

## Book Reviews

*Obedient Autonomy: Chinese Intellectuals and the Achievement of Orderly Life.* By ERIKA E. S. EVASDOTTIR. [Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2004. ix + 320 pp. \$85.00. ISBN 0-7748-0930-2.]

“If you are an archaeologist, then nothing is forbidden you (*baiwu jinji*)”, Erika E. S. Evasdottir was told by one Chinese archaeologist. This tantalizing remark prepares the reader for what promises to be an exciting journey, drawing on “the enviably thick professional Rolodex of contacts” of the professional Chinese archaeologist, as the author sets out a dizzying array of archaeologically related intellectual enigmas and social skeins for decryption.

In her opening chapter, *Autonomy and Autonomies*, Evasdottir discusses Chinese archaeologists as a subset of the intellectual class, “fascinating by virtue of their positioning relative to discourses of history, science and communism,” and why Chinese archaeologists “tend to use strategies of obedient autonomy more often than other intellectuals.” Obedience serves to maintain and strengthen order within the orthodoxy and orthopraxy that inform the working environment of the Chinese archaeologist, but by autonomy the author is not describing a freedom or self-interested sense of being, but rather the intervention, manipulation and the management of reputation and identity permitted by this created backdrop of order in the working environment. The notion of “obedient autonomy” is the *sine qua non* of the Chinese archaeologist, cast as the “typical” Chinese intellectual. However, rather than venturing far into intellectual history, the author adopts a social anthropological approach to examine archaeologists as professionals. This original, if more limited, view of Chinese archaeology and the social role of the archaeologist is well delineated by the author, as she takes readers back to the basics of academic life, namely being a student. In the second chapter, Evasdottir examines “what makes archaeologists most interesting to the anthropologist: the fact that archaeology is an apprentice-type discipline in which older archaeologists teach newly arrived youngsters the ‘tricks’ of the trade. Those tricks tend, once again simply because of the requirements of archaeology, to be overt expressions of the same strategies of rule and relationship manipulation that make up obedient autonomy.” Fieldwork sets the archaeologist, like the anthropologist, apart from intellectuals engaged in many other social sciences and humanities, bringing the archaeologist into active relationships with Chinese farmers and rural entrepreneurs, perpetuating professional relationships that extend for the older generation of Chinese archaeologists back to the closing years of the Cultural Revolution decade. However, the poverty of the Chinese countryside remains unalleviated in many areas and, for today’s Chinese archaeology students, their first encounters with rural poverty can be destabilizing and alarming. If anything, the differences between the relative comfort-levels of today’s urban-based archaeology students with their laptops as tools of trade and those of farmers in more remote areas

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are more striking now than 20 years ago. To establish active relationships with the custodians of China's lands, sometimes inconvenienced or displaced by archaeological work, sensitivity and tact are required. Evasdottir well documents the inadequacies of the fledgling Chinese archaeologists, and the strategies teachers must instil in their students in order to ensure that they handle these relationships well, and do not endanger the enterprise. Seen as removing "treasure" from the ground, Chinese archaeologists frequently encounter conflict, but Evasdottir eschews concrete instances of this; if this book were to detail more of the pitfalls faced by the young Chinese archaeologist the reader would feel greater sympathy for the teachers whose protective and patronizing behaviour she faithfully describes.

To date, much Euro-American analysis of Chinese contemporary archaeology has been marred by an excessive emphasis on the nationalist agenda of archaeology in China at the expense of other agendas, or by the view that the Chinese archaeologist as intellectual is in collusion with authorities in re-writing Chinese prehistory. Evasdottir, to her credit, dismisses these approaches at the outset of this study. In her discussion of orthopraxy, where Evasdottir dismisses the narrow Euro-American view of Chinese collusionist political agendas (whether Nationalist, Maoist-Communist, Centralist or Han Chinese chauvinist), and in the book's fourth chapter, "The separation of powers," the author comes to grips with the implications of this for her avowed topic – Chinese archaeology as a profession. With humour, she paraphrases Lewis Binford's formulation, "archaeology is anthropology or it is nothing," to read as "Chinese archaeology is bureaucracy or it is nothing." This is an enticing feint, prefacing her contention that the visibility of government in Chinese archaeological (and intellectual) lives, in contrast with its invisibility in Euro-American archaeological lives tends to result in simplistic Euro-American images of Chinese counterparts as collusive or victimized. She points out that "such simplistic visions of the Chinese world say a great deal more about Euro-American culture than they do about the relationship between Chinese archaeologists and the Chinese state." She observes: "There is a remarkable sophistication to the ways in which Chinese archaeologists respond to the prevalence of bureaucracy in their daily lives." Here, in fact, we are being led into dangerous territory. Despite her sound delineation of the bureaucratic realities with which the Chinese archaeologist lives, it is impossible to equate Euro-American concepts of government and bureaucracy with Chinese concepts which necessarily invoke parallel structures embodying a radically different political worldview. This is not to say, as she is all too quick to point out, that Chinese archaeologists inhabit a Wittfogel-style despotic order. A more appropriate and benign authoritarian model, however, is also not provided by the author. It is only in an endnote that the author states her position unequivocally: "My position includes the fundamental premise that all scholars, in every country, are affected both consciously and unconsciously by the historical, social, religious, and political contexts in which they work. Their beliefs and agendas are reflected in their work

whether they hold positions in the academy or hold government and party jobs; the opposition between ‘pure’ academia and ‘dirty’ politics is, in short, spurious.” Within the context of this study, this observation seems disappointing, but should it for this reason be buried as an endnote?

