independent individual, while never disregarding their personal responsibility for cultivating and managing the success of the child (in addition to their other gendered obligations). In extreme cases pressure may lead to attempts of suicide, as discussed in Hyeon Jung Lee's chapter about the high number of female suicides in rural areas. Based on a study in four villages, Lee argues that most such suicides are committed by disadvantaged married women who lack resources and feel powerless, either in face of a husband's violence or as a result of deep economic insecurity.

The last section of the book has the most direct focus on Foucauldian perspectives of how individual psyches are governed in China, discussing Confucian technologies of shaming, private and state education, and psychiatric institutions. Technologies of governing the individual psyche by means of shaming are known from the many examples during the People's Republic of how, for instance, criminals or prostitutes have been paraded publicly, or exposed in media. Drawing on case studies from CCTVs Society and Law Channel and interpretations of Confucian classics on human nature, Delia Q. Lin argues that such practices of governing through shaming have a long Confucian legacy in Chinese culture. Shame plays a role also in contemporary Chinese education, where an individual child's failure to succeed may influence the social status of the whole family. This has created a rapidly growing market for private education, and Andrew Kipnis's article shows how private schools promote themselves not as alternatives to the standardized state school, but as sites for cultivating a child into being successful in the established educational, and thereby social, hierarchy. The final article in the book is based on one of few fieldwork studies from within a Chinese psychiatric institution. Zhiying Ma convincingly shows how some patients and their families draw on holistic traditional knowledge of the body to resist a rather rigid form of biomedical individualization.

In sum, these nine articles represent empirically rich studies of individual psyches in China, and the complex ways in which they are governed. I warmly recommend the volume for anyone interested in the topic of individual and self in China, in the ways Chinese individuals are governed through various institutions and in different cultural settings, and for those interested in theories of modernity and individuation in the context of China.

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Breaking out of the Poverty Trap: Case Studies from the Tibetan Plateau in Yunnan, Qinghai and Gansu
Edited by LUOLIN WANG and LING ZHU
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This unique edited volume combines a wide range of contributions from a research team of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS). Being the translation of an original Chinese publication, it gives us unprecedented insights into the way modern Chinese academia deals with complex and sensitive socio-economic issues. This in itself makes the work an interesting read.

Comprising eleven chapters besides the introduction, the book can be loosely structured into three sections. The first four contributions focus on Tibetan farmer and herder market participation and income generation. The second set addresses a wide range of issues from ecological resettlement, health and education to a unique

chapter on the impact of TV broadcasting. The third set looks at aid, welfare (including an insightful study on elderly pensions) and disaster relief. Altogether, the volume touches on several topics that have never been examined in the Tibetan context.

All contributions are united by a focus on poverty dynamics and governmental poverty alleviation, based on fieldwork undertaken in 2006–07 in rural Tibetan regions. In the introduction, the editors highlight the multi-disciplinary and structural-institutional approach of their research – as opposed to what they perceive to be a primarily "anthropological" focus of Western research on Tibetans. Secondly, the volume seeks to transcend common theoretical and ideological limitations of Chinese academia in terms of simplistic, Sino-centric representations of minorities. For example, Yang Chunxue, who evaluates whether Tibetan farmers and herders can be said to engage in "rational" economic behaviour, contradicts received academic wisdom by arguing that their risk-averse behaviours are not caused by "backward thinking," but rather by "their fragile economic circumstances" (p. 20). Other articles likewise feature innovative approaches by Chinese standards, such as Zhu Hengpeng's analysis of a temple-run company as a successful competitor of the otherwise dominant local migrant businesses.

Another characteristic is the authors' critical engagement with government policy. This is exemplified by Jin Chengwu's intriguing chapter on the socio-economic plight of resettled herders. Items such as by-products of herding that used to be available for free now cost them money. Significantly higher living expenses are combined with greatly reduced means of earning an income. Jin Chengwu's conclusion is bold by Chinese standards: he argues that resettlement is a poverty trap with little hope of escape.

