

BOOK REVIEWS

Upriver Journeys: Diaspora and Empire in Southern China, 1570–1850. By STEVEN B. MILES.
Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2017. Cloth. \$ 49.95.

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Steven Miles' *Upriver Journeys* makes a number of important contributions. Miles examines the migration over the late Ming and Qing dynasties of lowland Cantonese up the West River basin (*Xijiang*) that descends from the mountains of Guizhou, Yunnan, and northern Vietnam through Guangxi and western Guangdong to the Pearl River delta. In so doing, Miles argues that Cantonese migrants' upriver journeys played a crucial role in consolidating imperial control along this rugged frontier. After a series of Ming military campaigns against the indigenous peoples during the 1570s, migrant Cantonese officials, students, merchants, and their families flowed upriver in increasing numbers to pursue diverse opportunities. In the process, they repeatedly helped to resettle this river basin, displaced or intermixed with its indigenous inhabitants, and incorporated the West River's resources and commerce into their own downriver networks. As a result, in Miles' argument, upriver Cantonese movements benefited both the migrants and state alike. Their movements allowed the Ming and Qing states to carve out new counties and assert direct rule over an increasing swath of the "Zomia" highlands, while positioning migrants themselves to establish commercial dominance over a hinterland from which they extracted valuable stores of lumber, rice, salt, and copper.

Drawing on a stupendous amount of research in the genealogies of the Pearl River delta, provincial and county gazetteers, stele inscriptions, and imperial memorials, Miles does not just establish that Cantonese circulations were common or important, particularly in Guangxi. He also provides a rare bridge between the historiography of late imperial China and the scholarship of overseas Chinese migration. As framed in the book's title, this link centers on Miles' innovative interlinkage of the concepts of diaspora and empire. In Miles' view, scholars of diverse Asian empires have long emphasized the ways in which expansionary states constrained mobilities and settled peoples in order to register, measure, and tax them more effectively. In contrast, Miles demonstrates that the Ming and Qing states also relied on mobile circulations to extend the state's power and integrate new regions into the imperial core. This is an important contribution that dovetails with arguments by scholars such as Madeline Hsu, Arissa Oh, and Paul Kramer, who have shown how the twentieth-century United States also carefully screened and sponsored transpacific mobilities in order to extend US power into Asia.

Simultaneously, Miles argues that these upriver journeys formed an inland or riverine diaspora that preceded and set conditions for the overseas diaspora. These arguments engage with scholarship on overseas migration most heavily in Chapter 4, which examines the structures of migrant families. Dialoguing with scholars such as Philip Kuhn and again Madeline Hsu, Miles effectively frames these upriver journeys as part of a Cantonese strategy of splitting families. Predominantly male family members would go upriver in order to assume official posts, sit for imperial exams, or pursue commercial opportunities, without intending to "leave" the family per se. Resonant with overseas migrant practices, they predominantly intended to sojourn and hoped to return to the Pearl River delta with enhanced wealth or social position. This strategy of course did not always

play out. Methodically tracking individuals and families across long distances, name changes, and generations, Miles walks us through how individual Cantonese migrants communicated with home, sent for Cantonese wives or selected indigenous concubines, managed the ensuing offspring, and arranged for their eventual return to the Pearl River delta whether in life or death. By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, it was a mark of prestige in the upriver highlands to claim Cantonese descent and so many upriver families attempted to reconnect with their downriver kin.

Outside of Chapter 4, however, the study's engagement with the scholarship of overseas migration is often brief. For example, Chapter 2 focuses on migrant students who went upriver to sit for the imperial examinations in order to improve their chances of success in less competitive districts. This practice was controversial and potentially illegal. As a result, Miles explains that these migrant students often sought out guarantors in these adopted communities to vouch for their belonging and legal right to take the examination there. Miles only states: "This practice resonates with that of 'paper sons,' used to subvert immigration restrictions in North America" (102). Such interesting comparisons beg for more substantial analysis, most especially for the potential insight into how radically different state formations police movement and adjudicate belonging. Similarly, Miles is attentive to Cantonese institution-building throughout the West River in order to mark their presence and care for fellow migrants through temples and *huiguan*. Yet, there is little direct engagement with the extensive scholarship on the contemporaneous institution-building of fellow Cantonese and Fujianese in Southeast Asia. A comparative analysis between the Cantonese *huiguan* in Guangxi and those in the colonial port-cities would have been fascinating. Yet, when analyzing these institutions, Miles' historical skill still shines through via his close attention to not only who donated to temples and *huiguan*, but also who did not.