Despite the stated objectives and the title of the book, the book presents little about the unique body of knowledge that is Chinese archaeology or indeed of the Chinese archaeologist as an intellectual, nor is the unique intellectual positioning of Chinese archaeology as a discipline examined deeply. This is unfortunate, because, as the author points out, Chinese archaeology is an outgrowth of historiography (as is Chinese anthropology), and so it still maintains close links with epigraphy and other “antiquarian” studies anathema to many contemporary Euro-American archaeologists. Also overlooked by the author is the context in which over the last decade the Chinese discipline of archaeology has also stressed its links with art history and other aspects of a larger heritage agenda.

The author is pioneering a new field, using politically neutral social anthropology and its theoretical constructs to examine Chinese intellectual life. This approach makes this an important work with no lack of sound observations and it should initiate further enquiry.

BRUCE GORDON DOAR

*Singing the Village: Music, Memory and Ritual among the Sibe of Xinjiang.* By RACHEL HARRIS. [Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. xxii + 227 pp. with compact disc. ISBN 0-19-726297-X]

In recent years, English language publications on Chinese minority culture have become increasingly prominent in Chinese studies, a discipline once dominated by Han-related topics. The 1980s’ government-sponsored open-door economic policy has provided Western scholars greater access to minority materials and the opportunity to conduct ethnographic fieldwork in minority nationality autonomous regions, resulting in many exciting new works that reassess and reinterpret the role of minority nationalities in post-1949 Chinese polity. Rachel Harris’ book, a study of music and ritual among the Sibe people of Xinjiang, is one such work that challenges the conventional Chinese portrayal of minorities as exotic and underdeveloped Others. Relying on historical and ethnographic data, Harris describes changes in Sibe culture and music through time and re-evaluates the role of Sibe music in Chinese music. Harris argues that the state’s attempt to appropriate ethnic music has reinvigorated locals’ effort in asserting their own identity. By juxtaposing the delicate relationship between official history of Sibe and her own findings on the ground, Harris reveals the complicated processes of how traditional Sibe culture and music survives in the modern age.

The book begins with an introduction that sets the stage for the rest of the book. Harris summarizes the Han attitude towards ethnic minorities

and the official policies for integrating them into China proper. Although the 1980s' economic bloom brought new energy to minorities and even encouraged "ethnic nationalism," ironically, images of ethnic minorities as exotic and primitive Others continued to thrive in public discourse. Chapter one is a description of Sibe history and society through its encounter with the Qing court and later with the Republic and the CCP government. According to Harris, Sibe culture is based on what Crossley termed "garrison culture" and its social structure is mostly a clan-based system in which the authority, custom, and law rest on the older generations. Because of the Sibe's tendency to adopt Han culture, the Sibe are considered successful and civilized in the eyes of the Han majority; however, Harris also laments that this trend has caused a "loss of cohesion (between generations) within the Sibe community" (p. 46).

The next chapter is on Sibe music. Using the concept of musical sub-culture, Harris views Sibe as part of a wider network of Xinjiang regional music and offers analyses of the songs, instrumental music, opera, and their relationship to other genres. She argues that the unique identity of Sibe music is a recently invented tradition that started with the formal designation of minority nationalities in 1956. Despite the musical similarities between *yuediao* and *pingdiao* (Sibe popular opera forms), Harris points out that, because of politics, the Sibe people chose to see the genres as originated from different sources. This further buttresses her claim that minority music and culture is highly politicized. To offer readers a complete picture of Sibe genres, she outlines a typology of Sibe music based on her own experience and other scholarly works. It includes discussions of story-telling, lullabies, laments, outdoor songs, ritual songs, the Sibe two-stringed lute, ballads, and operas. Harris' analysis reveals that Sibe people had adopted Han practice but for the sake of identity politics chose to trace their music's origin to its distant roots in Northeastern China.

The next chapter comprises the core of her book. In this chapter, she presents biographical sketches of three male and one female musician. Harris is at her best in giving detailed descriptions of songs at weddings, funerals, and festivities. She reports that vocal genres such as *talai ucun*, *srin ucan*, laments, and story-telling are most common on such occasions. The author documents the importance of songs and their changing function in regulating social relations, marking social functions, and constructing personal identity. She demonstrates the creativity of Sibe musicians in incorporating diverse musical sources into a unified Sibe repertory.

Chapter four outlines the memory of rituals and shamans in traditional Sibe society in ancient times, and chapter five discusses the ritual situation in modern times. In traditional society, shamanic ritual has played the central role of mediating between the living and ancestral spirits. Harris provides detailed accounts of historical shamanism practices, such as the *elçin* smallpox healing ritual, and discusses the shamans' ritual texts, music, and musical instruments. She shows how rituals have changed in response to socio-political contexts. Although

condemned by the state as superstitious, shamanic rituals have gradually gone through a “silent revival.” Chapter five covers musical reform in the contemporary period and discusses how state institutions have altered the course of Sibe music development. From the Republican period to post-1949, Sibe music has been changing due to the shifting political context. First influenced by Westernized harmonic practice, then Soviet style-revolutionary music, and finally by the new *yangge* style, Sibe music has developed through different stages. The author shows how collective memory works in defining what is uniquely Sibe about their music despite all the musical changes and new practices. Harris notices that with the advent of mass media, there is a generational split toward music and singing. Nowadays, singing traditional folk songs has become a thing for the older generations while the young ones preferred singing more in a Han-Chinese style in order to be seen as more “civilized.” Pop genres for modern youth include Madonna and Richard Clayderman.