Wei Zhong's chapter on education, however, shows how the authors of this volume tend to deal too superficially with complex issues. His central argument that attitudes towards compulsory education are shaped by employment opportunities raises a concern that warrants a much more in-depth engagement. In my book, *"Tibetanness" Under Threat?* (Global Oriental, 2013), I outline how the education–employment nexus is one of the key issues bedevilling the Tibetan community. However, Wei Zhong does not discuss the rich diversity of education and career strategies that came up in my fieldwork, including the mixing of Tibetan-medium and Chinese-medium education tracks. Neither does he clarify that Tibetan employment problems are by no means just limited to a lack of skills or education, but equally caused by endemic corruption and other exclusionary allocation dynamics. Additionally, many Tibetans are actually hesitant to engage in the low-skilled tourism job opportunities described by Wei Zhong as the supposed primary motivating factor for Tibetans in Diqing (Yunnan) to pursue education: these jobs are poorly remunerated, typically seasonal, and provide little or no fringe benefits. Overall, he provides insufficient evidence (ethnographic or statistical) for his key argument. Employment dynamics are given a slightly more comprehensive treatment in Jin Chengwu's chapter, but there also the breadth and depth of both fieldwork and analysis is less than adequate.

Overall, the book suffers from three shortcomings. First, it pursues a mid-level research approach, often giving generalizing summaries instead of ethnographic detail, and neither offering systematic and comprehensive macro-level analyses (e.g. of statistical yearbook data). Consequently, readers often neither obtain the sense of familiarity with local conditions that a "thick description" begets, nor are they systematically shown how structural trends correlate with socio-economic data. Second, the volume does not engage with a single Western academic study on Tibetans. Contrary to the impression given in the introduction, there are significant Western non-anthropological contributions: notably Fischer's *State Growth and Social Exclusion in Tibet* (NIAS, 2005), along with others. My own (anthropological) work involves significantly more socio-economic analysis than that of many of the

CASS authors. This prevents the CASS research effort from building on the substantial body of Western material on these topics. Third, the book is of no significant theoretical import. It lacks any discussion of relevant theories, such as theories of poverty. The introduction simply replicates the official poverty definition of a fixed income level, ignoring a vast literature that has long moved beyond such rigid understandings. Sorely missing here is a concluding chapter that would tie together the various strands and mesh them with relevant theoretical debates. As it stands, readers are left with scattered impressions rather than a big picture.

Even so, *Breaking out of the Poverty Trap* makes a significant and worthwhile contribution to the analysis of socio-economic issues on the Tibetan plateau. It continually provides the reader with insights that are unlikely to be gleaned elsewhere, while offering a first-hand perspective on a generation of Chinese academics who are willing to break with the traditional limitations of their discipline as they critically engage with a politically sensitive region.

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Comparative Perspectives on Criminal Justice in China
Edited by MIKE MCCONVILLE and EVA PILS
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The editors of *Comparative Perspectives on Criminal Justice in China* have assembled an impressive collection of essays by scholars from Asia and the West which critically evaluate various aspects of China's criminal justice system. The volume is divided into seven parts with the core four sections – analysing the various stages of the criminal process – flanked by an introductory section containing two contributions (by Jerome Cohen and Mike McConville), a conclusion (by Stanley Lubman), as well as a multi-authored postscript commenting on the 2012 revisions to the Chinese Criminal Procedure Law, revisions which took effect after many of these contributions had been written.

Focusing on the core sections of the volume, part two examines the investigation phase of the criminal process with specific reference to the complex issue of interrogation of suspects and witnesses and tortured confessions. The empirical analysis by He Jiarong and He Ran, as well as the historical analysis of Ira Belkin, demonstrate a pervasive link between wrongful convictions and tortured confessions, as well as the long-running institutionalization, and even promotion, of the use of tortured confessions by officials. The contributions of part three introduce the complexities of the prosecution phase of the criminal process and focus on the problematic nexus between the plea (guilty or not guilty) and sentencing. Here, some of China's most distinguished criminal justice scholars draw on broad empirical analysis, as well as local test cases, to advocate specific reforms designed to increase consistency and fairness in the sentencing process, while Ian Dobinson provides a critical comparative reflection on the differing values ascribed to a guilty plea in the Chinese and Australian legal systems. Part four provides a multifaceted depiction of the role (or plight) of criminal defence lawyers in China. The empirical evidence demonstrates potential gains for a client if represented by a defence lawyer; however, this success is limited to specific areas of argumentation (Zuo Weimin and Ma Jinghua). More