business strategies. What they shared was the goal of "dynastic stability": preserving and transmitting the firm's assets, skills, and managerial control down to future generations. McDermott's detailed case studies of each type of house firm yields precious insights into the nature of commercial enterprise virtually unequalled in any study of premodern Chinese business history (apart, I would say, from Madeleine Zelin's exemplary *The Merchants of Zigong*).

Deeply informative as this study is, McDermott refrains from any comprehensive assessment of the place of the Huizhou merchants in Chinese social and economic history. The book's conclusion really is more of an epilogue, and dwells mostly on the village institutions that are the subject of volume 1. Ultimately McDermott underscores the limitations of Huizhou merchant enterprise rather than its transformative potential, an economic environment fraught with obstacles, tribulations, and insecurity, a sociopolitical world rife with perfidy and predation. Yet the prodigious wealth of the Huizhou merchants and the social distinction they amassed suggests that the institutional innovations showcased in this book should be judged remarkably successful on their own terms.

A Century of Student Movements in China: The Mountain Movers, 1919–2019

Edited by Xiaobing Li and Qiang Fang. Lanham: Lexington, 2020, 312 pp. $115.00 (cloth), $109.00 (ebook)

Reviewed by Sebastian Veg*

École des hautes études en sciences sociales
*Corresponding author. Email: veg@ehess.fr

doi:10.1017/jch.2021.6

It is noteworthy, though perhaps not surprising, that the centenary of the May Fourth movement did not give rise to a significant historiographical renewal. One or two monographs appeared in English, a few more in Chinese, while a few—academic but nonetheless rather official—conferences were held in Beijing and Taipei. The overall echo remained limited. Perhaps the subject has been overly belabored, or perhaps the many caveats expressed by scholars over the decades, downplaying the significance of the movement, have finally sunk in.

In this context, the idea to revisit May Fourth as the foundational event of a century of student movements seemed particularly welcome. Unfortunately, the volume under review is rather disappointing. Most importantly, it lacks a clear definition of what should be considered a student movement. Both bottom-up society-led and top-down state-led mobilizations are included. While movements connected to the rise of the Communist Party are discussed in detail, pro-KMT movements in which students played a role, like the New Life movement in the 1930s and more generally the role of KMT youth organizations are simply left out, as are the recent (2014) student protests in Hong Kong and Taiwan. On the other hand, some of the chapters in the book

don't fit the definition of student movements. Chapter 8, on the role of returned students in China's nuclear program, deals with students but not movements, whereas chapter 11, on the April 5 movement, is devoted to a movement in which students did not play a specific role.

The introduction proposes a periodization underpinned by an implied typology contrasting self-organized and government-organized movements. The first period (1919–49) is described as "mixed" (in itself an indication that the typology is not entirely operational), the second period (1949–76) as one of "government-organized" movements (but with the 1957 anti-government protests at Peking University standing out as an exception to the Red Guard rallies and the Rustication movement of the 1960s), the third period discusses "self-propelled" movements (1976–1989) and the fourth reverts to state sponsorship (1990–today), referring particularly to the anti-Nato protests in 1999 and the anti-Japanese protests of the 2010s. The organization of the book only partially coincides with the periodization, with parts 1 and 2 covering the "first period" (1919–49), part 3 dealing with a segment running from 1949 to the early 1960s, and part 4 combining the Cultural Revolution, the April 5 movement of 1976 and the 1989 pro-democracy protests.

