

## Book Reviews

*China Since Tiananmen: The Politics of Transition.* By JOSEPH FEWSMITH.  
[Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. xvii + 313 pp. Hard cover £40.00, ISBN 0-521-80634-8; paperback £14.95, ISBN 0-521-00105-6.]

This is a well-researched and thoughtfully-presented work which seeks to combine an analysis of elite politics with developments in intellectual trends in the decade following the Tiananmen massacre in China. In so doing, Joseph Fewsmith examines several important strands of development in how this communist state, which was in crisis in 1989, avoided the fate of its East-European and Soviet fraternal states and turned itself into a developmental state that is also emerging as an economic powerhouse a decade later. The most important of these include: the continued maintenance of a balance of power between Deng and his less reform-minded colleagues, until Deng finally managed to achieve a breakthrough to reinvigorate reform in 1992; the rise of Jiang Zemin to power, despite being a compromise choice who was not in a position to push for his own programme when he was first appointed general secretary of the Communist Party; and the responses of the intellectual community to the unfolding changes and how these responses revealed changes in society. Fewsmith also examines how Jiang and his colleagues handled relations with the US, which were driven on the one hand by enormous economic benefits, and hindered on the other by the rise of a narrow-minded brand of nationalism.

By weaving together different strands of important political and intellectual developments, Fewsmith has revealed the limited abilities of this remnant of a Leninist state to reform, despite successes in economic reforms. The limit rests not only in the political system being riddled with factional politics, personal ties, systemic corruption and inertia as a safe way to secure political advancement, but also in the failure of the intellectuals to rise to the challenge by finding a way out of the vicious circle of Chinese politics. The intellectuals' readiness to accept uncritically and even advocate popular nationalism as a way forward for China at a crucial time when the Leninist state had lost its basis for legitimacy reveals the ultimate limit of China's capacity to reform in the foreseeable future. This is perhaps the most depressing conclusion one draws from reading Fewsmith's well-documented book.

Fewsmith has provided an excellent account of the intellectual debates and the elite politics, but he has not really explained the driving forces behind them. It is a pity that he does not address adequately some of the thorny issues, like how much impact the intellectual debates really had on policy making, how such an impact was translated into policy, and what difference it made in practice. Furthermore, while it is useful to know the views of influential intellectuals like Wang Huning, one would like to see an analysis of the basis on which one should cease to consider

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Wang (and others like him) an influential intellectual, and treat him more properly as a Party man working for Jiang Zemin or the Party. Does China's future rely more on thoughtful intellectuals being recruited into the system who would then become part of the Party machine? Can they change the Party from within? Does China rely more on intellectuals who refuse to join the Party machine and state bureaucracy but who try to engage the Party-state in a constructive dialogue in finding a way for Chinese politics to break out of its vicious circle? Or perhaps there is a middle way or complementary compromise between the two extremes? To raise these questions is not to imply Fewsmith has failed in any way. On the contrary, they are raised as one is so impressed with this work that one would like him to take on these and perhaps some other equally thorny questions.

This is a valuable addition to the scholarship on Chinese politics which scholars, students and others interested in developments in China will benefit from reading.

STEVE TSANG

*The Nature of Chinese Politics: From Mao to Jiang.* Edited by JONATHAN UNGER. [Armonk, NY and London: M. E. Sharpe, 2002. xvi + 333 pp. Hard cover \$69.95, ISBN 0-7656-0847-2; paperback \$25.95, ISBN 0-7656-0848-0.]

This latest addition to publisher M. E. Sharpe's Australian National University contemporary China books series comes with a blurb that sends a powerful message of intimidation to the weary reviewer. In it, Richard Baum insists that the book's contents amount to "the distilled wisdom and insight of three generations of distinguished China specialists." Now, who would want to risk stepping on the toes of one's daughter's, one's own and one's mother's generations in 'the field' by saying no?

*The Nature of Chinese Politics* is a collection of studies (some of them previously published in *The China Journal*) by ten prominent US- and Australia-based political scientists concerned with identifying and understanding essential changes and continuities in Chinese elite politics over the past 50 years. The book is divided into two sections, the first of which focuses on the political system under Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping; the second of which deals directly with the Jiang Zemin years. In the first section, much physical and intellectual space is devoted to the China-studies field's now 'classical' discussions of elite politics in the PRC – Andrew Nathan elaborates once more on factionalism and engages with new institutionalism, Lowell Dittmer reflects further on informal politics, Lucian W. Pye expands on "guanxi ties" (p. 55) and "guanxi connections" (p. 43), the late Tsou Tang compares balance-of-power politics with the game to win all, and Frederick C. Teiwes reminds us of how Western political-science writing about China sometimes amounts to little

more than “flawed official interpretative models... recast in Western social science concepts” (p. 59). As usual, in company like this, Teiwes’s own work turns out to be the most empirically solid by far.

The seven articles that make up part two of the book include a study by the late Michel Oksenberg concerned with the structural features of China’s present political system, as well as a further round of studies by Pye, Dittmer, and Teiwes amplifying on their earlier work but also branching out in new directions. The questions being asked this time range from whether or not the rules of the game of CCP politics have changed since the death and demise of Deng, to whether a collective leadership or dominance by one man is more the norm in PRC politics today. In one of the more well-rounded contributions to the book, Joseph Fewsmith speculates about the evolving shape of elite politics, introducing much carefully weighed empirical evidence and writing in a lucid prose that is a delight to read. Susan Shirk, in a piece finalized well before the autumn of 2002, explains how Jiang Zemin would have to behave at the 16th Party Congress in order to achieve what Western political science is prepared to recognize as a true institutionalization of leadership politics. Jiang Zemin’s relationship with the PLA is the topic of a superbly well-informed study by You Ji.

In a small number of places, the real-world persuasive power of fine arguments is hurt by unwarranted debunking of students of Chinese politics who are not bona fide political scientists. This reviewer fails to understand, for example, why on p. 176 he has to be told that “many Western Sinologists” (since the writer making it does not say who he has in mind, it is difficult to challenge the accuracy of this claim) who are sceptical of the “informal politics” conceptualization of Chinese politics should be characterized as engaged in “a tacit denial of culturally uncomfortable political realities.”

At the end of his introduction, Jonathan Unger suggests that what this book does best of all is show the degree of conceptual sophistication that Western political scientists have by now achieved in their analyses of China’s political arena. He is undoubtedly right. Whether readers from outside the discipline are likely to regard that degree as already high or not is, of course, an altogether different matter.

MICHAEL SCHOENHALS

*The United States and China: Into the Twenty-First Century (Third Edition)*. By MICHAEL SCHALLER. [New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. 242 pp. Hard cover \$45.00, ISBN 0-19-513758-2; paperback \$23.95, ISBN 0-19-513759-0.]

This useful textbook provides an overview of US–China relations between the late 19th century and the beginning of the 21st. It gives a clear chronology of events and covers the main events and issues in the relationship. It also embeds the description of these events and issues in

the larger international and domestic contexts, allowing it to mesh easily with other textbooks that focus either on China's foreign relations in general or on its domestic developments.

Two virtues of the book are its brevity and scope. Covering over a century of history in just 230 pages of text is a remarkable feat. In covering so much ground so quickly, it is inevitable that many details get left out. The author tends to offer a single explanation of motives and actions, when there is often great debate about what the true story was or is. For example, the author notes in several places that the Lin Biao affair was due to Lin's opposition to the opening to the United States, when other scholars have offered different explanations for this still murky episode. The opaque nature of elite politics and the paucity of reliable data should make any scholar cautious about attributing motives to Chinese leaders such as Chiang Kai-shek, Mao, Deng, and Jiang. The author describes Brzezinski as modelling himself after Kissinger, but ignores the personal rivalry between them. The brief depictions undoubtedly will make it easier for readers to follow the flow of events, but specialists will miss a more nuanced and well-rounded analysis.

While the book covers a broad span of time, some periods receive more coverage than others. Roughly one-third of the book covers the ten years between 1942 and 1952, focusing on the Second World War alliance between the US and China (especially the animosity between Stilwell and Chiang Kai-shek), the US involvement in the KMT-CCP conflict, and the Korean War. These chapters often get bogged down in detail, whereas the rest of the book provides a more cursory look at the events and personalities.

As the book progresses, its focus also changes. In the first third of the book covering the pre-Second World War years, the larger international environment which shaped US-China relations is depicted well. This is appropriate given the times, when the US and China were not the primary actors in each other's foreign relations. The middle third, covering the Second World War and the Korean War, begins to focus more on the bilateral relations and the domestic politics in both countries. The final third of the book emphasizes mostly the US perspective, especially after Nixon's visit in 1972. Throughout the book, the author describes changes in attitudes toward China among the general public and particularly the political leaders in Washington, but whereas this is but one of many themes early in the book, it becomes most prominent in the chapters covering recent decades. Even in these latter chapters, however, the Cold War environment, the Taiwan issue, and other regional issues are presented to show the outside factors that influenced the bilateral relationship.