Harris gives an excellent and detailed account of Sibe music and culture. Her voice is at once sympathetic and critical, a perfect balance in leading the readers through a complex matrix of issues. While focusing on details, she never loses sight of larger issues in ethnomusicology and Chinese studies. By way of the Sibe people, Harris offers her own assessment of the status quo of minority studies and perhaps a glimpse into the future of this evolving field of study. Her accessible account is enhanced by maps, photographs, glossaries, music transcriptions, and is accompanied by a CD of sound examples. There are a few minor flaws in the book; for example, I found the glossary of Chinese terms to be incomplete and the page numbers given in the CD contents confusing and inaccurate. Despite these glitches, this is a wonderful book. I strongly recommend it to scholars in Chinese music, Chinese studies, ethnomusicology, anthropology, and those interested in the study of minority groups.

FREDERICK LAU

*Governing China's Multiethnic Frontiers*. Edited by MORRIS ROSSABI.  
[Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004. vii + 296 pp. ISBN  
0-295-98390-6]

*Governing China's Multiethnic Frontiers* constitutes an important milestone in the study of the Chinese government's administration of its minority regions over the past 50 years. The volume, edited by Morris Rossabi, draws its origins from a conference, inspired by the late Michel Oksenberg, on “China's Management of Its National Minorities” held in February 2001 in Washington DC. Shifting from the traditional vantage point of looking at ethnic minorities either from a “statist” angle (what the State's goals are and how are they implemented) or from an anthropological one, the book gives back to the issue its spatial dimension (hence the “multiethnic frontiers” of the title), highlighting the simultaneous processes of coercion, negotiation and adaptation between non-Chinese communities and the contemporary Chinese state.

Following the observation that “each ethnic minority in China represents a different challenge for Chinese policy makers, and each has reacted differently to Chinese policies” (Rossabi, p. 11), each of the seven well-balanced essays focuses on one specific geo-cultural frontier: Hui areas (Jonathan Lipman), Sipsong Panna (Mette Halskov Hansen), Inner Mongolia (Uradyn Bulag), Xinjiang (one chapter from Gardner Bovington and one from David Bachman), and Tibet (one chapter from Melvyn Goldstein and one from Matthew Kapstein).

Although the authors come from different disciplinary traditions (history, political science, anthropology and religious studies), all essays converge towards the same object, “governance,” and share between them a number of common themes, with migration, language, education, religion, environment and economic development featuring prominently. The attention to keeping a coherent framework throughout the volume is noteworthy, as it allows complementarities and cross-fertilization between the different chapters, even though they remain monographic in character.

Patterns of Han migrations in Sipsong Panna and their impact on “development, resources and power” in state-minorities relations, for instance, (Halskov Hansen, chapter two), shed important lights on parallel processes in Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang and Tibet. Similarly, the precise and unforgiving deconstruction of the institutional and legal framework of the *minzu* regional autonomy in Xinjiang (Bovington, chapter four) bears validity for all the minority areas under consideration. Elsewhere, the description of the overly local character of the “initiatives, resistances and compliances” of Hui communities across China (Lipman, chapter one) resonates both with heterogeneous areas like the Southwest and more homogenous areas like Tibet or Xinjiang.

Perhaps the most widely shared characteristic in China’s multiethnic frontiers is Bulag’s observation that compared to the pre-reform era, “the Sinicization of the Party institutionalized the subordination of and distrust toward ethnic minorities” (p. 98). Indeed, none of the contributors nourishes any illusion about the fact that real political power is now more than ever concentrated in the local Han CCP apparatus. But at the same time, the reader is empirically shown that this mere fact doesn’t preclude a broad spectrum of distinct policies along China’s frontiers with the overall goal of diffusing tensions.

The volume is mindful not to fall into the most common pitfall of “minority issues” discussion: their reduction to a “problem” for the state, and therefore the tracing back of all changes to top-down state policies. Although political oscillations between accommodation and assimilation dictated by Beijing are real (as clearly illustrated for Inner Mongolia by Bulag and for Tibet by Goldstein), many changes in China’s frontier areas have more to do with the classic processes of modernization and globalization of markets than with specific political lines devised in Beijing. The commoditization and marketization of minority culture, for instance, is as much an initiative of the State than a vehicle for economic

development willingly embraced by minority leaders (Halskov Hansen, p. 74).

This is not to say that Beijing's rule is not challenged directly at times. As Bachman notes in the case of Xinjiang, it is precisely the threat of separatism and isolated incidents of anti-state violence that justify the policies of "making Xinjiang safe for the Han," a process which has reduced the Uyghurs to their present predicament of either "participating in the process of Chinese rule and do better economically or resist and be suppressed" (p. 182). In the same fashion, policies towards Tibet reversed to "a hardline strategy" in the 1990s, characterized by "enhancement of the security apparatus" along with economic growth and modernization (Goldstein, p. 207).

