the available state funding to repair and enlarge embankments, canals, and other hydraulic structures to develop Xinjiang's water resources for its agrarian production. In particular, Zuo and his subordinate Liu Jintang expanded, rebuilt, and mended the local *karez* (kan'erjing) which was a network of underground tunnels for irrigation. On the basis of Zuo's petition, the Qing Empire finally established Xinjiang as a province in 1884.

In chapter 6, Lavelle studies Zuo and his subordinates' moves to develop sericulture in Xinjiang. Although Xinjiang had its sericulture with its own characteristics, Zuo felt that the local natives, mostly Uighurs, were not able to maximize silk's potential. Therefore, Zuo imported Huzhou's techniques, invited Huzhou's experts to train local residents, and transported Huzhou's mulberry trees and silkworm eggs from Zhejiang to Xinjiang. To reduce government outlay, Zuo endorsed a policy of privatizing sericulture. Although it seemed to be a booming business, this endeavor did not pan out well. Yet, as Lavelle argues, this case "shows how technology and the propagation of expertise for exploiting nature became a more explicit tool in their struggle to control territory and people in Central Asia" (166).

Lavelle should be commended for the scholarly achievement of his meticulous inquiry into Zuo's passion, his measures, and his legacy in China's environmental transformation. With Zuo as a case study, Lavelle has examined state intervention into natural management. However, Zuo's name should apper in the title of the book, as the monograph is mostly devoted to his life and career. Perhaps, the current vogue of chasing broader titles by publishers compels the author to select the current title. It would be better, if Zuo's name was included, because he was truly a central historical figure in nineteenth-century China. A table to show the changes of place names would also be helpful, because many places were rechristened in Northwest China. This monograph will be viewed as a new volume of "the New Qing History" by Chinese scholars who have long criticized Western scholars' colonial approach in their study of China's borderlands. In any case, Lavelle's monograph should be respected as a contribution to modern Chinese history for his offering of a rational evaluation of Zuo's enthusiasm for nature, his management of natural resources, and his impact on China's environmental change.

Land of Strangers: The Civilizing Project in Qing Central Asia

By Eric Schluessel. New York: Columbia University Press, 2020. 304 pp. $140.00, £108.00 (cloth), $35.00, £27.00 (paper), $34.99, £27.00 (ebook).

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Over the past ten years, the field of Xinjiang studies has experienced two different shocks to the system. Well into the first decade of the twenty-first century, it was

still common for anyone who wished to learn more about Xinjiang to turn to a small handful of monographs and articles whose insights were derived chiefly from Anglophone archives and heavily edited Chinese memoirs, media, and government reports. Occasionally, a courageous scholar would manage to supplement this modest yet important body of knowledge with anthropological fieldwork based on oral interviews. But with one or two notable exceptions, such as Hodong Kim's *Holy War in China* (2004), we still had little sense of what could be learned from archival documents written in the languages of Qing or Republican-era Central Asia: Manchu, Mongolian, Chinese, Turkic, Persian, and Arabic. This is no longer the case. Beginning with Rian Thum's *The Sacred Routes of Uyghur History*, in 2014, the field of Xinjiang studies has witnessed an explosion of new monographs and dissertations that have shed unprecedented archival light on the thoughts and actions of those multilingual and multiethnic actors who attempted to formulate political, social, economic, and cultural agendas over the past three centuries, from the Qing conquest of the region in the 1750s to early Communist reforms in the 1950s.

Unfortunately, the new golden age of Xinjiang scholarship has also coincided with the implementation of an intrusive and coercive regime of surveillance, detention, violence, and indoctrination directed primarily at the Turkic-speaking Muslim, not Muslims populace of Xinjiang by the Chinese Communist state—what many scholars now describe as a calculated program of cultural genocide. Against this backdrop, the publication of Eric Schluessel's *Land of Strangers: The Civilizing Project in Qing Central Asia* could not be more timely. For his topic, Schluessel has taken on one of the last remaining chronological blind spots in the history of Xinjiang, for which almost no archival-based, English-language scholarship exists. This is the period from 1877, when Zuo Zongtang's Xiang Army initiated the reconquest of the region after fifteen years of warfare and instability, until the rise of Yang Zengxin as governor in 1912, following the abdication of the last Qing emperor. Schluessel makes use of archival documents in Turkic (Chagatay) and Chinese to provide an in-depth look at the lives and careers of both Chinese and Muslim figures in the region of Turpan.

Of course, the broad contours of the late Qing approach to Xinjiang have long been known. In a sharp departure from official Qing ideology, which promoted distinct identities for its officially recognized ethnic groups and discouraged the blurring of these boundaries or interference by cultural outsiders in the lives of ordinary people, the new crop of Qing officials who followed the Xiang Army into Xinjiang adopted new, aggressive cultural initiatives that were designed to turn Muslims into Confucians. As is so often the case with such attempts—and as Schluessel illustrates masterfully in this book—these new initiatives failed utterly to achieve their original goals. But it is in his sophisticated telling of just how they failed that Schluessel makes his greatest contribution to the field. The stories are told through six chapters, each of which tackles a distinct aspect of the late Qing era in Xinjiang. Because the content of these chapters ranges so widely, there is likely to be something of particular interest for scholars of all backgrounds. The first several chapters focus on the intellectual, legal, and political agendas of the new cadre of officials affiliated with the Xiang Army, nearly all of whom came from the Changsha region of Hunan. As a result, they brought with them into Xinjiang a common adherence to a zealous Confucian agenda that intended to transform the illiterate commoners of the empire—Chinese, Muslim, or otherwise—into civilized subjects in accordance with their interpretation of the rites. This entailed the construction of new Confucian schools and a Chinese-language pedagogy designed for the ostensible benefit of the Muslim peoples of the region. The only substantive

achievement of these schools, however, was the creation of a new intermediary class of *tongchi*, or bilingual Muslim translators, who learned how to repackage the Islamic discourse of justice into the Confucian discourse of upholding the rites. In other words, the Muslim subjects of late Qing Xinjiang were not in the least bit transformed. Instead, a small group of mostly privileged local elites simply learned how to reframe the grievances, concerns, and ambitions of their Turkic-speaking Muslim neighbors in such a way as to allow them the opportunity to direct the legal, political, and economic resources of the state toward their own ends.