As is the case for many textbooks, there is no explicit theme or analytical perspective that runs through the book. While the author's personal views seem to slip through here and there, his purpose is to recount the historical narrative as objectively and as clearly as possible. There is also no summary chapter highlighting the main trends, patterns,

and recurring issues in the relationship. This is consistent with the general tone of the book, which emphasizes chronology more than interpretation.

For a textbook, there are some unfortunate oversights. We learn on p. 186 that Taiwan's "long time leader Jiang Jieshi died in 1975." Many students reading the book may not realize this is the same Chiang Kai-shek who played such a prominent role in the first half of the book. Somehow, Chiang's name in the index is rendered "Chiang-Kuo," adding more possible confusion. Chiang Ching-kuo's name is spelled inconsistently, as is Wei Jingsheng's. These may be minor annoyances, but it is remarkable that they remain in the third edition of this book. More important is the absence of attributions in the book. The text is enlivened with frequent quotations, but not a single one is referenced. For those of us who insist our students give credit where credit is due, this sets a poor example.

While it does not provide new information, a novel interpretation, or in-depth discussion, this book successfully describes the key events, personalities, and influences that have helped shaped US–China relations for more than a century. It will be best used as a text for undergraduate classes, especially in combination with other works that have a more analytical or thematic focus.

BRUCE J. DICKSON

*Whither China? Intellectual Politics in Contemporary China.* Edited by XUDONG ZHANG. [Durham: Duke University Press, 2001. ix + 391 pp. \$23.95. ISBN 0-8223-2648-5.]

This important collection of theoretically oriented essays on contemporary Chinese culture and politics is an updated and expanded version of a special issue of *Social Text* (Summer 1998). The selection is multidisciplinary (including history, political science, anthropology) but with an expansive conception of comparative literature at its core. It is more intellectually focused than many China anthologies, no doubt reflecting the strong guiding hand of editor Xudong Zhang, whose 75-page introduction sets an ambitious agenda.

Chinese intellectuals, energized in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution, were hit hard first by the state's violence in 1989, and then by the vigorous expansion of the market that began in 1992. These paired shocks shattered the post-Cultural Revolution revival of reformist ideology in the May Fourth vein, evoking new debate over China's fate and the place of intellectuals in helping to shape it. *Whither China?* offers a sustained critique of the neo-liberalism that has recently presented itself as a successor to China's more familiar state-oriented ideologies.

The book provides insight into the set of ideas that are often characterized as "new Left," even as its authors explain why they do not rush to embrace such a designation, promoted initially by their adversaries as a politically damaging label.

There is a necessary schism in the book between Chinese authors who are active participants in the debate over China's future (Xudong Zhang, Gan Yang, Zhiyuan Cui, Shaoguang Wang, and Wang Hui) and a set of chapters by observers based in North America or Australia. There is a special energy from the Chinese participants, whose essays are consciously provocative.

To these writers, the Chinese state seems more pliant, and less a dinosaur than many are willing to admit. They mostly share with their neo-liberal adversaries a sense of China on the rise. Yet they are disinclined to treat the Chinese state's undemocratic features simply as a still uncorrected heritage of Maoist or imperial practices; Xudong Zhang asks if China's participation in the international political economy now renders it subject to the undemocratic imperatives of a "new technocratic-managerial regime."

The book suggests that China's neo-liberals are so full of hatred for the Maoist regime, and perhaps the state in general, that they cannot think straight. They cannot recognize how the post-revolutionary regime repositioned China in the world order. At the same time, their hostility to analyses that smack of critical theory, postmodernism, post-colonialism, feminism, environmentalism or labour studies prevent them from seeing some solutions to the problems China faces.

But the energy of neo-liberals at least wins some wary respect, in contrast to disgust for the general trend in Chinese intellectual life in the 1990s, which the authors regard as a self-pitying lament for the decline of high culture's status and the growing irrelevance of the humanistic intellectuals who were its guardians. In the new intellectual world, scholars have become professionalized, compartmentalized, and depoliticized: "philology and academic bookkeeping" have replaced humanistic engagement.

These scholars call for a Chinese intellectual life which takes part actively in global intellectual currents (Wang Hui), which recognizes the need for state action to improve the nation (Shaoguang Wang), and which presses for greater democracy instead of retreating to a specialist perspective which fears democracy. Gan Yang discusses Tocqueville after the French revolution to illustrate how difficult it is for a post-revolutionary generation to come to terms intellectually with a new world order.

I have focused on the writers of part one ("Against the neoliberal dogma") because of the importance of their argument, and because it is laid out here in accessible form for the Western reader.

The chapters of part two ("In the global context") are quite interesting in themselves, and as a contribution to the kind of comfortable East-West intellectual interchange proposed in part one. Rey Chow questions the assumptions which typically rest beneath discussions of Hong Kong's return to China. Rebecca Karl analyses 1959 and 1997 films of the Opium War, finding China's new role in the world reflected in the differences between them. Peter Hitchcock argues that Chinese culture is increasingly adapted to capitalist ends, including recent commodified manifestations of the Mao cult. Louisa Schein describes the workings of "acute com-

modity desire,” even among the poor citizens of remote Guizhou. Michael Dutton examines how the daily abuses suffered by migrant labourers are of little interest to Western human rights crusaders, who operate with “loftier and more overtly political images of dissent.” Finally, Harry Harootunian engages Dutton in a bracing appendix which returns to fundamental issues of applying originally European theories to contemporary China.

This is a stimulating and informative volume, which deserves a wide readership among students of contemporary China. It is at times rather abstract, but always intellectually challenging.

RICHARD KRAUS

*China's Economic Challenge: Smashing the Iron Rice Bowl.* By NEIL C. HUGHES. [Armonk, NY and London: M. E. Sharpe, 2002. 256 pp. \$58.95. ISBN 0-7656-0808-1.]

This book about Chinese economic reform is written by an industrial and financial specialist. It examines the argument of China's moving from a centrally-planned economy to one with more market components, asking, in the author's words, “whether the iron rice bowl has already been broken.” There are seven chapters in total. “Smashing the iron rice bowl” serves as an introduction to standpoints of the whole book, and discusses the reform of state-owned enterprises. “Like stones dropped in the sea” studies the evolution of the financial sector in China. “The good earth” is about agricultural issues in rural areas, drawing on discussions on the sustainability of food grain production in China. “Cities without walls” investigates the population and urbanization problems accompanying the growing economy. “The Three Gorges Dam revisited” evaluates the pros and cons of one of the largest hydroelectric-generation and water-control projects in the world. The “Cyberspace gatekeeper” analyses growing telecommunications in the huge consumer market. “From dragon robe to business suit” is the concluding chapter, presenting the stance of the author on the China's future.

There is no formal analytical framework for the whole manuscript. Using his ample experience of working in 25 countries, Hughes adopts a flexible approach in constructing each chapter. Like many China-watchers in the West, he accepts that China's problems should be studied with an understanding of her past. Thus he examines the historical background in many areas, for example the section on the development of food patterns looks back to the agricultural origins of Yangshao culture in the Huang (Yellow) River valley; the change of city life in urban China is traced back to the Warring States Period; telecommunications development is linked with the first telephone line invented by Bell in 1876.

While many scholars researching China use numerical data to support their findings and arguments, Hughes attempts to “get behind the numbers.” No statistical tables or figures are found in this analysis, yet he



tries to apprehend the “real meaning” of those figures; this “real meaning” is rarely supported by any theoretical spectrum or any clearly stated methodology.

Amongst the growing literature on economic reform in China, Hughes’s contribution is considered as one of those with a pro-market framework. Although he states that he would like to consider China from a Chinese perspective, Hughes is actually comparing China’s reforms with mature market economies. Hughes acknowledges that the advantage in China is its cultural distinctiveness. The Communist Party has paved a successful path in stabilizing society and mobilizing its inhabitants for more than five decades. However, with the widening gap in its economy and the joining of the WTO, he believes that China must modify its behaviour by giving up fundamental values. Inevitably, Hughes admits that significant political reforms are necessary to further economic transformation in China. He adds that such practices would also help the survival of the ruling regime.

Overall, this work is non-technical and narrative in nature. Both factual and informative, Hughes’s analysis and arguments are familiar from many other works on China. The text undoubtedly shows the author’s enthusiasm for making the complex reform experiment simple enough for a broad readership. *China’s Economic Challenge* is clearly a good guide for beginners of China studies, especially on its contemporary economic development, and should be interesting to general readers. Regrettably, however, the bibliography provided in this book is fairly thin and limited.