At the same time, cultural resilience has proved stronger than anyone could have expected. Kapstein's appraisal of the growing role of Tibetan Buddhist culture in China comes to the conclusion that the "cultural role of religions has continued or even expanded in many communities in China" (p. 260), a finding echoed by Halskov Hansen who notes that religious communities in Sipsong Panna have expanded their links with Buddhist organizations and monasteries in Thailand without hindrance from the authorities (p. 78).

The overall nuanced approach of the volume has the added benefit of superseding the unhelpful question of assessing whether the general situation of the minority populations has improved since the establishment of the People's Republic of China – an issue which remains a fault line in scholarly studies of minority areas. On the contrary, all the volume's contributions illustrate the fact that to understand how China operates as a so-called multi-ethnic state, one needs to move away from the "dichotomous understanding of China as either a *minzu* destroyer or a *minzu* builder" (Bulag, p. 113), as well as to recognize that ethnic groups "would like to have running water, modern apartments, and wider, cleaner streets, but not at the cost of values and social conditions that they perceive to be essential to their community life" (Lipman, p. 35).

*Governing China's Multiethnic Frontiers* is bound to become the reference in general ethnic groups' studies in the PRC. It should find a place on the shelves of specialists and non-specialists of minorities' issues alike, alongside two earlier volumes of similar scope: *China's Minorities: Integration and Modernization in the 20th Century* by Colin Mackerras (London: Routledge, 1994), and *China and Its National Minorities: Autonomy or Assimilation?* by Thomas Heberer (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1989).

NICOLAS BECQUELIN

*Plucking the Winds: Lives of Village Musicians in Old and New China*,  
By STEPHEN JONES. [Leiden: Chime Foundation, 2004. ix + 426 pp.  
ISBN 90-803615-2-6].

In this wonderfully original study Stephen Jones offers us the first historical ethnography of music-making in a Chinese village. The villages

are South and North Gaoluo in the extreme south-east of Laishui county on the Hebei plain, not far south of Beijing. The focus is on the music associations (*yinyue hui*) of the two villages, which perform without payment a solemn and reserved style of instrumental music, together with a vocal liturgy, for funerals and the calendrical festivals of the gods (notably, Chinese New Year). The ensembles consist principally of the *sheng* (free-reed mouth organ) and *guanzi* (double-reed pipe), supported by the *dizi* (transverse flute with membrane) and *yunluo* (frame of small pitched gongs). The *shengguan* music they play is a highly conservative genre – the local associations can trace their genealogy back to “precious scrolls” of the 18th century – that has proved far more resistant to innovation than, respectively, the “southern music associations” of the two villages, which perform a secular music open to influences from folksong and opera, the local opera troupe, which has modernized its repertoire since 1949, or the paid shawm bands that perform for weddings. Jones rather modestly claims to “provide enough social background to place the ritual music and the lives of the musicians in context,” but he does far more than this. He reconstructs the history of the two villages from the 15th century to the 1989, drawing to a limited extent on the documentary record, in respect of the Boxer rebellion of 1900 and Italian missionaries active in the 1920s and 1930s, but mainly on the recollections of villagers. In addition, on the basis of intensive fieldwork, he sets the musical associations in the context of village life as a whole, producing an ethnography that fully bears comparison with those of Anita Chan et al., *Chen Village under Mao and Deng* (Berkeley, 1984), Edward Friedman et al., *Chinese Village, Socialist State* (New Haven, 1991) and S.H. and J. M. Potter, *China's Peasants: the Anthropology of a Revolution* (Cambridge, 1990). There is, for example, fascinating material on relations between the Catholic minority and the larger community. He beautifully captures the “spit and sawdust” of village life, but is wise to the implications of his own presence, recognising that his involvement in studying, recording and even performing the *shengguan* music is helping – he hopes – to perpetuate it.

Perhaps the greatest contribution of the study is to the debate on the survival of “traditional” culture through the Maoist era. Writers like Helen Siu have argued that the “traditional” practices that revived in the reform era differ in form and meaning from their pre-Communist antecedents and she is sceptical that they can be interpreted as evidence of the resilience of folk tradition. Jones takes subtle issue with this. He makes the general point that the era before 1949 was not a golden age for folk culture, given endemic economic and social insecurities, and argues that even a conservative genre like *shengguan* music was not altogether impermeable to change. In Gaoluo, for example, the participation of the music associations in rain processions became intermittent after the Japanese invasion. So far as the Maoist era is concerned, he is at pains to stress the capacity of the musical associations to survive in the face of fluctuating political pressure. From 1958, the associations found themselves increasingly constricted, but between 1961 and 1964 they



experienced significant relaxation, only to be subject to severe repression between 1966 and 1969. Yet in spite of the taint of “feudal superstition” attached to them, the associations nevertheless kept their heritage alive, principally because they played a valuable social role in funerary ritual, one that was recognised by local officials, who gave the associations much needed protection. Even so, Jones concedes that the language of *shengguan* music underwent a certain impoverishment as village rituals became fewer and more condensed. Crucially – and this is a point about which he might have said more – despite its high status, *shengguan* music faced a steep loss of popularity, as other musical genres – most recently, pop music – made it appear increasingly superannuated. His ironic conclusion is that the music was threatened far less by the political pressures of the Maoist era than it is today by the economic and social pressures of the reform, notably the overriding importance attached to making money and the absence of young men in the village. He concludes that it “looks likely that capitalism will destroy the old ways more effectively than Maoism did” (p. 241). The book is a testament to the capacity of music to create the most intense form of “participant observation.” The author’s commitment to the music and to the villagers shines through each page. His fine analysis is complemented by a marvellous CD of the music, some evocative photographs and useful maps and appendices. All who are interested in China’s social and cultural development since 1949 should read this book.

