" (p. 73); so what then was to become of these radical American intellectuals who were not only keen observers of China but politically invested ones?

Using the frames of CCAS members (Ed Friedman, Mark Selden, James Peck, Richard Pfeffer, Sandra Sturdevant, Paul Pickowicz, and Orville Schell are among those prominently mentioned in the book), the author also provides a critique of the contributions of the most influential "liberal scholars" (John K. Fairbank, Ezra Vogel, Chalmers Johnson, and Lucien Pye among others) and of modernization theory (pp. 47–59). Lanza writes of how Area Studies was at the outset shaped by government intervention in light of US strategic interest in Vietnam (p. 24), and how the McCarthy purges led to self-censorship by scholars (p. 13). He writes of the politics and ideology behind university grants, challenging the assumptions of objectivity and neutrality of the academe, and the viability of value-free academic pursuits.

Chapter 3 is particularly interesting and deeply resonant, although lengthier and peppered with more detail than perhaps is necessary. It recalls the impact of the first actual visits to China by CCAS members. The psychological effect on various individuals ranged from deep disillusionment (how poor and backward China was compared to the United States!), to enlightenment (one must stop judging China from the frame of one's own experience as Americans, but learn to see the Chinese based on what is relevant to them). The China that had seemed so attractive when it was distant and closed was not so, once they had reached its soil. Moreover, China was in the midst of a policy shift towards the US (against the Soviet Union, and at the expense of Vietnam) at the time of these visits, thus adding to a sense that the China they had believed in as anti-war, anti-imperialist activists was betraying their principles, and this caused sharp divisions among the scholars.

Lanza also provides interesting discussion of the dilemma of "concerned scholars" during visits to China just prior to the normalization of diplomatic ties, where their objective of seeking greater understanding and conducting investigations became conflated with the Chinese hosts' expectations that they were there as

“friends,” more than as scholars. This again fueled internal debates about what their role was – between understanding and friendship – at this particular juncture in Sino-American relations.

The CCAS ultimately disbanded in 1979, and Lanza explains the disagreements and contradictions that led to this outcome. The *Bulletin*, which had devoted much attention to publishing on the Vietnam War and the Cultural Revolution, no longer had much reason to do so. The Deng era, in particular, represented a sharp departure from Maoist policies that was difficult to explain, let alone accept, in the views of many of the concerned scholars. Like Deng – many opted for a pragmatic turn and decided to publish in more traditional journals and even secure cushy places in academic institutions. Some were reportedly purged by universities that had no love for leftists and Marxists (pp. 170–71).

Fabio Lanza gives us clear insight into the driving forces and tensions behind the development of China studies in the United States during the Cold War, by focusing on a particular intellectual movement and a political perspective that was critical of the role being played by the United States government. That critical perspective lived on after CCAS disbanded, through the *Bulletin* which was renamed *Critical Asian Studies*, albeit it was no longer China-centered.

China itself is today nearly unrecognizable from the revolutionary experiment that had first intrigued and inspired the young scholars of CCAS in the sixties and the seventies. China studies in the United States in the post-Cold War period has become an enormous industry representing a wide range of perspectives. But Sino-American relations continues to stand at the nexus of international politics – perhaps more so than ever before.

To some extent, relations even appear to have moved full circle. There is talk of a new Cold War emerging, with the government under Donald Trump having officially labelled China a peer strategic competitor of the United States. With the resurgence of geopolitical rivalry between the two, and China having risen to great power status on the wings of Mao’s and Deng’s legacies but now spurred by the bold ambitions of Xi Jinping, China experts in the United States could once again be called upon to perform a vital role.

The current generation will likely face challenges similar to those faced by their predecessors – to explain what is happening in China both in its own terms as well as to draw implications for China’s relations with the rest of the world, to take a political stand, to scrutinize their own government’s actions, to translate analysis into activism. The stakes are higher than before, should China scholars in the United States (but as a matter of fact, in many other places in the world) not get it right this time.

Rather than simply recording an episode in American intellectual history, Fabio Lanza’s book – intentionally or otherwise – is relevant.

doi:10.1017/S1479591420000029

India, China, and the World: A Connected History

By Tansen Sen. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017. Pp. 541. ISBN 10: 1442220910; ISBN 13: 978-1538111727.

John Kieschnick

Stanford University, Email: John.Kieschnick@stanford.edu

Running just beneath the surface of Tansen Sen’s most recent contribution to the study of Indian–Chinese interactions is a characterization of the history of the relationship that Sen finds deeply unsatisfying. According to this cheerful narrative propagated in both China and India, roughly two thousand years of Chinese–Indian relations are comprised of a dialog of peaceful interaction between two great civilizations divided into three periods: the first, religious exchange sparked by the