FUNG KWAN

*Finanzausgleichspolitik in der Volksrepublik China: Eine empirische Analyse der Haushaltsreformpolitik von 1994 im Spannungsfeld zwischen Zentrale und Peripherie.* By DAGMAR HAUFF. [Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2002. xxii + 253 pp. ISBN 3-631-37437-2.]

This book attempts to analyse one aspect of the 1994 fiscal reforms in China, namely the effects of fiscal decentralization on the fiscal relations of and between subnational government units, in particular the provinces. Unlike most other books on fiscal reforms or the fiscal side of state–local relations, *Finanzausgleichspolitik in der Volksrepublik China* makes use of the toolkit of economics to cut through the different forms and stages of fiscal reforms and to offer an analytical form by which the effects can be assessed. The analytical strength of this approach poses a challenge for readers who are not familiar with the literature on public finance. Based on the still useful frame developed by Musgrave more than 40 years ago, the book starts the analysis by clarifying the different functions of state budgets: they can improve (or worsen) resource allocation, help to smooth the business cycle, or redistribute income. The crucial argument for decentralizing tax authorities to equalize interregional income distribution is to replace direct transfers from one province to the other with



a “regional fund” at the central level out of which the central government finances transfers or subsidies. Without further familiarity with the literature, the debate on the actual aim of such redistribution schemes, provincial GDP p.c. or – the German version – “harmonization of life chances,” remains abstract. And one wonders how the concept of “fiscal federalism” is understood by those unfamiliar with the literature.

The book’s major strength lies in the way the author steers the reader through both the academic literature in public finance and the vagaries of Chinese tax legislation. The author shows in the first 90 pages to what extent the reforms of central–local tax authority sharing would have affected interregional income distribution if the reforms had been implemented as propagated. The second half of the book focuses on the reality of the Chinese fiscal system, which the author constructed with the help of interviews and Chinese-language primary sources. Some of her solutions cannot come as a surprise. The reforms failed utterly in their attempt to stop “spontaneous” decentralization. Instead of streamlining revenue sources and predictable expenditure and creating a unified fiscal system, the state “disaggregated” further with even larger extra budgetary revenues at the disposal of provinces and lower local agencies. While the reforms attempted to increase the central share of overall tax revenue, and by doing so gather more funds available for redistribution purposes, the sub-national units quickly (starting from 1995) managed to compensate for their loss by extracting additional revenue at the local level (Abb. 14, p. 138). Besides these direct transfers, there is a second way to redistribute income in China: in a complex system of back-transfers of revenues that need to be shared between the central and local units which are collected by tax bureaus under central control, plus special subsidies and tax breaks, the fiscal position of provinces can become that of a net receiver or net payer of transfers. Despite all the problems involved in gathering data, the overall picture allows only one interpretation, namely that income disparities between provinces, contrary to what was attempted, worsened (p. 143).

Aside from the distributional effects of reform, another disappointing result was, as the author shows, that the reforms also failed in their attempt to reform tax administration and to introduce something like accountability and transparency into the fiscal system.

All in all, Hauff manages to present a thorough empirical analysis of a difficult and rather technical subject. By concentrating on one aspect, namely fiscal decentralization and interregional income equality, the author manages to cover a complex topic in a systematic and comprehensible way.

BARBARA KRUG

*China’s Long March Toward Rule of Law.* By RANDALL PEERENBOOM.  
[Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. xviii + 673 pp.  
£80.00. ISBN 0-521-81649-1.]

Randall Peerenboom has become one of the most prolific specialists

writing in English about the legal system of post-Mao China. In his latest book, Peerenboom provides a summary overview of the development of the post-Mao legal system, drawing on a number of his previously published works on issues such as lawyers, globalization, human rights, and legal theory. Peerenboom discusses the rule of law from the perspective of a philosophical pragmatism that balances thick and thin theories on the rule of law. Recognizing that concepts of law are unavoidably contentious and embedded in local cultural context, Peerenboom suggests a number of approaches that might inform assessments of China's efforts to build a legal system. Acknowledging varying forms of the rule of law, the centrality of local cultural contexts, and the importance of local historical perspectives, Peerenboom suggests that despite the many problems and contradictions inherent in development of law in China during the post-Mao period, this process can indeed be described as moving toward a rule of law system. A major focus of Peerenboom's book is the increasing importance of law in everyday life. While Peerenboom acknowledges that many institutional studies suggest obstacles to the rule of law, including the dilemma of Party rule, the institutional frailty of legal institutions, and the obstacles of path dependency, he suggests nonetheless that China's economic reforms make some form of rule of law inevitable, with important implications for political reform. In sum, Peerenboom views the development of China's legal system as an historical process of socio-economic change that makes unavoidable the gradual progression toward a system which, while not necessarily matching the models of Europe or North America, nonetheless qualifies as a rule of law system.

Drawing on his background in Chinese philosophy and history, Peerenboom begins with a useful survey of historical perspectives on law in China, followed by a discussion of the competing visions of law reform in the context of the post-Mao reforms. Addressing issues of rights and political reform as well as perspectives on institutions, Peerenboom concedes that ideological and normative conceptions about the rule of law have had significant limiting influence on China's legal reform effort, as exemplified by the *falun gong* case and the legal responses to it. Nonetheless Peerenboom challenges sceptics of the rule of law in China to re-examine their expectations about the possibilities of reform and their assumptions about the extent of popular support or alienation. Peerenboom emphasizes the diversity of viewpoints that characterizes rule of law discourse in China and cautions against application of uni-dimensional standards. For example, in discussing the role of the Party (often cited as a major obstacle to the emergence of the rule of law in China), Peerenboom concludes that the Party's role is diminishing as it finds itself driven by the needs of legitimacy to greater reliance on law. Examining legal institutions (legislature, judiciary, and the legal profession), Peerenboom acknowledges the challenges that these face in building a rule of law system, but also notes their significant successes in bringing law into the forefront of Chinese life. He takes a similar approach in examining the evolution of administrative law.

Peerenboom's perspectives on the potential for the emergence of the rule of law in China seem based primarily on his assessment of the interplay between law and economic development. While perhaps not to the extent suggested by conventional liberal theorists, Peerenboom asserts that law has played a central role in Chinese economic development and will continue to do so. He suggests that law may play a greater role in supporting political reform and human rights, particularly as the economy develops and Chinese people demand increasing rights. Peerenboom sees changing attitudes among China's population, driven in part by economic growth and in part by increased exposure to international ideas, as generating increased reliance on law and legal procedures in the exercise of governance.

This is an extensive survey which will be useful to many students of law in China. While, as Peerenboom admits, many may find his forecasts optimistic, his discussion is well supported by conceptual and theoretical discourses, empirical data, and solid analysis. At the end of the day, however, questions about the emergence of a rule of law system in China still turn on issues of criteria, variables and evidence. Peerenboom's belief that changing attitudes among the Chinese people will constrain the state to rely increasingly on law and legal procedure may indeed prove true, although it is a hopeful projection for which the evidence is mixed (as Peerenboom's interpretation rests, also suggests that the Chinese state responds only slowly and reluctantly if at all to the normative demands and values of the Chinese people. Thus, questions remain about not only the extent of progress toward even a thin rule of law system, but also the degree to which the regime is committed to the exercise. If General Secretary Hu Jintao's speech on the 20th anniversary of the 1982 constitution is any guide, the rule of law may still be quite some distance away. Nonetheless, Peerenboom's useful treatise is an important contribution to our understanding of law in China and should be required reading for all who are interested in the process of legal reform in China today.

PITMAN B. POTTER

*Debating Human Rights in China: A Conceptual and Political History.*

By MARINA SVENSSON. [Lanham, MD and Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002. 389 pp. \$29.95. ISBN 0-7425-1697-0.]

*The Chinese Human Rights Reader.* By STEPHEN C. ANGLE and MARINA SVENSSON. [Armonk, NY and London: M. E. Sharpe, 2001. 476 pp. \$29.95. ISBN 0-7656-0693-3.]

Talk of 'Asian values' seems to have abated. Those who promoted such 'values' in order to license disregard for international human rights standards touted the 'logic' that 'anything originated in Western culture is only valid in countries of Western cultural heritage and should not be

applied elsewhere; human rights originated in Western culture. Therefore, they should not be applied in Asia.' The collapse of this 'logic,' many believe, was due to the Asian financial crisis in the late 1990s. But in Chinese political discourse, to the post-Mao leadership intent on defusing a legitimacy crisis by enhancing economic performance without abandoning communist authoritarianism, the cultural relativist rhetoric never registered beyond the superficial. It does not fit in with the Party's ideological legacy of Marxist proletarian internationalism. After a brief flirtation with 'Asian values,' China went ahead to sign a number of international conventions. By the late 1990s, it emerged as a skilful player of international human rights politics and a powerful wheeler-dealer at UN rights functions. The government now submits periodical progress reports to international bodies for review, and has enacted laws promising to protect rights. These moves emboldened open rights talks at academic conferences, in journals, and on campuses.