The overall framing presented in the introduction ("The May Fourth Centenary") and the conclusion ("Who Move [sic] the Mountain in the Twenty-First Century China?") is also unconvincing, partly because of its official overtones and partly because it largely ignores the bulk of recent western and Chinese historiography on twentieth-century China. The conclusion, whose title alludes to Mao's words, pays particular attention to Xi Jinping's call to commemorate patriotism and loyalty to the party, and Ma Ying-jeou's calls for unity on the occasion of the May Fourth centenary. By contrast, it singles out "some Western historians" for criticism because they "overlooked the complex nature and tremendous changes in Chinese student movements from one generation to the next. The stories told here provide a unique perspective into those who moved mountains of 'old ideas,' shaped modern China, and made unprecedented changes over the past 100 years." (269) The narrative remains confined to a linear view of the Chinese people's heroic endeavors against the "two mountains" of imperialism and feudalism, under the guidance of the party. Little attention is paid to the many recent and not-so-recent studies—in no way limited to "Western" (whatever that may mean) historiography (see for example studies by Chen Pingyuan, Luo Zhitian, Zhang Qing, Xu Jilin, and Wang Fan-sen, to name only the most famous, none of whom appear in the bibliography)—that considerably complexify the view of the May Fourth era, the ambiguous role of intellectuals in quest of cultural capital, and the salience of conservative alternatives, among other themes.

Individual chapters offer a more contrasted picture. The May Fourth period is heavily skewed toward Party history, with yet another study of Li Dazhao aimed at closely tying the 1919 protests to the foundation of the CCP in 1921 and strenuously denying the possibility that the movement was "leaderless." Li Dazhao's role in the Young China society (Shaonian Zhongguo xuehui) is overstated, and the society itself was ideologically far more eclectic than claimed. The chapter on women activists in the May Fourth movement is more cognizant of scholarship in the field, but the focus on Tianjin in 1919, predictably highlighting the role of Deng Yingchao, again seems overly narrow at a time when women activists were fighting many other battles, including for women's suffrage. Two chapters on students in wartime mobilization focus respectively on a Guangxi student regiment, acknowledging the role played by Li Zongren and Bai Chongxi, and on demonstrations by Chongqing students (April 21, 1949) within the

Anti-Civil War movement, noting the role of Third Force parties in keeping students mostly "unaligned" until 1949.

Although it does not fit well into the editors' typology, the chapter on the 5.19 movement at Peking University in 1957 is one of the best, clearly showing that the movement was a spontaneous outburst rather than being part of the broader Hundred Flowers movement, and that it supported a form of socialist democracy that remained within the ideological frame of Marxism. The chapter on the pre-Cultural Revolution rustication movement (1962–66) is well-documented, but it is questionable to what extent the movement can be compared to other student mobilizations. In the Cultural Revolution context, "movement" (*yundong*) refers to a state-initiated "campaign," rather than to a form of bottom-up mobilization. A similar discussion is also lacking in the following chapter on Red Guards. Finally, the chapter on the 1989 movement provides some interesting background on student life in the 1980s but concludes by questionably designating the students' "self-pride if not arrogance" as one of the factors of the crackdown (260).

Overall, although this is a somewhat disappointing compilation, especially in terms of conceptualization and periodization, individual chapters still offer new perspectives on certain historical episodes. Perhaps some of the contributors may yet take up the challenge of compiling a more comprehensive and diverse collection of views on student movements in twentieth-century China.

Profits of Nature: Colonial Development and the Quest for Resources in Nineteenth Century China

By Peter B. Lavelle. New York: Columbia University Press, 2020. 288 pp. $65.00 (cloth).

Reviewed by Patrick Fuliang Shan*

Grand Valley State University, Michigan, USA
*Corresponding author. Email: shanp@gvsu.edu

doi:10.1017/jch.2021.7

In this well-crafted monograph, Peter B. Lavelle offers a persuasive analysis of Zuo Zongtang's involvement in China's environmental control and his relentless endeavors to strengthen the Qing Empire by tapping into nature, obtaining new resources, and acquiring wealth. Lavelle's approach is wide-ranging, in that he covers a variety of different regions, ranging from Hunan to Jiangnan (Jiangsu and Zhejiang in particular) and then to the Northwest (Gansu and Xinjiang). Nevertheless, he has done a good job at retrieving primary sources, sharing fascinating stories, and interpreting environmental changes after the Taiping Rebellion in the south and the Muslim Rebellion in the northwest in nineteenth century China. This book should be welcome as a valuable addition to the growing literature on environmental history.

The monograph is in six chapters plus an introduction and a conclusion. Valuable photos, illustrations, and maps are included. In each chapter an in-depth analysis of a special topic is supported by prized primary sources. Following chronological order,