My more substantial questions center around several choices of terminology and language. Throughout the early chapters, a constant backdrop is the killing and displacement of thousands of Yao, Miao, Zhuang, and other indigenous peoples. Miles is appropriately skeptical of Ming-Qing officials' characterizations of these "barbarians" and does not reproduce their biases. Yet, he also at first avoids the terms "genocide" and "colonialism." I imagine many readers will note these terms' absence, so their sudden appearance (without comment) on pages 125 and 141 respectively is striking. The burying of these powerful terms deep within the text left me unsure whether the author's view evolved over the course of writing or whether another matter was at work. Using these terms shifts how we frame this history, however, from emphasizing circulations of Cantonese as "imperial intermediaries" to potentially foregrounding state-sponsored ethnic cleansing.

In tandem, Miles or the press has chosen to exclude the Cantonese dialect from this study almost in its entirety. By my count, only one Cantonese phrase appears in the entire book, on page 206. The reference "(Cant. *baahk wa*)" is more confusing than helpful, as 白話 has divergent meanings in Mandarin and Cantonese. More importantly, this belated dash of Cantonese is jarring by reminding readers that this study focuses exclusively on one dialect group while removing that dialect. Given Miles' evident range in Chinese and acknowledgement that Mandarin was rarely spoken by this era's West River inhabitants, this choice merits at least some explanation. For example, most of the place names in *Upriver Journeys* would have been said very differently than is rendered here (Wuzhou vs. Ng-zau). Most of the individuals too would have pronounced their own names differently than is printed here. This issue is larger than this study and urges a broader re-consideration of the field's best practices. By filtering the ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversities of imperial China through the prism of standardized modern Mandarin, do we purchase convenience at the cost of naturalizing teleological assumptions about Chinese history? Just as the New Qing historians have incorporated increased Manchu sources and transliterations, I suspect the increased use of Cantonese here may well have served the author's larger arguments by underscoring how diverse, mobile peoples transformed this region and incorporated it into what became the Chinese nation-state.

These questions do not diminish Miles' numerous contributions, however. The book's research is impressive, while its innovative analysis provides a long absent bridge between fields. It should be read by all scholars of Chinese migration, as well as scholars of other Ming and Qing borderlands, particularly those that received extensive Han in-migration such as Taiwan and Manchuria. *Upriver Journeys* recovers an important set of marginalized histories and underscores how imperial-states both block and channel human mobilities in order to achieve their ends.

American Grand Strategy and East Asian Security in the Twenty-First Century. By DAVID KANG.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. 224 pp. \$89.99 (cloth).

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How safe is East Asia? What does East Asian security imply about America's grand strategy in the region? In the early 1990s, many international relations scholars asserted that Asia was becoming ripe for rivalry. Most notably, Aaron Friedberg anticipated that East Asian countries would engage in an arms race, and that "Asia will not lack for crises" ("Ripe for Rivalry: Prospects for Peace in a Multipolar Asia," *International Security*, 18 (3), 1993, 31). This pessimistic view has recently been contested, and in this book David Kang argues that most of East Asia is safer than previously predicted. By extension, Kang stresses that with East Asia's increasing prosperity and peace, the American grand strategy of building on diplomacy, economics, and regional integration, will provide a more effective solution to the region's problems than a military one.

Kang uses bargaining theory and the distinction between *cheap talk* and *costly signals* to evaluate how East Asian countries are responding to one another and to the rise of China; the logic implied throughout the book is that a country communicates its strategic resolve—how much it cares about an issue—via costly signals. Focusing on military expenditure (measured by the ratio of defense expenditures to GDP) as the means of costly signaling, Kang argues that East Asia is safe because countries in the region are neither participating in the arms race nor turning to allies to counterbalance each other. Except for the Korean Peninsula, he claims that "none of the other East Asian countries are using costly signals or preparing for war in dealing with each other and China" (p. 11). This claim is based on his idea that "a nation's military expenditures would directly respond to its external security environment" (p. 21)—i.e., its threat perception.

The central virtue of this book is that it contributes to the current debate over East Asian security with strong empirical efforts to provide the missing piece in the explanatory jigsaw. Specifically, Kang presents ample evidence that East Asian countries are reluctant to risk war with China: no East Asian country is spending heavily on its military, despite increased Chinese power projection; all have close relations with China, and none are pursuing allies to counterbalance China; and they are disinclined to get involved in Chinese-US disputes. All this evidence is well-grounded in his case studies and descriptive statistics, providing a relevant context for understanding contemporary relations among East Asian countries.

Another notable aspect of this book is its position against several established theoretical frameworks associated with the rise of China and East Asian security. To demonstrate that East Asia is secure while its regional military spending has tapered despite China's rapid rise, Kang juxtaposes his argument against alternative explanations based on regional hegemonic power, spiral dynamics, and balance-of-power mechanisms: namely, that China's rise has escalated tensions in the regional and global order, provoking the security dilemma and counterbalancing behavior. Undoubtedly,