It would be a mistake though to think that a Chinese discourse on human rights has just arrived. These two books, *Debating Human Rights in China: A Conceptual and Political History*, and *The Chinese Human Rights Reader* (along with Angle's 2002 book, *Human Rights and Chinese Thought: A Cross-Cultural Inquiry*), amply demonstrate that there had been an ongoing discourse long before the Communists took power. For more than a century now, the Chinese have contested relativistic claims and conversed in human rights vocabulary. If Asians had ever shared a cultural objection to human rights, one contributor, the scholar Liu Junning, asks, "why do so many people in so many Asian countries struggle and shed blood for democracy and human rights, and why are more and more Asian countries moving in the direction of democracy?" (Angle and Svensson, p. 412).

These books trace the conceptual journey of human rights in 20th-century China, yet they should also be read beyond circles of intellectual historians and philosophers. By carefully situating the discourse in domestic debates of pressing issues in this turbulent century, the authors provide engaging and provocative materials for anyone interested in human rights and in social, political, and cultural transformations in contemporary China. They present a rich and contested discourse woven together sensibly and intelligently into concise chapters, organized by periods or topics. These books make friendly textbooks for instructors and students of Chinese political culture.

For the theoretically inclined, they offer interesting hypotheses, including an interpretation of 'universality' of human rights: rights are generated by intrinsic needs to seek safeguards against threats posed by the modern state and majoritarian interest. When such needs have become pressing in China, demands for human rights have grown.

The discussions have a particularly contemporary significance. The authors dissect how human rights are concretely negotiated, contested, and appropriated by variously situated social actors. In what one may call a second wave (after 'Asian values') of cultural encounter since 1989,

such negotiations and contestations on concrete rights issues have now replaced high-pitched rhetoric.

The discourse is now more diffused and localized. On the one hand, the government claims itself a patron of human rights, while it makes exceptions to international standards by overriding rights with its political priorities in the name of “national conditions.” On the other hand, advocating rights in China is increasingly about supporting indigenous groups in their work to organize and assist the poor and vulnerable. The relentless crackdowns on civil and political liberties – organized labour, religious freedom, efforts to seek official responsibility for HIV/AIDS infection in poor villagers, and censorship on the Internet – weaken grassroots mobilization for equal social and economic rights. It is necessary, for winning this second debate, to contest claims of “national conditions” or “social stability.” Behind such claims is the fear that granting certain rights breeds chaos. But “[s]peech does not create dangers for other individuals or the group (except in cases of instigation and slander), so that others or the group have no reason to engage in force against it,” argues Hu Ping, in an article in the Angle and Svensson book (p. 432).

Claims of “national conditions,” as stated in official statements included in *The Chinese Human Rights Reader*, try to tap into fears for chaos among the post-Cultural Revolution generations. Also, some Chinese intellectuals insist that the Chinese remain much acculturated in the Confucian tradition and they are unready for self-governance and individual autonomy (see for example Xiaoguang Kang, “China: political development and political stability in the reform era,” *Modern China Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3, 2002). Such omens are at best contestable. The population has not had the opportunity to prove itself too “Confucian” to exercise democratic rights.

These debates stretch back to the late 19th century, as these books show, when reformist Confucian scholars criticized tradition and called for the protection of legitimate self-interest. Perhaps such ideas, if not the rights vocabulary, went even further back. The idea that there is something that belongs to the person, such as life and dignity, the violation of which is morally wrong, has a much longer history than the term “*tianfu renquan*” (heavenly endowed human rights).

But it is true that only now can human rights advocacy in China refer to laws, scrutinize and contest official commitments. Rights debates are now more integrated in state–society negotiations over conflicted interest. The growing efforts to hold official agencies accountable for violating the government’s statutory commitments to safeguarding rights, arguably, anticipates a third wave of cultural encounter. The state cannot be effectively held responsible and safeguards cannot be meaningful unless there is an accountable government and a rule of law. But even with these institutions in place someday, the population will still face the challenge of capability-building for effective exercise of self-rule, rights and correlated responsibilities. A third wave will see tensions between rights concept, implementation efforts, and cultivated habits of heart and mind.

The indigenously motivated “domestication” of human rights vocabulary and concepts in official and intellectual discourses in the 20th century thus has hardly “laid to rest safely and finally” (Svensson, pp. 7–8) the issue of whether human rights are compatible with and habitable in, the evolving and contested Chinese culture. So far as one views “culture” more broadly than political, intellectual, or spiritual traditions (such as Confucianism), as one includes cultivated habits, mental and behavioural, shaped in traditions and by complex experiences, one may be more cautious while optimistic. This broadened view points one to a different kind of cultural challenge ahead.

XIAORONG LI

*The Chinese National Character: From Nationhood to Individuality.* By LUNG-KEE SUN. [Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2002. xx + 300 pp. \$65.95. ISBN 0-7656-0826-X.]

Readers of *The Chinese National Character* may well wonder if there is any book or article on the subject that the author has not consulted. This is not an easy book to read, partly because it is packed with information and partly because of the form in which the author presents the subject matter. But it should be required reading for every graduate class in Chinese history/studies not only for its bibliographical coverage but also for the insights into the subject that Sun provides.

Sun is best known to Chinese readers as the author of an influential study of Chinese culture, *Zhongguo wenhua de “shen jieyou”* (*The “Deep Structure” of Chinese Culture*), that unfortunately has never been translated into English. Unfortunately, because for two decades now Sun has been a lone voice in trying to bring psychohistory into Chinese historiography, and that work was his most influential one. Whatever psychohistory’s merits, the issue of the psychology of the Chinese people, and its relationship to China’s fate as a nation, has been of fundamental significance to Chinese thinkers and writers over the last century, as the present work demonstrates.

Sun’s turn in this work from his own analyses of Chinese “psychology” to a historical survey of discussions of the Chinese national character in some ways serves to vindicate his earlier work by demonstrating the importance of the issue to several generations of Chinese intellectuals. It also brings to discussions of nationalism in China a fundamental issue that has been largely ignored by scholars.

The study here covers the century from the 1890s to the 1990s. The six substantial chapters discuss different phases in the unfolding of discussions and debates over the Chinese national character, which in the end requires a multi-faceted consideration of competing nationalist ideologies. Sun has a remarkable command not only of debates in China, but European and American debates over biology and psychology that Chinese writers drew upon. The result is a work that accounts for debates in

China within their global context, without falling back upon some Chinese exceptionalism in the preoccupation with national character. If national psychology is an illusory concept, the preoccupation with national character probably has played a greater part in shaping modern history globally than is usually recognized. For all the postcolonial disorganizing of cultural essentialism, Sun suggests, the issue is still alive, fed by the very same postcolonial concerns: "... the Chineseness issue ... has converged with contemporary American identity politics, turning it into a truly global vogue" (p.xv).

The discussion is rich in its coverage, which is informative but also presents some problems of interpretation. Sun pulls into his argument diverse Chinese and foreign texts, without adequate attention to their context or a thorough accounting of their content, which makes for some arbitrariness in his deployment of the texts, as any casual reference to nation and national character serves as grist for his mill. This also makes it difficult to judge the relative significance of the texts involved either in relevance of argument or impact on the debates.

The book is less a historical narrative than a succession of chapters on different phases of the discussion that are more or less self-contained. Each chapter reads as a discussion of works in a certain period, with commentaries by the author. There is nothing wrong with this arrangement, except that it makes for difficult reading, especially when combined with fleeting references to a large number of works that range from texts on genetics to feminist psychology. Use of the book in undergraduate classes would require close guidance by the instructor. The book is likely to be of the greatest relevance in graduate courses on modern Chinese history, and graduate-level courses on nationalism with a comparative/transnational scope.

ARIF DIRLIK

*Memories of the Future: National Identity Issues and the Search for a New Taiwan.* Edited by STÉPHANE CORCUFF. [Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2002. xxvi + 285 pp. Hard cover \$64.95, ISBN 0-7656-0791-3; paperback \$24.95, ISBN 0-7656-0792-1.]

