

investigate the CCP's legal definition of concubinage as bigamy. Unlike the previous legal practices that acquiesced in the concubine's social identity as a minor wife, the CCP law, represented by the 1950 Marriage Law, considered concubinage as de facto marriage. Chapter nine documents how the CCP employed a case-to-case avenue distinct from the KMT formalist approach to deal with specific cases on concubinage.

Although this book is characterized by an accumulation of diverse sources, ranging from legal archives and official records to popular periodicals and newspaper reports, these materials are treated rather loosely and at times simplistically. When drawing on the local case records, for instance, Tran devotes little attention to differences between the court cases in bigger cities, such as Beijing and Shanghai, and those in the less developed areas, such as some counties in Yunnan and Sichuan provinces that appeared in the text. Inattention to the regional differences might leave intact the complexities and inequalities in the overall picture of the legal developments of concubinage. The analysis also tends to be repetitive and oversimplified. Although the author intends to transcend the "1949 divide," her analysis, however, constantly subjects the early Republican and KMT law to the stark contrast with the CCP law – with the result that the reader is tempted to think of the CCP law as the most effective and successful one in the elimination of concubinage. Likewise, this book shows little attempt to engage with the on-going scholarship on concubinage and sociocultural changes in the historical periods prior to the 20th century, such as the studies by Keith MacMahon and Matthew Sommer, although the author does devote a passing mention to their work in places. These criticisms notwithstanding, by tracing the transitions and transformations of the legal treatment of concubinage in the first half of the twentieth century, Tran's book enriches our understanding of gender and legal history and culture in China and will be a useful reader for those who are interested in these fields.

ZHANG YUN  
[hmsophie@ust.hk](mailto:hmsophie@ust.hk)

*“Das Fremde im eigenen Lande”*: Zur Historiographie des Christentums in China von Liang Qichao (1873–1929) bis Zhang Kaiyuan (geb. 1926)

DIRK KUHLMANN

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Dirk Kuhlmann's book is based on his dissertation of the same title, submitted to the University of Trier in 2011; in fact it may well be a verbatim version of the original dissertation. As the title suggests, the book is written in German and applies a very traditional Sinological methodology of text analysis; the old-school impression is further underscored by a stringent structure and numbering of chapters required in German academic writing.

The author sets out to present the historiography of Christianity in China from Liang Qichao to Zhang Kaiyuan. His main argument is that there are strong continuities between the approaches during the Republican period and the writings in the 1980s. He does so through detailed readings of selected texts and by presenting a summary of these readings in chronological form. The work is therefore more descriptive than analytical in its approach.

The book consists of seven chapters, but chapter four presents the actual findings of the textual analyses and thus constitutes the main body of the book. Chapter one is an introduction explaining the relevance of the topic, including a short literature review. Chapter two presents an overview of the history of the Christian mission in China, while chapter three presents the political, ideological and ecclesiastic context. This chapter is subdivided into three sections on the discourses on modernization, culture and identity; the contextual parameters of Christianity's perception in China; and theoretical debates on the purpose of historiography. Each of these are treated separately and in chronological order, i.e. rather than looking at all three aspects in the period of the Republic, for example, the reader finds him/herself moving through the 20th century over and over again. This pattern is repeated in chapter four, when different patterns of discourse in the 1980s – after an all-too-short dispatch of the Republican period – are each analysed through the same or remarkably similar categories, resulting in the same “*déjà vu*” effect the reader experiences in chapter three. Chapter five is a short 16 pages of conclusions, followed by an appendix (chapter six) and a bibliography (chapter seven).

In chapter four the author identifies three patterns of discourse in relation to Chinese historiography of Christianity; these are “cultural aggression,” “modernization” and “cultural exchange.” Under each of these headings, detailed summaries and excerpts of the author's selected Chinese historiographers' writings are presented. While Kuhlmann can identify all three discourse patterns over the time period under investigation, one of his main conclusions is that discourses on “cultural exchange” have now superseded discourses on “cultural aggression” in Chinese historiographical sources on Christianity. From this he draws the further conclusion that this tendency towards an accommodating perspective will continue henceforth. This seems entirely valid, but somewhat anti-climactic; this is not ground-breaking news.

Detailed and rigorous in its treatment of the individual texts, the book reads a bit like one extended literature review, mostly missing the opportunity to draw things together, to make cross-references and show more explicitly and immediately (i.e. in the same chapter or section) the continuities between Republican times and the contemporary, which the author argues. As a result of the rigid structure that was adopted, the findings are compartmentalized rather than joined up and fail to draw in the reader.

Indeed this reviewer kept wondering who the intended audience of this book was, and even whether any thought was given to this prior to publication. Much in this book will be known, or at least not come as a surprise, to the researchers of Chinese Christianity. Many of those interested in the fine detail of any individual Chinese intellectual's evaluation of Christianity will be able to go to the original source rather than having to rely on Kuhlmann's summaries. For the non-specialist audience, however, this book will pose a formidable challenge, as in its structure and presentation it makes little concession to the reader intent on finding information or drawing links and wider conclusions.

As it stands, the intended audience appears to have been the academic assessors, who judge academic rigour, structure and format as much as they will judge the findings. After the many years of hard labour that must have gone into this work, which justifiably resulted in the award of a doctorate, the author could have reached a far wider audience by condensing his actual findings into an article.

GERDA WIELANDER  
[g.wielander@westminster.ac.uk](mailto:g.wielander@westminster.ac.uk)