

new methodological approach to Chinese film studies. Another area that needs further exploration is the role of citizens as critical spectators and active participants in the forging of the urban contract. Just as the meanings of urban spaces could never be monopolized by the singular statist gaze of the Maoist and post-Maoist regimes, in post-socialist China's globalizing economy, citizens become travellers in transit who may offer new visions of unbounded cinematic and spatial configurations of urban spaces which could encompass a multitude of experiences of virtual communities beyond the limits of geopolitical boundaries.

This theoretically sophisticated and painstakingly researched monograph is a welcome addition to the fields of Chinese film studies and urban history. Students and scholars from a wide range of disciplines such as Chinese and Asian studies, film and theatre, urban planning, global studies and cultural studies will find valuable approaches not only to the study of Chinese cities and urban cinema but also to new understandings of the urban milieu and visual media representations of other global cities.

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Why Taiwan Matters: Small Island, Global Powerhouse

SHELLEY RIGGER

Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2011

ix + 209 pp. \$32.95

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Shelley Rigger is one of the most incisive analysts of Taiwanese politics in the field. Her first two books are, in my opinion, among the finest on democratization in Taiwan and are still highly relevant more than a decade after being published. But those of you hoping (as I was) for a sequel to the rigorous *Politics in Taiwan: Voting for Democracy* (Routledge, 1999) or the riveting *From Opposition to Power: Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party* (Rienner, 2001), will be disappointed with this new book. Yet, although there is little by way of novel information for Taiwan politics specialists, there is much to admire (and to recommend) in this history/sociology/politics primer.

Rigger, as always, shows her observant eye and wisdom hewn by three decades researching Taiwan. The trademark anecdotes and tales from the field, seamlessly integrated into an ebullient text, will resonate with colleagues and charm students. One sympathizes with the way in which Rigger's obvious affection for Taiwan is tempered by frustration and occasional bewilderment about its politics. Many readers will recognize Rigger's sympathetic portrayal of the (in my words) plucky underdog, misconstrued and mistreated, which, despite performing economic and political "miracles," is unable to enjoy the fruits of its labour and is constantly under the threat of losing the astonishing gains it has made. But, as I have already intimated, this book is not really for Taiwan specialists, even though we have our own concerns about Taiwan's increasing marginalization in the academy and in international society (see Jonathan Sullivan, "Is Taiwan studies in decline?" *The China Quarterly*, No. 207, pp. 706–18).

Taiwan as a polity, as a nation or whatever descriptive you prefer, is at a crucial juncture. As readers of this review will know only too well, Taiwan faces a series of political and economic challenges, and after three decades of political liberalization

continues to wrestle with fundamental questions about what Taiwan is and should or should not be. Strategic challenges outside of Taiwan's control are equally pressing. For instance, in some quarters in the US there is growing demand for a reassessment, if not recalibration, of the relationship between the US and Taiwan that has prevailed during the past three decades. Such is the gravity of this scenario that respected Taiwan scholars have felt impelled to rebut the argument that the US should "abandon" Taiwan in order to facilitate its increasingly complex relationship with China (see Nancy Tucker and Bonnie Glaser, "Should the US abandon Taiwan?" *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 4, pp. 23–37). A strong demonstration to US policymakers that Taiwan matters as a long-time ally, global economy and exuberant liberal democracy could have been another important undertaking for the book.

The book is not a specialist text, nor does it offer much in the way of the rhetorical or polemical fireworks that the title may suggest. Instead, this thin, subtle and captivating book provides a convenient introductory student text with its potted histories, text boxes and chapter summaries. As a politics student text, it is not as detailed as Denny Roy's *Taiwan: A Political History* (Cornell University Press, 2002), or the more contemporary *Presidential Politics in Taiwan* (Steven Goldstein and Julian Chang [eds.], Eastbridge, 2008). Other collections I can think of cover most of the same ground too, but many of these are now dated, overly narrow or incoherent collections of papers. Rigger's book is strong on structure and coherence and newcomers will feel secure in the light-footed linear approach and uncomplicated expositions. As an introduction to Taiwanese politics, it lines up against Dafydd Fell's *Government and Politics in Taiwan* (Routledge, 2011) on a suddenly well-stocked introductory textbook shelf.

Despite my initial disappointment, which is partly a legacy of the rather misleading title (although the more apposite "Taiwan is an interesting study" is admittedly less racy), the highest praise I can give Rigger's book is that if I were undergraduate today with no prior experience of Taiwan, after reading this book I would sign up straight away for a Taiwan class and start planning a summer vacation trip there. Given that the work that really did affect me in that way was John F. Copper's classic accounts of early Taiwanese elections, *Why Taiwan Matters* is clearly a worthy publication. I have no doubt that colleagues running introductory classes on Taiwan will assign it as essential reading, and I have no hesitation in recommending them to do so.

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Macau History and Society

ZHIDONG HAO

Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011

xvii + 294 pp. HKD250.00; \$38.00

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Zhidong Hao's book uses the past as a method to explain Macau's present as well as to suggest ways the enclave can create a better future. Hao makes use of Chinese historical material along with the growing Chinese language literature that has appeared since the early 1990s but does not use Portuguese sources that are helpful for understanding Portuguese views and myths surrounding Macau. Still, Hao has been able to put together a valuable work using the Chinese and English literature.