The French Taiwan expert, Stéphane Corcuff, has assembled a group of mainly younger scholars, including many from Taiwan, to discuss, from different disciplinary perspectives and employing a range of methodologies, the politically sensitive and fascinating subject of Taiwan's identity. The nine authors do not question whether or not there is something called a "Taiwan identity" divergent from a "Chinese" one, and they are sympathetic to the identity project. They examine the historical origins of this separate identity, its social and political grounding, and its ongoing evolution. There are ten substantive chapters, and the hard-working editor has contributed valuable introductory and concluding chapters to integrate the book. The result is an excellent volume well worth reading.



The editor labels Taiwan a “laboratory of identities” (p. xxiii) and distinguishes between two broad perspectives held by islanders: those who accept that there is a plurality of identities within Taiwan itself, and not just between Taiwan and mainland China; and those who take a more hardline approach, insisting that there is a single Taiwanese identity. One of the book’s main contributions is its detailed and serious examination of what mainlanders (who Corcuff calls “New Inhabitants”) think about all this. From a survey (Corcuff) and interviews (Kuang-chün Li), the evidence is clear that the majority of them, especially their Taiwan-born offspring, increasingly identify with Taiwan.

Internal and external forces have stimulated the evolution of a distinct Taiwan identity. Andrew Morris traces it back to the abortive efforts mainly by the island’s gentry to establish a Taiwan Republic ahead of the advancing Japanese forces in 1895. A major catalyst was the tragic February 28 Incident. In a superb chapter Robert Edmondson analyses the often violent and still ongoing struggle among different groups over the power to analyse February 28 and deploy it for political ends. This battle over history is central to the book’s title: who controls “memory.”

From the outside, the assertiveness of the PRC over Taiwan’s future has shaped the identity debate in recent years. Robert Marsh traces what public opinion polls in the 1990s indicate about the thinking of different groups, broken down into what he calls Taiwan or China nationalists and pragmatists. Another external force, not often appreciated, is the overseas Taiwanese diaspora, which is discussed in an important chapter by Wei-der Shu, based on the life histories of 14 activists.

Taiwan’s democratization, which proceeded hand-in-hand with the assertion of a Taiwanese identity, is central to the analysis. And the role of former president and KMT chairman Lee Teng-hui was critical. His 1999 declaration of the “two state theory” brought many hitherto sublimated issues into the public domain. Whether Lee had a long-term plan to assert Taiwan’s separate identity, or whether he pushed it opportunistically as the PRC’s pressure on him grew, particularly in 1995–1996, remains a matter of speculation.

Most of the papers here were initially presented at a 1997 conference. Some have been updated to take the 2000 presidential election into consideration; others, unfortunately, have not. Many chapters clearly reflect the fact that their authors have read the other contributions and they engage in a lively dialogue with their colleagues, the hallmark of a strong edited volume. The book could have used more explicit comparative analysis; Taiwan’s experience can contribute much to comparative politics. Another weakness is the paucity of theory. Although Rwei-Ren Wu utilizes Gramsci’s thesis of passive revolution to examine the Lee presidency and the political rise of native Taiwanese, and Benedict Anderson’s concept of imagined community receives mention in passing, much more could have been attempted. In particular, Pierre Bourdieu’s ideas about symbolic violence and cultural capital seem quite relevant here and could have added another dimension to his countryman Cor-

cuff's already superb discussion of the symbolic dimension of democratization.

THOMAS B. GOLD

*Democratization and Welfare State Development in Taiwan.* By CHRISTIAN ASPALTER. [Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2002. xii + 171 pp. ISBN 0-7546-1603-7.]

Taiwan studies suffer from an overemphasis on cross-straits relations and national identity, making Christian Aspalter's *Democratization and Welfare State Development in Taiwan* a refreshing change. After his previous comparative publication, *Conservative Welfare States in East Asia*, Aspalter offers readers the first English language book-length publication explaining the development of Taiwan's welfare state. This work is also ground breaking in that while most work on Taiwan's democratization focuses on the transition process, this book sheds light on how democracy has affected public policy in Taiwan. Aspalter attempts to tackle an important question, why – when there has been a global trend in welfare retrenchment – have the new democracies such as Taiwan and South Korea bucked the trend and expanded their welfare state provisions? Aspalter convincingly argues that the key force that has been pushing social welfare expansion has been inter-party competition. He backs this up in three substantive chapters. Chapter four is an excellent chronological account of the development of Taiwan's social welfare system. Chapters five and six are fascinatingly detailed election case studies, looking at the role of the social welfare issue in the 1997 and 1998 campaigns, employing a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods and using sources such as the election gazettes and newspaper reports.

There are a number of areas where the book could have been improved. First, the manuscript would have benefited from being thoroughly proofread before printing, as in many parts poor English affects the quality of the book's argument. Secondly, the 1998 election does not deserve a whole chapter, as social welfare was of only limited salience that year. It would have been more productive to look at the first election where the issue was central, that of 1993. Thirdly, since the author was actually in the field in the late 1990s, the work would have benefited from more interview data. Although election gazettes are an interesting data source they do not receive much attention from voters. In Taiwan's multi member districts voters can choose from over 30 candidates, so few have the patience to actually plough through each candidate's 300-character policy declaration.

Despite the abovementioned drawbacks, I recommend the book to postgraduate or undergraduate students interested in Taiwan's electoral politics or comparative social welfare. It would also be suitable reading

material for courses on comparative social policy, democratization or party politics in East Asia.

DAFYDD FELL

*Digital Dragon: High-Technology Enterprises in China.* By ADAM SEGAL. [Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003. xiii + 184pp. \$35.00. ISBN 0-8014-3985-X.]

*Digital Dragon* claims to be “the first detailed look at a major Chinese institutional experiment and at high-tech endeavors in China” (inside book jacket). In fact, the book is more about the Chinese government’s policies towards high-tech enterprises than about high-tech enterprises themselves. In particular it examines how four Chinese cities – Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Xi’an – have differed in implementing such policies, and how policy variations have impacted on the nation’s high-tech development trajectories in different localities.

Segal correctly points out the importance of an indigenous technological capability in China’s renaissance, which means that “China may slowly move away from a development strategy based on labor-intensive goods, import substitution, and export-led growth” (p. 3). He also puts the examination of the capability building-up in the context of the larger process of China’s transition to a more market-oriented economy. It is against such a background that high-tech enterprises have posed an interesting and important case. In their initial development, many of these high-tech enterprises – spin-offs from public institutions of research and learning – depended upon these institutions for knowledge, personnel, and connections in their business operations. Therefore, although individual scientist-turned-entrepreneurs run the firms, they could not and should not claim full ownership. The dilemma is that the separation of the initial governmental investment from total assets does not result in the loss of state ownership rights while at the same time protecting the interests of entrepreneurs.

According to Segal, differences in macro political and economic situations have led to different development patterns at the micro levels. Beijing seems to be the role model where vibrant small-sized enterprises have taken centre stage, and where entrepreneurs have more autonomy in their business decision-making. In Shanghai high-tech development has been led by state-owned enterprises so that bureaucrats rather than entrepreneurs run the show, which also determines the domination of state ownership. Guangzhou is both similar to Beijing in its focus on small-sized enterprises and different from Beijing in its less technology-driven growth; but in Guangzhou firms tend to be more market-oriented in corporate financing and therefore individuals are more likely to take ownership. Finally, Xi’an is a hybrid in that it has been closer to the other three cities in various ways.

In the concluding chapter, Segal brings up the question of “technology

and technonationalism,” a prominent issue associated with the indigenous building-up of technological capability (pp. 165–8). In the reform era, the Chinese leadership – from Deng Xiaoping to Jiang Zemin, and to Hu Jintao presumably – has emphasized the significance of technonationalism while maintaining a technoglobalist vision. The promotion of a China-oriented technology standard, and the priority given to software packages ‘made-by-China,’ not merely ‘made-in-China,’ in government procurement are just two recent examples. With the nation evolving into a true “digital dragon,” China is expected to be where technonationalism clashes with technoglobalism.

Segal has done an impressive job interviewing about 130 high-tech entrepreneurs, government officials and policy analysts, and collecting numerous Chinese documents, making *Digital Dragon* stand out amongst studies of China’s high-tech and political economy. But unfortunately careless errors appear here and there. For example, “Founder” (*Fangzheng*), one of the best known high-tech firms, becomes “Founders;” “three capital” enterprises (*sanzi qiye*), which Segal refers to as enterprises owned by Hong Kong, Taiwan, or overseas Chinese (p. 99), are in fact three types of enterprises invested by entities from outside mainland China – wholly foreign-owned, Sino-foreign joint-ventures, and Sino-foreign collaborative ones. More problematic is the assertion that “much of the recent work on the Chinese industrial economy has focused on either the difficulties of reforming state-owned enterprises (SOEs) or on the growth of town and village enterprises (TVEs)” (p. 2). In this respect, one could at least recall the contributions of two pioneering works – one by Shulin Gu, *China’s Industrial Technology: Market Reform and Organizational Change* (1999), the other by the late Qiwen Lu, *China’s Leap into the Information Age: Innovation and Organization in the Computer Industry* (2000).

