

have pursued different strategies in alleviating poverty and protecting the environment, or to place the achievements in a global perspective. Wang Xiaoyi makes a commendable effort to critique “disparities” resulting from different development paths, and Li Zhou tackles distortions to factor pricing and the contemptuous attitudes of elites towards the “common people,” but overall these chapters are long on polemic, short on references. Definitions of opaque terms such as “ecological infrastructure” and “poverty incidence” are neither spelt out, nor critiqued. Comical statistics are presented without comment. My favourite was the transformation that occurred in Ningxia between 2000 and 2004, where the “poverty incidence” dropped from 14.21 per cent to 1.56 per cent (p. 233).

In the strongest chapter of the volume, Ma Jun explains how the development of hydropower in western China, far from being a boon to the environment, attracts energy-intensive industries such as aluminium smelters and yellow phosphate plants, and results in the construction of more coal-fired power stations to cover the slump in electricity generation during the dry season. The fate of resettled communities, some receiving as little as 10,000 yuan per household, answers the question posed by Han Wei in the following chapter as to whether farmers have been “empowered” by the introduction of participatory poverty alleviation methods in western China.

Yu Changqing’s critique of how the political system is ruining western China deserves a wide readership. He examines three high-profile ecological projects: panda protection, northern shelterbelt construction and converting pastures back to grasslands, where boasts of great advances accompany environmental destruction. He wryly notes, “Cutting trees for economic development is a political achievement, afforestation after all of the trees have been cut down is also a political achievement and can also bring project funds. Water conservancy is a political achievement, and applying for funds to restore wetlands to combat water exhaustion resulting from water conservancy is also a political achievement.”

The achievements of this volume, though considerable, are overshadowed by omissions. A striking absence from chapters that discuss poverty alleviation is any mention of the role of Japanese aid to China during the 1980s and 1990s. How did China’s experience as a recipient of aid shape its approach to western China? The legacies of Maoist approaches in western China are hinted at, but this theme also lies underdeveloped. There is a sense that the Western Development Strategy was driven by similar philosophies that motivated the “go global” push, launched by Jiang Zemin in the same year, but the philosophical basis that underpinned these massive investments remains for a future volume to explore.

GRAEME SMITH

The Chinese State’s Retreat from Health: Policy and the Politics of Retrenchment

JANE DUCKETT

London and New York: Routledge, 2011

xiv + 146 pp. £75.00

ISBN 978-0-415-57389-4 doi:10.1017/S0305741011001202

Jane Duckett presents a vigorous argument for the need to understand the politics of the withdrawal of the Chinese state from the health care service after 1978, a hitherto under-researched topic in contemporary Chinese studies. This book identifies changes in the functioning of the health system as the outcome of a highly politicized and

ideologically-driven retreat of the state. Duckett argues against the belief that health reform was a by-product of economic policies and, based on mainly official documents and speeches, identifies this as a form of politics of retrenchment, operating during the period from the 1980s to 2003. Politics of retrenchment is a concept introduced in the analysis of how, in European liberal democracies and post-communist states, the state withdrew from the responsibility of organizing and funding health care services and risk protection. This framework and the key factors and main characteristics of health policy-making are introduced in the first chapter, followed by a chapter on the Chinese health care system from the 1950s to the 1980s. The following three chapters discuss different areas of retrenchment, including budgetary retrenchment and the retreat from rural and urban risk protection. The conclusion highlights the main findings in a comparative perspective, clearly setting out the main characteristics of the Chinese state's retreat.

Underlying the argument set out in the book is an assumption derived from Duckett's framework. This is that decision-making at the top of the Party-state hierarchy is capable of creating capacity for implementation of proposed changes at lower levels. Institutionalization and funding generate stakeholders, and the conflicts between ministries, acting as "bureaucratic stakeholders," and feedback of societal stakeholders (here, medical staff and patients), determine the outcomes and extent of retrenchment. In the urban case, Duckett convincingly argues that retrenchment from state responsibility was ideologically driven. This retrenchment was implemented through established administrative hierarchies in the health and other bureaucracies right down to the state enterprises and cities as owners of these enterprises. The result of reducing services and levels of risk protection of urban residents, a group of social stakeholders who were accustomed to taking welfare for granted, generated feedback resulting in a fear of social unrest on the part of government and a need for the reintroduction of a degree of social security.