STEVE SMITH

*Hong Kong Cinema: A Cross-Cultural View.* By LAW KAR and FRANK BREN, with SAM HO. [Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 2004. xviii + 377 pp. ISBN: 0-8108-4986-0.]

Law Kar and Frank Bren’s *Hong Kong Cinema: A Cross-Cultural View* is a detailed historical overview of cinema in Hong Kong. Placing Hong Kong cinema in the larger Chinese and regional context, this book moves from the earliest appearances of cinema in China to the 1970s, or the period in which contemporary Hong Kong cinema was in gestation. The lists of archives and libraries consulted and newspapers scoured, along with the appendices of detail and fact attest to the authors’ commitment to primary research. At the same time, the engaging narrative that they produce demonstrates their genuine enthusiasm for a cinema they clearly love very deeply. For scholars of Hong Kong cinema, this will be a most useful mine of information.

However, it would be remiss not to note that this is also a very curious book in one particular way. *Hong Kong Cinema: A Cross-Cultural View* is remarkably similar to the established history of Hong Kong cinema, Stephen Teo’s 1997 book, *Hong Kong Cinema: The Extra Dimensions* (London: British Film Institute). The authors of both books are not university-based academics, but instead come out of the world of film festivals, film criticism, film societies, and film archives. Bren has previously authored a history of Polish cinema, and Law was the

distinguished senior programmer for the Hong Kong International Film Festival in its heyday before taking up his present position at the Hong Kong Film Archive. Teo also comes from the world of the Hong Kong International Film Festival. As a result, they are all less interested in theoretical perspectives or challenges to conventional historiography, and more concerned with the tracing of facts and the production of a viable overview narrative.

Teo's book differs in coverage, beginning with the first films made in Hong Kong itself and ending with the 1990s. However, there are many other areas of similarity, with both books devoting much attention to female stars, the transition of many filmmakers from Shanghai to Hong Kong and the resultant tension between Mandarin and Cantonese-language cinemas in Hong Kong, and more. Where Teo gives greater emphasis to martial arts film, Law and Bren go into more detail on regional connections. Yet, apart from a reference in a footnote on p. 44 to a translation by Teo, Law and Bren write as though Stephen Teo and his book have never existed.

In academic publishing, it would of course be impossible to produce a reputable book without discussion of the existing literature, points of difference, and so forth. However, at no point do Law and Frank discuss where they differ from Teo, whether if they have been moved to contest or correct his work, or in what ways they are not duplicating his work. In these circumstances, it will have to be left to other scholars to comb through the two volumes and look for significant differences. In the meantime, however, I suspect Teo's book will continue to be the most commonly used history, because its period of coverage includes more recent and more available films. Nonetheless, this engagingly written and meticulously produced work does not deserve to be overlooked, and I am sure that those who turn to it will find it very rewarding.

CHRIS BERRY

*The Invention of a Discourse: Women's Poetry from Contemporary China.* By JEANNE HONG ZHANG. [Leiden: CNWS Publications, 2004. 304 pp. ISBN 90-5789-096-8]

This is the first book in English exploring the formation of the discourse of women's poetry in contemporary China. Its contribution to enhancing readers' understanding of Chinese poetry and poetics and pertinent disciplines – comparative literature, gender and Chinese studies – is therefore rather significant.

The author features a mostly semantic analysis of a wide array of examples taken from the works produced during the 1980s and 1990s by seven contemporary Chinese poets: Hai Nan, Lu Yimin, Tang Yaping, Wang Xiaoni, Yi Lei, Zhai Yongming and Zhang Zhen. Performing a close reading of these works and making apt references to Chinese and Western poetic traditions, Jeanne Hong Zhang illustrates the ways these

women poets are self-consciously addressing matter of gender in their creative process, rewriting traditional stereotypes of femininity. With this purpose in mind, she singles out a number of recurring themes to give evidence of a shared gender-based writing experience: the female body (chapter four), the mirror (chapter five), night and black colouring of scenes (chapter six), death (chapter five), and flight (chapter eight).

The first chapter is dedicated to the historical context within which contemporary women's poetry has taken shape. Starting from the theoretical and terminological propositions elaborated by critics and writers on women's poetry during the 1980s, Zhang moves to a quick overview of women-authored poetry from the Han dynasty till today. The information given in this chapter provides students and teachers of Chinese literature with a general introduction to the complexity of the discourse on Chinese women's poetry.

The second and third chapters summarize the theoretical framework adopted by the author in her analysis of the presented works: Western strategies of intertextual and feminist readings.

Throughout the book, intertextual reading is successfully applied to show the literary anomalies and resistance displayed by contemporary women's poetry in breaking down the Chinese patriarchal literary tradition. However, intertextual references to some Western poems are in my view less illuminating. Similarly, the appropriateness of Western feminist theories for the analysis of the selected Chinese works is not convincing, and perhaps the author could have questioned their applicability in the Chinese context.