CONG CAO

*China Human Development Report 2002: Making Green Development a Choice*. Produced by STOCKHOLM ENVIRONMENT INSTITUTE in collaboration with UNDP. [Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2002. 152 pp. ISBN 0-19-593603-5.]

The 2002 *China Human Development Report* explores the interaction between Chinese society and the environment, and the responses of government and the people to the challenge of finding a more sustainable development path. It states that “China is at a juncture of increased scarcity of natural resources with declining environmental quality and intensified social pressures.”

The wide range of Chinese and international experts who authored this report argue that good governance and a committed populace are the key to finding a future where social progress and environmental protection are

more balanced. They also want Chinese people to take responsibility themselves and move away from a reliance upon the state to address environmental problems.

For students of the environment with an interest in China or students of China with an interest in the environment, this text gives a comprehensive and up-to-date overview of the environmental and related social issues facing China. The data annex provides the latest provincial data on environmental, economic, social and demographic indicators. The report also clearly explains the historic and cultural foundation of Chinese people's attitudes to the environment as well as briefly introducing China's climatic and topographic differences and the relevant state institutions.

From the outset, the authors are bullish in their praise of the increasing environmental awareness in China and the movement of both government and people towards sustainable development. However, the description of the state of China's environment and the horrific statistics that are cited demonstrate no evidence of this commitment.

What makes this report different from most analyses of China's environment is the construction of two alternative scenarios for the future: "green reform" and "perilous path." The critical uncertainty at the heart of these stories is whether the Chinese population realizes the importance of environmental preservation and acts upon it, or continues to focus on economic growth oblivious to nature's limits. The authors claim that China is facing a choice "between sustainable development with an improving environment on the one hand, and short-term economic growth accompanied by a dirty, unhealthy environment on the other."

Unfortunately it is hard to imagine a situation where the green reform scenario comes true. Plausibility is essential for good scenarios. There is little evidence from elsewhere in the world to suggest that the Chinese will forego short-term gains in wealth in order to protect the planet, unless other factors come into play. Nevertheless, the section of the book which examines the driving forces at the "society–environment nexus," such as demography, economics, poverty, awareness, globalization and consumption, provides ample material to consider other more plausible and challenging paths into the future.

One can certainly imagine a future where China's people and state take action to prevent further environmental damage, through necessity rather than through a change of heart. China's environment, as described in this report, is in such a bad state that it is already costing the Chinese government dearly. Chronic water shortages and soil erosion are barriers to further growth. Increasingly unpredictable ecological backlashes are almost inevitable. One uncertainty for China is not whether pressure *will* come, but *from where* it will come: will it be international or domestic? Will the government see the economic benefits of preserving the environment? And will reform enable shifts in behaviour with or without pain to the population?

This is an excellent volume for anyone looking for a comprehensive

overview of the environmental issues facing China today, policy responses being made and future uncertainties and challenges.

FRAN MONKS

*One Quarter of Humanity: Malthusian Mythology and Chinese Realities.*  
By JAMES Z. LEE and WANG FENG. [Cambridge, MA and London:  
Harvard University Press, 1999. xiii + 248 pages. £12.95. ISBN  
0-674-0709-3.]

This short, provocative, and important book makes two major claims: first, that the low fertility that is well documented for historical Chinese populations is due to rational demographic decision-making rather than to environmental stress; and secondly, that the source of this rational decision-making is the fundamental prevalence of collective authority in China, as opposed to the fundamental emphasis on individual rights in the West. In making these broad but China-specific claims, the authors also address the larger issue of the validity of Malthusian models of population and the even larger one of the usefulness of grand-theoretical binary oppositions between Western and Chinese culture and society.

The authors' first claim about rational decision-making takes off from Malthus's own comparison of Europe and China. According to Malthus, in the West-European demographic regime, where population growth was controlled by what he called the "preventive check" of "marital restraint," rational individuals delayed or forewent marriage until they could be financially independent, so while the marital fertility rate was very high, the overall fertility rate and consequently the growth rate of population were moderate. By contrast, Malthus thought that the social norm of universal marriage in China meant that fertility would be unrestrained, leading over the course of years to poverty, worsening living conditions, disease, and famine, which would control population by what he called "positive checks" of high mortality.

Lee and Wang endorse Malthus's analysis of West-European population, but reject his model of the Chinese demographic regime. Instead, they make their first claim: that the moderate growth of China's population over the first two millennia of the imperial era was the result not of positive checks, but of rational decision-making much like that engaged in by Europeans. The difference, they maintain, is that this rational decision-making proceeded not from calculations of individual self-interest, as in Europe, but from calculations of collective good made by household heads and sometimes by state agencies. They thus replace Malthus's binary East–West opposition with their own. According to Malthus, the difference lies in preventive checks as opposed to positive checks. According to Lee and Wang, preventive checks operate in both places, and the difference lies in individual versus collective decision-making.

In order to substantiate these broad claims, Lee and Wang have to

undertake two tasks. First, they need to substantiate a version of the Chinese demographic regime that differs from that posited by Malthus and by such neo-Malthusian Sinologists as Ho Ping-ti and Arthur Wolf. To do this, they attempt to synthesize results from their own and a wide variety of other scholars' historical demographic analyses of China, using data sources that include, for imperial times, banner household registration records from Liaoning, genealogies of the Qing imperial lineage, and Han lineage genealogies analysed by others. For more recent times they draw on results from others' analyses of household registration records and national and local censuses. Their secondary analyses of these findings are presented in chapters on "Subsistence," "Mortality," "Marriage," and "Fertility."

In the first three of these chapters, the authors make mildly controversial claims. They argue that imperial China was not a land where progressive immiseration kept the majority of the population on the verge of positive checks, but rather that standards of consumption rose steadily for the past several hundred years. Furthermore, they claim that mortality in China was moderately high only because of widely practised selective female infanticide; that the health and nutritional status of the population were rather good. And they present a widely-accepted model of early and universal female marriage, coupled with a high male-to-female sex ratio due to infanticide and with a wide variety of strategies for securing heirship in the absence of a biological son.

In the chapter on fertility, Lee and Wang make truly revisionist assertions. They state that Chinese marital fertility was actually quite low (not a scholarly illusion due to poor or incomplete data), and that the reason it was low was because Chinese people exercised not Malthus's "moral restraint" of postponing or foregoing marriage, but a kind of "marital restraint" of deliberate fertility limitation in the form of "late starting," "wide spacing," and "early stopping." Chinese couples, in short, abstained from sexual intercourse in order to regulate their childbearing, and women also used drugs thought to have a contraceptive or abortifacient effect. In addition, female infanticide was a method of deliberate fertility control, a kind of "post-partum abortion."

It is partly because the claims of marital restraint go so much against conventional wisdom that Lee and Wang are compelled to take on their second task: to invoke a broad cultural and social-institutional contrast to explain them. Only if decisions not just about fertility but about sex are bumped up a level from the principals to the family head can we understand what otherwise seems like an impossible level of self-restraint for Chinese newlyweds, otherwise known as horny teenagers. But there is cultural support, after all, both in Confucian familism and in Daoist theories of bodily energy and yin-yang balance, and the family-controlled processes of arranged marriage are also perhaps less conducive to uncontrolled marital ardour than the love-marriage idealized in Europe.

The author's final claim is that the success of recent fertility-limitation programmes in the PRC since 1979 is at least partly a result of the continuing collectivist cultural tradition that puts fertility decisions in the



hands of a collective, which was formally the family but is now the state, and of the willingness of individuals to accept such collective authority for the common good. They contrast this Chinese fertility transition to the European one, in which calculations of individual well-being led couples empowered by economic independence and later by contraceptive technology to regulate their own fertility. Once again, a collective rationality as opposed to an individualist one.

How well do Lee and Wang substantiate their claims? This question has already spawned a cottage-industry of rebuttals, counter-claims, responses, and responses to the responses. The following are my personal views in brief.

First, the analysis of the marriage market is well-accepted and well-documented, with no counter-evidence that I know of.

Secondly, the absence of mortality crises, of large and long-lasting wars and famines that kept population growth low in spite of supposedly high fertility, is questioned by some, but I believe it is correct. Mortality crises appear to be local and short, with rapid rebound, until the Great Leap Forward, which was widespread and short, with rapid rebound.

Thirdly, the secular trend of increasing wealth and rising living standards is probably real, but with more dips in the curve and more regional variation than the authors take into account in their brief treatment of the subject. This criticism can, in fact, be extended to the authors' analyses of fertility and mortality: they take what data they can and apply it to an empire- or nation-wide argument, rather than trying to explain local variations.

