the expansive empire, and the nation that followed it, cohered" (7). This argument accounts for the recurrence of imperial language throughout the book: "the consolidation of state control on the frontier" (30), "the imperial consolidation of the frontier" (33–34), the "conversion" of *tusi* (54, 93), and the argument that "migrant students brought the West River frontier more firmly within the empire" (107). In the conclusion, Miles restates the case: "the Cantonese diaspora and the Ming and Qing empires together expanded into the frontier defined by the middle and upper West river basin." (240) Miles artfully weaves diaspora, empire, and frontier together, but as an explanation of the role played by the Cantonese diaspora in Qing expansion, the argument often reads like an imperial echo.

As a study of the intersection between Qing imperial ambitions and Cantonese diasporic practices, this book demonstrates why accounts of imperial expansion portrayed that imperial expansion as successful and how this might contribute to claims of national coherence. Miles has written an excellent study based on copious and thoughtful research, and he displays a lucid understanding of this fascinating "riverscape." (23) Readers will find themselves enriched, enlivened, and inspired by both the richly detailed narrative that Miles fashions as well as the questions and avenues for future research that this book calls forth.

Navigating Semi-Colonialism: Shipping, Sovereignty, and Nation-Building in China, 1860–1937. By Anne Reinhardt. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2018. 396 pp $49.95 (cloth).

Reviewed by Jenny Huangfu Day, Skidmore College (jhuangfu@skidmore.edu)
doi:10.1017/jch.2018.37

Navigating Semi-Colonialism uses the steamship and steam navigation in Chinese waters to reconsider China's experience with imperialism from the late Qing to the eve of the War with Japan. Theoretically rigorous and richly empirical, the study makes new use of the term "semi-colonialism" by considering both sides of the hyphen—"semi" (which emphasizes the specificity of China's experience) and "colonial" (which highlights continuity and relation to global processes)—with equal emphasis. Compared with existing studies on steam shipping (which have generally considered it within the framework of industrialization), Reinhardt chose steam navigation because it was both concrete and abstract, an "element of the treaty system that bridged its abstractions and material realities" (2). The reader will encounter all the familiar landmark events in modern China (treaties, movements, and wars) in a refreshingly new light—by considering the specific and local dynamics experienced from the perspective of steam navigation.

Structured chronologically, the book is divided in roughly two parts: chapters 1–4 focus on the political economy and the social space of shipping in the late Qing and

the early years of the Republic; chapters 5–7 bring the narrative up from the early republican period through 1937. Steam shipping is made intelligible by perspectives from political, diplomatic, business, cultural, and social history supported by company archives, shipping newspapers, and journals, and diplomatic records assembled from Chinese, English, and Japanese sources. Another notable feature is a series of short comparative reflections, embedded in the chapter conclusions, fleshing out the specificity of China's experience and its similarities with steam navigation in colonial India.

Chapter 1 charts the development of the steam transport network between 1860 and 1911, and shows how the Qing dynasty worked with a margin of sovereignty within the treaty system to limit, restrain, and temper the pernicious effects of foreign navigation expansion. By examining two sets of concurrent negotiations (between the Qing's Zongli yamen and the British diplomats in Beijing on the one hand, and between the British diplomats and the so-called Old China Hands, on the other), this chapter contends that the Qing's resistance to steam transport was not due to an instinctive fear of modern technology or moral concerns (as it was so often portrayed by the Old China Hands or the foreign press), but should be seen instead as reasoned steps taken to defend the dynasty's legitimate interests. In her discussion of the gradual opening of the inland transport network, Reinhardt also invites us to rethink the treaty ports not only as foreign enclaves, but as a transport network experiencing social and economic transformations due to fluctuations in demands for shipping.

The evolution of the steam business between 1860 and 1913 is the main subject of chapters 2 and 3 (divided at 1882, the year when the Shipping Conference was formally established). In contrast to the earlier "cosmopolitan model" where Chinese merchants freely invested in foreign shipping companies (but lacked representation), from 1872 to 1895 the field was dominated by the "Three Companies" whose ships' flags aligned with their sources of capital: British-owned China Navigation Company, the Indo-China Steam Navigation Company, and the Qing's China Merchants Steam Navigation Company. Set against the backdrop of the British "communication revolution" of the 1870s and a growing Qing interest in the steam trade from the mid-1860s, this chapter uses company archives to uncover the challenges faced and choices made by the three companies to merge, collaborate, and compete within the conference framework.

The Shipping Conference highlights what Reinhardt calls the "paradoxes of semi-colonial collaboration" (94). A form of cartel initially developed by the British, the conference aimed at standardizing the field, limiting competition, and increasing the stability of earnings for the Three Companies. It pre-divided trade among participants based on the tonnage, efficiency, and size of their fleet, upon which profit was redistributed at the end of the season. While existing studies have generally seen the China Merchants Company's joining the conference as favoring short-term interests at the expense of national development, Reinhardt argues that its effects were not all negative, considering the challenges faced by the China Merchants Company (intense competition, uncertainty within the company's management, bureaucratic exploitation, and the eventual withdrawal of the dynasty's support). Even as the conference aided Britain's expansion, it also ensured the survival of the beleaguered Chinese Merchants Company, its lifespan outlasting the dynasty itself.