For those who are more interested in social history, Schluessel also devotes a chapter to the "sexual economy of Confucian colonialism." Here we get a fascinating glimpse into the widespread phenomena of decommissioned Xiang Army soldiers attempting to acquire Muslim wives through mostly Hui intermediaries. The Hunan clique of Confucian officials openly encouraged such cross-cultural marital unions, of course, as a practical means of creating what they regarded as civilized family units out of potentially destabilizing "bare stick" military grunts and Muslim women, who were often depicted in Chinese texts as sexually promiscuous and overly enamored of divorce. What Schluessel's close bilingual reading of the archival sources from Turpan ultimately reveals, however, is that the new regime succeeded only in swapping one exploitative patriarchy with another. The illicit trafficking of Muslim women through sale, kidnapping, and deception continued much as it did with Han women in the interior provinces, with the possibility of legal redress only available to those who learned how to engage the new Confucian discourse of family, chastity, and virtue.

Finally, Schluessel concludes his book with a pair of chapters that deal with cultural and intellectual history. In short, he concludes that new formulations of group identity emerged from attempts on both sides of the linguistic and cultural divide to claim the material remains of the recent and distant past. Investigations into the identity of corpses unearthed in vineyards and other resettled land provided a rhetorical platform to articulate a new sense of bonded communities that no longer atomized into particular sub-units associated with ancestral hometowns, occupations, gender identities, or even religious communities. These debates over the supposed connections between the identities of corpse and soil were mirrored by the efforts of Confucian officials to collect material traces of the Han and Tang empires in the Western Territories. Ultimately, by the turn of the twentieth century, the ideological groundwork had been laid for the Hunanese-dominated political and economic presence in Xinjiang to be regarded as "Chinese," while the Muslims of Xinjiang were beginning to internalize and give new meaning to labels—such as *Chantou*—imposed on them by the conquerors.

In his conclusion, Schluessel is careful not to conflate the re-education camps of today with the Confucian civilizing schools of the late Qing. But there are some instructive parallels. While Beijing is currently not trying to turn Uyghurs into Confucians, it is absolutely attempting to impose the cultural model of what Schluessel deems "Sino-normativity" throughout the Muslim populace of its northwestern territories. In addition, it is clear that Chinese control of Xinjiang has once again shifted away from the pluralistic, relatively hand's-off imperialism of the mid-Qing and early Republican eras and back toward the coercive and intrusive colonialism of the late Qing, late Republican, and Maoist eras. This pendulum, it seems, has been a constant feature of Chinese rule in Xinjiang during the modern era. In response to a perceived political crisis, Beijing pursues the heavy-handed sociopolitical transformation of the region's Muslim, not Muslims peoples. In times of relative peace and stability, pluralistic

imperialism prevails. Schluessel has given us an unprecedented portrait of Chinese and Muslim societies in Xinjiang during a time when those in power fervently wished to reinvent their subjects in their own image but lacked the resources to do so. The latter is no longer the case today. Whatever the results of the latest Sino-normative agenda in Xinjiang, Schluessel's new book will prove indispensable in placing it within its proper historical context.

Corporate Conquests: Business, the State, and the Origins of Ethnic Inequality in Southwest China

By C. Patterson Giersch. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2020. 304 pp. $95.00 (cloth), $32.00 (paper).

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Ethnic inequality is an entrenched and baleful feature of contemporary China. It manifests in many forms, from the mass internment of Uyghur in Xinjiang to everyday labor market discrimination there and in other provinces. Different *minzu* in China feel its effects in different ways. Even before the camps in Xinjiang, Tibetans and Uyghurs appeared to face significantly greater discrimination in the labor market than Mongols.[1] In Yunnan, the Naxi studied by Mette Hansen did much better in schooling than the Tai.[2] There have been excellent studies of the assimilationism and prejudice against non-Han groups in modern Han nationalism, but the complexities of ethnic inequality in history are difficult to research, especially as one moves away from elite discourse and into the realm of lived experience and economic inequality.[3] Giersch's excellent new book aims to say something about ideology in the Yunnan provincial state, and also about economic life beyond official planning and writing.

Some of the methodological difficulties specific to Giersh's inquiry will be discussed below, but for starters there is one big challenge that applies to everyone who wants to work on the Southwest. Archives in Yunnan have always been notoriously restrictive, and since 2018, Sichuan's previously fairly liberal provincial archive has closed access to all its Xikang material, as well as all post-1949 files. Giersch has used some material from the Yunnan Provincial Archives, as well as documents held in local libraries in western Yunnan, Taipei archives, and records from colonial Burma held in London.

[1]Margaret Maurer-Fazio, 'Ethnic Discrimination in China's Internet Job Board Labor Market,' *IZA Journal of Migration* 1.12 (2012). https://doi.org/10.1186/2193-9039-1-12.

[2]Mette Halskov Hansen, *Lessons in Being Chinese: Minority Education and Ethnic Identity in Southwest China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999).

[3]On ideology, see James Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism: How the Qing Frontier and Its Indigenes Became Chinese* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).