Fourthly, I still have my doubts about the low level of marital fertility. I don't think we know enough about the gaps and biases in such sources as genealogies to make a definitive numerical guess about some magic level and how much lower it was than the European level. My absolute guess is that Chinese marital fertility was lower than European, but not as low as Lee and Wang estimate.

Fifthly, the most provocative of the authors' claims, that of "marital constraint," is probably their greatest contribution, despite the fact that we don't know yet whether it is valid or not. It has really set people thinking, not just about the immediate issue, but about the larger issue of collective control over individual actions. My guess, this time supported by some preliminary research results of my own, is that early stopping is a possibility, and that deliberate late starting or wide spacing are less likely to have a factual basis. But the jury is really still out on this one.

Finally, the cultural claims, like all cultural claims, are not entirely substantiable or falsifiable by scientific method. But both research and experience in China suggest that many people take this logic of the collective good very seriously.

Throughout the book, one sees evidence that the authors *really want* their model to work, and there are places where they use quantitative or qualitative data selectively, where they make claims that rest on rather slender empirical validation, where they draw the individualist/collectivist, West/East binary too sharply, despite their own disclaimers. But

what grand theorist, from Marx to Freud to the arch binarist Lévi-Strauss, does not marshal his own forces by selection and by sometimes wishful data interpretation? James Lee and Wang Feng have dared to address large, important, and fascinating issues in a novel and provocative way. Whatever the ultimate outcome of research spurred by their individual claims, they have energized a field.

STEVAN HARRELL

*The First Tung Chee-hwa Administration: The First Five Years of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.* Edited by LAU SIU-KAI. [Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002. xxxiv + 430 pp. ISBN 962-996-015-X.]

Why has Hong Kong's experience as a Special Administrative Region proved so disappointing? Since 1997, the government has become more unpopular than at any time since regular opinion polls began two decades ago. The public has responded with disquiet to changes in long-established housing, educational, hospital and welfare programmes because the new policies are perceived as very often ill-conceived and poorly co-ordinated. From the 1960s, the economy enjoyed real GDP growth every year without interruption, only to suffer two recessions after 1997. This formerly resilient society, which overcame the political and economic threats to its survival throughout the Maoist era and the Cold War, now suffers from a severe loss of self-esteem, with many observers convinced that Shanghai will soon overtake Hong Kong.

This volume brings together 16 contributions that explore this abrupt reversal in Hong Kong's fortunes. In the process, they provide a sometimes idiosyncratic but, overall, an authoritative overview of the first five years of post-colonial existence. During the last two decades, Professor Lau, the editor of this book, and his colleagues at the Chinese University have pioneered the collection and the analysis of comprehensive polling data, which in the absence of conventional democratic institutions in Hong Kong offer the only safe way to assess the community's political preferences and social aspirations. The great strength of this volume is the extent to which its generalizations are firmly grounded in credible statistical evidence about Hong Kong society.

The authors generally avoid polemic and deal with individuals and events even-handedly. They are free from misplaced nostalgia about the past. They share a collective pragmatism, typical of Hong Kong, which is focused on the need to find solutions rather than identify culprits. The result is a work of political and social commentary that will prove invaluable to those interested both in Hong Kong issues and in how the Chinese government handles its principal gateway to the global economy.

The book begins with a critical analysis of the performance of Tung Chee Hwa, the former shipping magnate appointed as first chief executive despite his limited experience of public affairs or political activity. There

are two excellent essays reviewing the legal controversies that have embarrassed post-colonial officials and embroiled the Chinese government, together with a separate review of mainland–Hong Kong relations. The parlous state of the economy since 1997 is analysed by three well-known academics. The flawed attempts by the post-colonial administration to develop a new pattern of social services are recounted in three strong contributions. The post-colonial political system, the civil service, the role of the legislature, the impact of public protests and the enhanced influence of the business class are dealt with convincingly in separate chapters. There is also an important statistical review of the public's perceptions of Tung himself.

The book suggests that Hong Kong's misfortunes are overwhelmingly political rather than economic. The political system's credibility was grievously undermined once the business-dominated power structure failed to deliver prosperity. Problems were compounded, on the evidence of this volume, by the inability of the chief executive to communicate with the public or to mobilize popular support for his vision of the future. Tung's selection in 1996 by the Chinese government was widely applauded. In his inaugural speech, he declared: "Democracy is the hallmark of a new era for Hong Kong." By the end of his first five-year term, however, opinion polls showed his popularity had fallen so low that he would have had no hope of a second term if his future had been determined by universal suffrage in Hong Kong. He remains in office until 2007 simply because Beijing reappointed him.

LEO F. GOODSTADT

*The Cinema of Hong Kong: History, Arts, Identity.* Edited by POSHEK FU and DAVID DESSER. [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. 333 pp. ISBN 0-521-77602-3.]

This edited volume of 14 essays is an aptly titled and useful resource, particularly for anyone interested in the first of its three themes, the history of Hong Kong film from the 1920s up to the present. Like most such volumes, the essays are of uneven quality and the editors could have done a bit more to fix some awkward writing and iron out some grammatical wrinkles and typos. Still, there is far more than a smattering of substance in most of these essays, and the writing is generally quite good. The volume also contains a brief chronology listing highlights in Hong Kong cinema history, and – perhaps most useful of all for US scholars and for teaching purposes – a selected bibliography of English-language studies on Hong Kong film.

Taken as a whole, the book's greatest contribution is in tracing how the Hong Kong film industry has survived and thrived despite being buffeted by a series of complex and abrupt shifts in its cultural and political-economic environment. Law Kar's essay on Hong Kong's film industry from the 1920s to the 1940s stresses the centrality of its connections not only

with Hollywood but also with the world of Cantonese opera performance, wonderfully illustrating the inextricable interplay between local and global cultural and economic forces that are pivotal to understanding Cantonese film-making. Poshek Fu contributes two essays to the volume, both of which focus on moments of crisis in Cantonese film production (the war years of 1937–1941, and the 1960s) and both of which intelligently broach the complex topic of Hong Kong identity vis-à-vis its relation to mainland identity, Mandarin cinema, and nationalism. Fu's essays both document the cinematic expression of a self-conscious Hong Kong identity and thereby serve as a sympathetic corrective to the important insights of Abbas Ackbar – often cited by the authors in this volume – whose work perhaps over-emphasized 1984, the year that Hong Kong's return to China was negotiated, as the moment of emergence of a unique Hong Kong identity and aesthetic. David Desser and Stephen Teo both admirably present the trends of the 1970s, focusing, respectively, on the influence of the US market on the kung fu genre and on the role of television film production as a training ground for the innovative directors of the Hong Kong new wave. Jenny Lau's essay on the Cantonese comedy of Michael Hui and Patricia Brett Eren's piece on the films of Ann Hui take us into the 1980s, with both authors reminding us that, as important as the impending 1997 handover was in shaping the cinema of the 1980s and 1990s, we should beware of reductively reading all Hong Kong films in this era merely as political allegories about Hong Kong identity. Still, such allegorical readings have their place, and Sheldon Lu and Gina Marchetti both perform them fairly effectively in relation to the films of Wang Kar Wai, Peter Chan, and Xie Jin. David Bordwell's thoughtful observations on the use of "the glimpse" in the films of legendary kung fu director King Hu is by far the most effective formalist analysis in the volume. The remaining essays in the volume – on topics such as the films of John Woo, images of urbanism, and evocations of nostalgia in Hong Kong film – read less smoothly.

Overall, when the contributors attempt to theorize or generalize about how Hong Kong identity relates to larger questions of nationalism, colonialism, and globalization, the volume is less successful. Nevertheless, the complexities of identity and aesthetics adhere in the details, and the thoughtful historical research and sensitivity to Hong Kong's shifting political and cultural context found throughout the volume make it an excellent resource for anyone interested in the development and significance of Hong Kong cinema.

JOSHUA GOLDSTEIN

*Consuming Hong Kong*. Edited by GORDON MATHEWS and TAI-LOK LUI.  
[Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2001. 340 pp. ISBN  
962-209-536-4.]

In 1997 James Watson edited and published *Golden Arches East*, a labour

of love on manifestations of McDonald's in East Asia, which by focusing on differences of usage and acceptance in various countries threw some light on nuances of consumerism. The work under review here also carries an article on McDonald's, but the focus is firmly on consumer culture in Hong Kong. The book grew out of a conference held at the University of Hong Kong in 1996, but only two of the articles included were first presented at that conference, and it is perhaps owing to the editors' seeking out of a series of articles on specific topics that this work holds together so well and is of such consistent high quality.