The complex effects on the shipping industry of the Qing's collapse and the emergence of the new Republic is the subject of chapter 5. Under the banner of "shipping rights recovery," a new generation of Chinese businessmen aligned the interest of their firms with China's sovereignty in inland shipping. Taking full advantage of the temporary retreat of the powers during WWI and riding on the tide of anti-imperialist boycotts, these new shipping firms mounted a significant challenge to the domination of the conference companies. Reinhardt adopts the category "national capitalists" (a term often used willy-nilly as a political classification after 1949 and treated with suspicion in English-language scholarship), to describe owners of these newer firms. She argues that the term usefully captures "the inextricable link between Chinese shipping interests and nationalist activity" (p. 213). Three new shipping companies, the Dada, the Sambei/Hong'an, and the Minsheng companies developed along similar lines: by contributing to the national economy from the hinterland while challenging foreign domination in Chinese inland shipping.

Two parallel developments in the "Nanjing Decade" are the subject of chapter 6, which provides a close comparison between the attempts by the Nanjing government and Chongqing militarist government (under Liu Xiang) at bolstering Chinese-flag shipping against foreign domination between 1927 and 1937. On the national level, shipping rights recovery was incorporated into Jiang Jieshi's sweeping state-led project to achieve tariff autonomy and revise unequal treaties, but its progress was stalled due to foreign resistance. After 1933, Jiang's effort was further undermined by the alienating effects of the Nanjing government's intrusive demands upon private shipping firms. In contrast, Liu Xiang's Chongqing-based Navigation Bureau achieved notable success because he faced challenges of a smaller and more localized scale and therefore could assert state intervention much more effectively. It also helped that the militarist regime Liu headed had few qualms about using boycotts to resist Japanese pressure.

Complementary to the politics and business of shipping reviewed above, in chapters 4 and 7 Reinhardt's versatility as a cultural and social historian of colonialism comes to the fore. These two chapters tackle the social space of the steamship in 1860–1925 and 1925–1937 respectively. Lucidly written and beautifully illustrated, this pair of chapters will make a welcome addition into an undergraduate syllabus on modern China or colonialism in Asia. Adopting Louis Hunter's idea of the steamship as a "world in miniature" and Michel Foucault's idea of ships as a "heterotopias," chapter 4 treats the steamship as a social space that both confirmed racial and class hierarchies of the colonial world and threatened to disrupt them. Here as elsewhere in the book, this regime of racial inequality is shown to be a product of multiple mechanisms and sources of agency, thus defying a simple diagnosis or assignment of moral failures. Nonetheless, the blatant racial inequality on steamships engendered a powerful nationalism, setting off a cascade of national and regional efforts aimed at reforming the ship's social space (chapter 7). From the perspectives of the social space of shipping, the nationalist government and Liu Xiang's regime in the Upper Yangzi can be considered progressive, even enlightened, forces dismantling colonialism and instilling modern values and civic duties to both the crews and passengers.

In light of the nuanced approach taken in the seven main chapters, I cannot help but find the conclusion, a short survey of the field from 1937 to the present, a bit hasty and over general. The attempt at sketching out how steam shipping was "decolonized"

during the War of Resistance, the Civil War, and the PRC is laudable, and there might well have been no ideal solution to increasing pressure from publishers to demonstrate the contemporary relevance of a scholarly study. Nevertheless, given how successful the book has been in unpacking the term "semi-colonialism," the conclusion runs the risk of oversimplifying the process of decolonization. I would like to see more about how Reinhardt's analysis opens up new ways to reconsider the war and the early PRC period. Concluding the narrative at a point in the past should not be seen as a shortcoming for a historical study, especially one which has already accomplished so much.

Fact in Fiction: 1920s China and Ba Jin's Family. By Kristin Stapleton. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016. ix + 280 pp. $25.95 (paper).

Reviewed by David Strand, Dickinson College (strand@dickinson.edu)
doi:10.1017/jch.2018.31

I would wager that most historians of modern China have taught their basic course on the subject at some point with Ba Jin's novel *Family* as an assigned text. The novel offers not only a vivid, cinematic picture of post-imperial China but, as importantly, it documents the inner lives of Chinese caught up in the strange mix of change and continuity that marked the era.

With Stapleton's *Fact in Fiction* we have an opportunity to enter into the social and political landscape of 1920s Chengdu with the kind of completeness and grasp of nuance difficult to achieve unaided by most readers of Ba Jin's *Turbulent Stream* (the trilogy *Family* opens). From a literary studies point of view, we can more readily appreciate the novelist's art in altering and transforming facts on the ground to suit his purposes as a writer.

As Stapleton points out, the imaginative power of *Family*, which makes the work so important and useful for teaching, also may tempt a reader or instructor to take shortcuts past other interesting people, places, and events that define the 1920s. Stapleton adds the eye and the voice of the social historian to Ba Jin's in order to provide a clearer and more complete view of what is fact and what is fiction, or, as Stapleton succinctly puts it, the "facts in the fiction." As Stapleton points out, Ba Jin succeeds as a novelist in part because of his empathetic understanding of people and events. Stapleton helps us appreciate the deeper truths in Ba Jin's fiction by showing us more clearly and up-close the raw materials and raw feelings the novelist chose to work with.

Her reading of the period and the novels at times strikes a critical tone. She provocatively suggests that offering Ba Jin's writings as a complete statement of historical fact would be rather like taking *Gone with the Wind* as the true and complete story of the American Civil War. Progress in the social history of modern China, an effort Stapleton has helped lead, makes a more balanced presentation possible, in which not all Confucian scholars were reactionary, not all women were either "feudal" or "new" and not all educated young people sought to break free of family ties. Stapleton notes that other writers,