The book raises problems on the difficulty of a negotiation between seizing a language dominated by men to assert women's creativity and creating a new language for poetry. It alerts us to the fact that women poets in contemporary China are actively engaged in the debates and reformulations of what poetry means today. The examples provided reveal that conceptions of "woman," "femininity" and "women's poetry" are being constantly redefined. However, the study does not offer any example of how the effects of women's poetic (re)production signify changes in the way woman is constructed and understood, not only by women themselves, but also by patriarchy. Zhang does not sustain her argument with a contrastive analysis of contemporary poetry authored by men, which frequently displays exactly the same themes she has selected from women's poetry. This does not devalue the importance and coherence of her study, but perhaps asks for further speculations on the effects (if any) of women's poetry on the usage of poetic language as a whole, in women's, men's, and gay poetry alike. In other words, it might be interesting to find out whether or not women's self-representation has created problems within the male-dominated language. An exploration of the shifting place of the feminine in the work of men writers, of the ways new conceptions of gender might have shaped the formulation of male aesthetics too, would help to de-essentialize difference between genders in literature. Are there, in contemporary Chinese poetry, respectively examples of women's writing that continue to draw upon institutionalized

representations of women and examples of men's writing that have changed attitudes towards such representations?

In conclusion, Zhang's study facilitates new avenues of research, stimulating a number of questions: in view of the fact that some of these women poets have expressed their reluctance on having their work read just in retaliation against men's poetry, is the term "women's poetry" sufficient to contain what this poetry is? Does a concentration on gender deny anything? Could it be that women's or men's poetry is able to shift back and forth between male and female? Does the subject which writes and reads poetry both know and forget it is gendered? And finally: can we ever attempt to move on from the feminist agenda to the point of abolition of gender boundaries in literary experience?

COSIMA BRUNO

*Selling Happiness: Calendar Posters and Visual Culture in Early-Twentieth-Century Shanghai.* By ELLEN JOHNSTON LAING. [Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004. x + 304 pp. ISBN 0-8248-2764-3.]

This splendid book, or something like it, has been awaited by historians of early 20th-century China since reproductions of calendar posters began to appear in Chinese publications in the early 1990s. The originals were products of an earlier period of history, originating in the late 19th century and proliferating in the 1920s and 1930s. Widely used in the first half of the 20th century to advertise cigarettes and pharmaceuticals among other commodities, they are best known for their depictions of beautiful women in fashionable dress. Their generic name, "calendar poster" (*yuefenpai*), derives from the incorporation of a calendar into the picture, allowing it to serve in place of the traditional woodblock print calendar. Not all such advertisements featured calendars, and some paintings in the style of the calendar poster were not even advertisements, but it is by this name that the genre is generally known.

In the past decade, these extraordinary examples of commercial art have become a common point of reference in studies of Republican-era China, and a number of works published in recent years have contributed to a knowledge of them. Laing's book, however, is the first thorough study of the genre. The encyclopaedic knowledge she brings to her discussion makes the book a treasure trove for her colleagues in the field. It is more than a reference work: Laing has a story to tell, or rather multiple stories, of images and their creators in the late Qing and Republican eras. The book is also copiously illustrated, so that browsing through it is like visiting a very well-curated art exhibition. For all these reasons, *Selling Happiness* is certain to have a long shelf life.

The book follows two main trajectories. One is a history of images, which Laing examines from the perspective both of advertising in China

and of the calendar poster in the West, which was the inspiration for the Chinese version. An art historian, she pays close attention to the genealogy of images and compositional arrangements. Most painters of calendar posters drew to some degree from a Chinese repertoire of images, especially for landscape backgrounds, but they freely exploited whatever else was on hand. Laing treats the reader to a fascinating demonstration of the way in which they “quarried” sources of visual material to produce sometimes hackneyed but often very distinctive compositions. The Zhiying Studio’s “Beautiful Athlete” may be little more than a duplicate of a photograph of actress Jean Parker at archery (pp. 220–1), but Xie Zhiguang (1900–1976) made clever use of a photograph from *Ladies Home Journal* for the background in his advertisement for a brand of Japanese tablets (pp. 152–153). By the 1950s, the calendar poster had itself become a source, serving the reformed employees of big capitalist companies as a model of sorts for the political posters they produced after Liberation.

Laing’s other preoccupation is the artists themselves. Basic biographical facts about most of the artists, including dates, native places (mostly in Zhejiang), and early training, are noted in a number of works. Laing has advanced on these bare outlines to produce a detailed portrait of the commercial art scene of the Republican era, peopled by the painters, their teachers, their models, and their friends and associates, male and female. In the final chapter she traces the lives of the last of them through the Mao years and beyond. In the case of Xie Zhiguang, at least, the abandonment of calendar poster painting allowed his other artistic talents to flourish. By the time of his death, he had produced an impressive corpus of works in the traditional style, which by the 1980s were being widely acclaimed.

Laing treats the artistry of all of these painters seriously, paying attention to their graphic skills, aesthetic choices and use of colour, the last of which is one of the most striking features of the calendar poster genre. While the rub-and-paint method popularised by Zheng Mantuo (1888–1961) is the best known technique used for calendar posters, Laing distinguishes the oeuvre of Liang Dingming (1898–1959) for its brilliant hues – a consequence, she writes, of his use of oils (pp. 172–3). Two of Liang’s works are among the 24 colour plates that supplement the many black-and-white illustrations in this book. The high gloss of good colour reproductions on quality paper rather inhibits a comparison of the effects of different sorts of colour application. While the delicacy of Zheng Mantuo’s colour schemes is obvious to the eye, most of the colour reproductions, as in other recently published collections, look literally gorgeous. They greatly add, of course, to the attractiveness of an otherwise beautifully produced book, and will no doubt ensure it a readership beyond the specialist domain of historians of Republican-era China.