All the chapters concentrate on post-handover Hong Kong and look at consumerism in the spread of the shopping mall (the title "The malling of Hong Kong" is certainly a conscious pun); in the role of interior design in softening the harsh realities of cramped living space; in patterns of cinema design and film preference (a little less clear an account than others, perhaps because it attempts to cover a longer time frame); in the class connotations of fashion-wear, of real estate advertising and of alcoholic drinks; in the boundaries of art connoisseurship and collecting (confined almost entirely to Chinese art); in the growth and polarizations of the Lan Kwai Fong area (the Hong Kong equivalent of London's Soho); in an extraordinary short-lived collecting craze sparked by McDonald's promotion of dressed Snoopy dolls; and in patterns of cultural and national identity since 1997.

The authors all follow a standard class analysis scheme in looking at consumerism, but this is not and is not meant to be a theoretical work, and none of them is slavishly intent on proving a theoretical point. Some of the papers are less fully researched than others, but nearly all carry some useful statistics, and all succeed in making their points well. In only one instance is there a degree of blindness to pragmatism, and that is where Eric Kit-wai Ma correctly assigns Chinese alcoholic drinks to the lowest class – he assumes it is because Chinese alcohol is culturally Chinese that it is inferior, completely overlooking the fact that almost without exception it is objectively nasty and few who could afford to drink anything else would touch it.

The book will no doubt add bulk and depth to the scholarly literature on consumerism, but it serves also as a highly illuminating description and analysis of Hong Kong society at a clearly defined moment in time. Those who know the territory will recognize the accuracy of the picture and will be helped in their understanding of what drives the people to live as they do. Anyone wishing to gain an insight into contemporary Hong Kong would profit from reading this.

HUGH D. R. BAKER

*Essential Outsiders: Chinese and Jews in the Modern Transformation of Southeast Asia and Central Europe.* Edited by DANIEL CHIROT and ANTHONY REID. [Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1997. 335 pp. ISBN 0-295-97613-6.]

Xenophobic nationalism and ethnic conflict have been major features of

modern times. As Daniel Chirot rightly points out about Jews in Europe and Chinese in South-East Asia in his introduction, “information about these two successful but often persecuted minorities offers insights about the very formation of ethnic and nationalist identities, and clues about when such a process is more or less likely to lead to either violent social separation and conflict or peaceful accommodation” (p. 3). Furthermore, Jews and Chinese have been perceived as the two most important entrepreneurial ‘minority’ groups in the process of modern transformation, the writing of their history is therefore crucial in understanding the history of modern times.

In this edited volume, Daniel Chirot and Anthony Reid bring together nine essays from scholars of various disciplines, including historians, economists and social scientists. The book explores the reasons behind both the success and stigmatization of the Jews in central Europe and the Chinese in South-East Asia by examining their role as both ‘essential’ and as ‘outsiders.’ The book is divided into four parts, concerning historical issues such as nationalism and ethnicity, state politics and the economy in contemporary South-East Asia. In part two, “Identity, choice, and reaction to prejudice among the Chinese and Jews,” the authors (Kasian Tejapira, Steve Beller, Victor Karady and Edgar Wickberg) show that resentment towards Jews or Chinese emerged during the rise of nationalist consciousness in late 19th-century Europe and a decade later in South-East Asia. The need for self-definition/redefinition was a result of modernization process, and the definition of the ‘other,’ either the ‘Jews’ or the ‘Chinese,’ played an integral part. In part three, “The modernisation of ethnic perceptions and conflicts,” Hillel Kieval’s essay on the accusation of Jewish ritual murder of Christian children in central and Eastern Europe, and Takashi Shiraishi’s essay on anti-Chinese sentiment in Java (along with Anthony Reid’s essay on the comparative history of Jews in Eastern Europe and Chinese in South-East Asia in part one) show that dislike or hatred towards a successful ‘other,’ or ‘outsider,’ was often an expression of anxiety by the ‘self,’ or the ‘insider.’ In other words, both Jews in Europe and Chinese in South-East Asia, real or imagined, have played an intrinsic part in the politics of identity in which one group’s power, privilege and status is based on the exclusion, or sometimes inclusion, of other groups.

With the end of the Second World War, the ‘Jewish outsiders’ in Eastern Europe ceased to play an essential role, though not completely. At the same time however, the Chinese remain, as the Jews once were, the quintessential ‘outsiders.’ In some South-East Asian countries, especially since the second half of the 20th century, they have regularly served as the targets of majority nationalist prejudices and have often suffered from discrimination. In part four of the book, three essays on contemporary Chinese business in South-East Asia (K.S. Jomo, Gary Hamilton and Tony Water, and Linda Lim and Peter Gosling) show that in recent years political and social integration, as well as general prosperity, have benefited both the Chinese and non-Chinese in the region. It

seems that open and official discrimination against the Chinese has diminished, particularly in ASEAN countries. Yet not long after the publication of this volume, the South-East Asian economy began to suffer a major setback. Since then, the world has witnessed again violent reactions against Chinese and their businesses in Indonesia and Malaysia, and clearly an anti-Chinese sentiment has re-emerged there. The concern put forward by Daniel Chirot (p. 27) has become a reality. This is also echoed by the rise of a new wave of anti-Semitism in Europe in recent years.

In an age when 'globalization' has become a vogue, one expects that nationalism will gradually lose its appeal. On the contrary, under the guise of 'anti-terrorism' the old rhetoric has been reconfigured and the xenophobia has increased and deepened. The attempt to draw racially and ethnically defined boundaries between people is still an important part of many contemporary culture and societies, and the role of 'Jews' and 'Chinese' as essential outsiders remains.

ZHOU XUN

*Innovation in Chinese Medicine*. Edited by ELISABETH HSU. [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. 426 pp. \$90.00. ISBN 0-521-80068-4.]

Innovation can be of crucial concern to the development of any medical tradition. It is of particular importance for a proper understanding of Chinese medical developments, in part because of the long-held misgivings about traditional therapies as an unchanging heritage, which has led to an insistent differentiation between medicine and Chinese medicine, especially at the time when Lu Gwei-Djen (1904–1991) lived. As a proper tribute to Lu's high-flying and distinguished career, Elisabeth Hsu has brought together 12 essays on six different themes to present the history of the equally distinguished and fascinating experiences of Chinese medicine with the wish to argue for a fairer case. The themes, with two articles each, are chronologically arranged, beginning with discussions on acupunctu therapy, pulse diagnostics and correlative cosmologies in early China, through dietetics and pharmacotherapy in the middle periods, the medical classics and new schools in the later imperial period, to their contemporary adaptation and very present struggles. Through in-depth analyses of the early roots of Chinese medical thinking on *mai* and *qi* in "life nurturing" culture, of stages of innovative works in pharmacology, of regional health practices, and of continuous efforts in documented reasoning, as manifested in the production, reproduction, and practical implication of the *yi-an* (medical case records) literature, contributors to this volume have made clear the multi-vocal and constantly changing character of the Chinese medical tradition. They therefore successfully lay to rest the idea (prevalent both in the West and in



“modern” Asia) that Chinese medicine or traditional Chinese medicine was static or lacked the interest and momentum for improvement.

The achievement of this book as an interdisciplinary investigation that cuts across immense time and broad regional development should be congratulated. There is little doubt that articles or sections from this collaborative work should be of use to scholars and students of Chinese cultural history, the comparative history of science and technology, as well as areas of health sciences. As individual pieces, the analyses on pulsing, diagnostic thinking, physicality of medical ideas, arsenic poison and developments in pharmacology all stand out as innovative accomplishments in their own right each ready to make a wide impact on their own field. In this perspective, waves of modern transition or transformation could be viewed as but another stage of ongoing negotiation and mutual enhancements of which characterization no medical tradition should be an exception, East or West, old or new. Following this idea, however, the ‘dark,’ ‘unsuccessful’ side or the arduous, twisted journey of the Chinese case is in need of more serious treatment, just as the broader ramifications and multi-faceted, multi-lineal character needs to be emphasized (such as components of other neighbouring medical traditions that were in constant contact and exchange with the Chinese medical system, raising questions about the very understanding of the “Chineseness” of this project).

As a collective presentation, it is regrettable that the editor and authors decided against any effort to standardize translations (of terms, concepts, and works) or offer further explanation on the variation and debates behind insisted differences. Erroneous Chinese characters, few but pertinent, also impair the broader intellectual exchange that this book aspires to stir up. Sectional essays to introduce each of the sections, in this regard, are of vital importance, helping readers to better appreciate the argument in play. Overall, it should still serve as a good book for seminars on Chinese science and comparative medicine.

HSIUNG PING-CHEN