However, I am not convinced that this central-level focus is sufficient to explain the collapse of the Cooperative Medical System (CMS), the basic programme of risk protection in the countryside. Duckett argues that the CMS collapsed because the health ministry refrained from support after 1982 when the ideological wind turned against this leftist policy of the Cultural Revolution. Unafraid of being punished (p. 68), there was an incentive (p. 97) for local levels to withdraw their support and to stop organizing farmers into local schemes, resulting in the rapid collapse of the CMS.

This framework, with its implicit top-down implementation logic, is limited in a decentralized policy arena. Even during the Cultural Revolution, when administration by the Ministry of Health had broken down, the CMS continued to be operated and funded by commune and brigade cadres. Duckett describes this administrative framework and factors giving rise to autonomy of the collectives, but she does not readjust her framework on this basis. Centrally planned and orchestrated Party campaigns relating to the CMS, hygiene and health prevention work (which do not get a mention in Duckett's book) replaced state administration to overcome the distance between the central state and the collectives. The detailed analysis of weak state capacity and conflict between ministries presented in the case of the urban sector seems to be absent in the discussion of rural areas. This leaves the decision of the Ministry of Health at the central level to retreat from health provision as the exclusive explanation of changes at the local level. This is of doubtful explanatory power. Firstly, the CMS had already collapsed in some areas during the Cultural Revolution. One has to ask why local leaders should be more afraid to continue implementing the CMS in 1981 than during the Cultural Revolution, especially if the argument relies exclusively on the direction of the Minister of Health without

any triangulation from other, local, sources. Furthermore, it is assumed that the CMS collapsed immediately following the minister's statement, whereas this must remain under debate, given that yearly statistics for CMS coverage are simply not available (p. 6).

Disaggregating the state into different levels would allow one to question the argument that fiscal crisis and the impact of the minister's opinion were the cause of state retreat at local levels.

This work shows how ideological positions in the Ministry of Health, and not central state budget constraints, can play a dominant role, especially in authoritarian polities with weak social stakeholders. Despite the criticisms raised here, the author should be commended for taking a significant step forward in this direction.

SASCHA KLOTZBÜCHER

Ancient Chinese Thought, Modern Chinese Power

YAN XUETONG, Edited by DANIEL A. BELL and SUN ZHE

Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011

viii + 300 pp. US\$29.95

ISBN 978-0-691-14826-7 doi:10.1017/S0305741011001214

Ancient Chinese Thought, Modern Chinese Power represents an initiative by international relations (IR) scholars from China to enter into theoretical conversations with counterparts elsewhere. This translation of work by Yan Xuetong and his colleagues examines prominent pre-Qin dynasty (221–202BC) political philosophies with the aim of providing analytical, predictive, prescriptive and normative insights for IR (pp. 3, 21). This ambitious project may appeal to readers seeking an introduction to how IR scholars from China conceptualize and apply pre-Qin thought to inter-state relations. More importantly, the book highlights major questions facing current efforts to overtly relate Chinese traditions to contemporary world politics.

Yan and his collaborators organize the volume into three sections together with an introduction by series editor Daniel Bell, which outlines the tensions, implications, and history of the project. As the book's conceptual core, the three chapters in part one review work by major pre-Qin thinkers, relating them to IR theory and strategies for managing China's rise. Yan's starts by comparing different outlooks on inter-state relations in canonical pre-Qin texts, framing them in terms of IR discussions over levels of analysis, norms and hegemony. He next examines the work of the philosopher, Xunzi, to illustrate how morality, hard power, strategic reliability, force, stratagems and norms can together shape inter-state order along humane authority, hegemony or tyranny. Chapter three by Yan and Huang Yuxing surveys the normative and individual bases for hegemony, which they see as *The Stratagems of the Warring States*' (*Zhan guo ce*) main message for inter-state politics.

Part two contains reactions by Yang Qianru, Xu Jin and Wang Rihua. Their respective chapters argue for better contextualization in the reading of pre-Qin texts, emphasizing benevolence and justice in pre-Qin concepts of inter-state leadership, as well as the centrality of governance and legitimacy to inter-state order. Yan's rejoinder opens part three. He points to how pre-Qin political thought may enhance the theoretical and empirical study of IR, while proposing refinements to his delineation of key concepts – especially humane authority and hegemony. Part three also features three appendices, which include Xu Jin's overview of the pre-Qin, Spring and Autumn (~771–403BC) and Warring States (~403–221BC)