ANTONIA FINNANE

*China and the Great War : China's Pursuit of a New National Identity and Internationalization.* By GUOQI XU. [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. xiii + 316 pp. £50.00. ISBN 0-521-84212-9.]

This is an important revisionist study offering many significant new insights on the history of China in the period of the European war, 1914–1918. Its use of Chinese materials adds a completely new dimension to the story. But the author has also conducted exhaustive research in the American, British, French and German archives. It is, therefore, by far the most thorough and comprehensive study of this subject for some decades.

It is Dr Xu's argument that President Yuan Shikai and his cabinet were anxious to throw in their lot with the allies in their struggle with Germany. They became especially keen to do so late in 1915 after the Twenty-one Demands crisis. The prime reason why they were prepared to be associated with the allied cause was the natural one of securing a seat at the ultimate peace settlement. Possibly they might not have been realistically prepared to send vast forces to the western front which for many was the test of being a fully-fledged ally. In any case that was not what the allies wanted. The allies' reluctance was unquestionably affected by a desire to avoid complications and by the continuous opposition which Japan offered to a larger role being given to China. Indeed the European allies were in a Japanese straitjacket for most of the war.

An original contribution of this study is to clarify the recruitment and use of Chinese labourers. According to many scholars, China only considered getting entangled in a European war after considerable persuasion from allied diplomats and others, not from her own convictions. We have been seduced into believing in the considerable role played in this by (for example) Dr G.E. Morrison. Dr Xu is convincing in showing that there was a genuine Chinese desire to get involved in the war effort in order "to join the international system" (p. 81).

What emerged was the labour plan, which was launched as a Chinese initiative as early as 1915. This resulted after countless difficulties in the large-scale recruitment of contract labour for work behind the lines on the western front. Dr Xu gives us by far the most complete account of the Chinese working for French, British and American forces. When one adds on the numbers of those working on the Russian fronts and those employed in the mercantile marines of the allied countries, it is a formidable contribution, though statistics are not reliable enough to give accurate numbers.

Dr Xu stresses that Chinese labourers resented that they were not rewarded for these exploits. It seems that the labourers were not given medals, awards or bonuses to which they were entitled and were treated harshly. My feeling is that, even if the recognition was inadequate, the prevailing feeling at least in British recruitment circles was one of satisfaction and gratitude. In British eyes, the Labour Battalions who came to France were mercenaries; and it may have been for that reason that appropriate rewards were not given.

A new set of considerations arose when China formally declared war on Germany and Austro-Hungary in August 1917. The idea here was that in future China's position vis-a-vis Japan was best safeguarded by keeping in line with the United States which had, albeit with some reluctance, invited China to take part in the war. Dr Xu salutes this as a rational and well-considered policy, a device for manoeuvring China "out of its old crippling relationships and into a new role within the world community" (pp.155–6).

In his final chapter the author deals with China's inevitable disappointment at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. She had built up great expectations; and the treaty that emerged left her public opinion feeling that China had been let down by the West, and especially President Woodrow Wilson. It was, of course, unfortunate that by this time China was in the throes of civil war, and factionalism and warlordism were growing fast. It was disgraceful too that the peace conference involving the world's leading statesmen could not find time to deal adequately with the problems of east Asia, which were admittedly difficult to settle. China fought hard, disclosing the wartime treaties with Japan which the latter had tried to keep secret, but failed over the critical Shandong issue. Here Dr Xu is optimistic: "even by simply presenting its position at the conference, China had already partly succeeded in projecting a new image to the world and injecting its own voice into discussions of the new world order" ( p. 272). Even China's refusal to sign the Versailles treaty served a purpose in stimulating Chinese nationalism and drew the attention of world powers to the justice of China's case.

Clearly there is much that is controversial in this book. But it is a fine example of the writing of international history, based on careful archival research. The argument is skilfully developed and assisted by a small section of illustrations. It puts before the reader the Chinese side of a story which is not unfamiliar but which has been slanted in the past.

IAN NISH

*The Role of Japan in Liang Qichao's Introduction of Modern Western Civilization to China.* Edited by JOSHUA A. FOGEL. [Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 2004. ix + 324 pp. \$20.00. ISBN 1-55729-080-6.]

This collection of essays, from a 1998 international symposium in the United States organized by editor Joshua Fogel, was inspired by a multi-year research seminar at Kyoto University, 1994–97. Under the direction of Naoki Hazama, the Kyoto seminar findings were published in Japanese (1999), then translated and published in Chinese (2001). Now English readers can benefit from these, since five of the thirteen Kyoto contributors appear in the Fogel volume, including Hazama himself and Yoshihiro Ishikawa, Noriko Mori, Tokihiko Mori, and Mareshi Saitō. Their contributions are supplemented by leading Western and Chinese

scholars who attended the U.S. conference. The eleven chapters that result cut across languages and cultures in richly textured essays.

