

are agents of their own fates – though they had little or nothing to do with the emergence of the boom. In her conclusion she provides a clear and succinct analysis of the economic boom and how pastoralists have capitalized on it. Though the monograph's main focus is not on the historical and political context of Tibetans as an ethnic minority of the People's Republic of China, her conclusion makes explicit that the caterpillar fungus economy was at times “envisioned as a field of competition and contest between differently empowered actors and not as a place of neutral economic activities and relations between equal partners or groups” (p. 255).

In sum, this is a well-crafted, outstanding ethnography. Sulek was able to get access to and give insight into a complex field of market dynamics that operates at the margins of the legal and sometimes in opposition to the state, and that touches on the intimate realm of individuals' money management decisions. Her monograph is an unique and remarkable contribution to the anthropology of Tibet, to regional studies of current China and Central Asia and to economic anthropology at large. It will serve well in undergraduate and graduate classes through its accessible language that gives insight into the economic and social mechanisms set in motion when a new form of income becomes available in a rural, formerly poor region.

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Tales of Hope, Tales of Bitterness: Chinese Road Builders in Ethiopia

MIRIAM DRIESSEN

Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2019

vii + 198 pp. HK\$350.00; \$45.00

ISBN 978-988-8528-04-2 doi:10.1017/S0305741020000661

Tales of Hope and Bitterness is a wonderful read. Over the course of its two hundred pages, it consistently displays that rarest of combinations: an important and topical subject, a solid evidentiary base, and a combination of trenchant detail and seamless analysis that only the most gifted ethnographers manage to pull off.

Miriam Driessen's book is unusual in multiple respects. Much of the emerging literature on China–Africa interactions focuses on China's impact on Africa and presumes that China is the economic superpower with the upper hand; some focuses on African agency in dealing with China. Very little literature focuses on the motivations for, and experiences of, those Chinese actors who go to Africa. *Tales* addresses this lacuna, and is firmly trained on the Chinese technicians, engineers and foremen who sojourn in Africa to build its infrastructure, the disappointments they encounter, and the ways in which African actors sidestep, divert and resist Chinese managers on the very infrastructure projects that employ them. *Tales* is based on months of fieldwork in Tigray, Ethiopia, following the construction of a road that a major Chinese SOE had subcontracted in large part to some five private Chinese companies, a provincial SOE and a few Ethiopian companies. Given that the dominant discourse on China and Africa presumes that the former is wealthy and strong, while the latter is poor and weak, Driessen finds, somewhat counterintuitively, that Chinese managers and technicians in Africa are, more frequently than not, lonely, frustrated, and feel themselves hard done by the lack of African gratitude for all that they do to aid

Africa's development. In short, that "it was the Chinese who were being exploited, rather than the other way around" (p. 27)

Chapter one, "The push to Ethiopia," describes the Chinese workers who went to Ethiopia to work on road infrastructure and their reasons for so doing: the relatively high salaries offered by Chinese companies in Africa were perceived by Chinese sojourners who were themselves often only precariously in China's new middle classes to be a "way out" to earn enough to establish themselves with a modicum of stability and security upon return to China, despite the boredom, loneliness, and "eating bitterness" that was part and parcel of company life in Ethiopia. Chapter two, "Preserving purity," details the divisions within different categories of Chinese by company worked for, between professionals and "peasant workers," and between Chinese expatriates and Ethiopians. Chapter three, "The politics of intimacy," explores the ways in which this distancing and preservation of boundaries was articulated by high status Chinese managers policing lower status workers' sexual liaisons and sharing of local food. Chapter four, "Fashioning Ethiopian laborers," focuses on the ways in which Chinese managers and foremen understood Ethiopian workers' lack of response to monetary incentives and unwillingness to develop the self and work hard as part and parcel of backwardness and laziness. Chapter five, "Inspiring indiscipline," draws out the ways in which Chinese managerial practices, such as arbitrary pay docking for presumptive labour infractions, seven-day working weeks, and equating efficiency with speed, led to a host of strategies of defiance: shirking, stealing, joking, wildcat strikes and deserting for other companies with higher pay or less onerous hours. Chapter six, "Entangled in lawsuits," describes perhaps the most effective strategy of resistance of all: lawsuits brought by Ethiopians to local courts, who were typically sympathetic to local Ethiopian labourers and often found in their favour. Chapter seven, "Speaking bitterness," reiterates the multiple ways in which Chinese sojourners "stuck between China and Africa, between a rural past and an urban future" (p. 174) both "eat" and "speak" bitterness: loneliness, monotony, separation from family, and the "low quality" of ungrateful local people who cannot be easily fashioned into the diligent, disciplined workforce Chinese managers assumed to be the requirement for, and reflection of, development.

Tales of Hope: Tastes of Bitterness is a must read for all those interested in China–Africa, in China as a new development actor, or in Chinese labour relations. It is already on my course syllabi for the next academic year.

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Migration and the Media: Debating Chinese Migration to Italy, 1992–2012

GAOHENG ZHANG

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019

xi + 281 pp. \$70.00

ISBN 978-1-4426-3043-7 doi:10.1017/S0305741020000478

Although migration has been a longstanding phenomenon, it continues to elicit heated debate in numerous countries, not least Italy. Over the last few decades, Chinese migration to Italy has prompted many to reassess the benefits and drawbacks of this development. In this light, Gaoheng Zhang's *Migration and the Media* is an