These essays, on the role of Japan in the introduction of modern Western thought to China, focus chiefly on the writings of Liang Qichao during his nearly 15 years of residence in Japan, 1898–1912, when he read and published voraciously. Through his writings that introduced numerous “modern” or Western concepts and fields to Chinese readers, Liang, more than anyone else, brought about a paradigm shift (p. 205) in China’s intellectual world, from its own traditional culture to the importation of modern Western civilization. The role of Japan in this process has been insufficiently recognized, and is even commonly ignored. But scholarship of recent years has undergone “a significant breakthrough” (p. 154), in the words of contributor K’o-wu Huang. Such scholarship continues through activities like the International Symposium on Liang Qichao at Nankai University, Tianjin, October 2003, which drew 150 scholars and more than 110 papers to its meetings.

Contributor Peter Zarrow writes about Japanese “monarchy” as understood and used by Chinese radicals like Liang Qichao and his early mentor, Kang Youwei. He concludes that “Japan was model, goad, threat, and stimulus” – and, for radicals Kang and Liang, its role “cannot be overstated” (p. 42). Don Price looks at the prolific Japanese thinker Hiroyuki Katō, and carefully tracks Katō’s formative influence on Liang Qichao’s thinking, particularly in terms of Liang’s understanding of Social Darwinism. Marianne Bastid-Bruguière performs a singular service by going to German and French sources that few English-speaking scholars of China and Japan consult. Through meticulous scholarship, she rescues from obscurity Johann Kaspar Bluntschli, famed jurist of the German school and leading authority on the concept of “state.” In 1899, Liang Qichao discovered a translation into “excellent classical Chinese” of Bluntschli by the forgotten Heiji Azuma (p. 108), and appropriated it in a “word-for-word plagiarism” (p. 118). Bastid-Bruguière’s brilliant essay should be a must read for scholars of modern China and Japan. It is a healthy reminder, in an age of post-modernist scholarship, of the ongoing need and essential value of empirical, document-based research.

Liang’s understanding of Immanuel Kant – entirely “by way of Japanese translation” (p. 130) – is examined by K’o-wu Huang. Yoshihiro Ishikawa focuses on Liang as the man who “pioneered the modern discipline of human geography in China” (p. 156). Liang’s debt to Japanese translators and geographers is documented page after page in this carefully researched piece. Bing Sang then explores Liang Qichao as “founder and pioneer” (p. 177) for China of the field of national learning – a term that originated in Japan, and whose Japanese writings Liang appropriated, usually without attribution and often by plagiarizing (p. 186).

Of the remaining essays, Noriko Mori’s essay on Liang, Buddhism, and modern Japan has perhaps the broadest appeal and implications. As Mori points out, “the great majority of influential late-Qing intellectuals were enthusiastic researchers of Buddhism” (p. 222). Liang’s interest in



Buddhism was sustained over a lifetime, before, during, and after his stay in Japan. In Japan, Liang absorbed “the most recent products of Japanese Buddhist scholars who had been stimulated by East Asian studies in Europe” (p. 246). Readers of this volume will also want to look at Hiroko Sakatomo’s probing article on Liang’s concept of race, national identity, and their relationship to gender, as informed by late-19th century concepts of “white race” and “yellow race,” and the expectation of an imminent race war between the two. Finally, those interested in language will benefit from Mareshi Saitō’s exploration of Liang’s consciousness of language, beginning with his native Cantonese, and extending to Mandarin and Japanese.

Where does a volume like this leave Liang Qichao? Joshua Fogel raises this and other questions in his introduction. He writes, “For those reluctant to concede a significant Japanese influence on Liang, there is no longer any room for debate” (p. 12). Liang’s writings were enormously influential. But – as Fogel writes – his writings should not be confused with “academic brilliance, great linguistic breadth, or even originality” (p. 12). It is as “publicist” or “public intellectual (as opposed to an academic or scholar)” (p. 11) that Liang stands out, in Fogel’s assessment.

During his years of residence in Japan, from 1898 to 1912, Liang Qichao was at the forefront of seeding and nurturing the ground for a new China. To take him out of the picture of China’s intellectual seismic shift from “traditional” to “modern” renders it incomprehensible. Liang Qichao’s place in modern Chinese history is secure.

DOUGLAS R. REYNOLDS

*Bazoku de miru Manshū: Chō Sakurin no ayundamichi (Looking at Manchurian Bandits: The Road Taken by Zhang Zuolin)*. By YURI SHIBUTANI. [Tokyo: Kodansha, 2005. 242 pp. ISBN 4-06-258317-8.]

During the first half of the 20th century, China was plagued by gangs of roving bandits, in Chinese called local bandits (*tufei*). Especially in the wilds of Manchuria and Inner Mongolia, these gangs were mounted on horses and claimed wide swathes of land as their own territory. The many Japanese in Manchuria referred to these bands as mounted bandits (*bazoku*). The image of the *bazoku* that remains from old photographs is that of rugged and somewhat unkempt men wrapped in furs and padded clothing against the cold, congregating in groups of three or four looking untrustingly at the camera. Clearly, one would conclude from the photos, an outlaw group beholden to no authority.

Yuri Shibutani’s new book does not deny the impact of the photo images, but she peels away some of the myth and legend in order to reveal how and why many *bazoku* groups formed and the ways in

which they maintained themselves. The picture of these groups that then emerges is refreshing in being perfectly logical and convincingly argued.

For starters, she tells us, horses were hard to get and expensive to maintain. They needed a lot of fodder, adequate periods of rest and the regular attention of a veterinary doctor. Usually only the top leaders of the mounted bandit gangs actually had horses to ride. Likewise the firearms, which needed ammunition and regular cleaning, could be expensive and not easy to obtain. Though it might be overreaching to say the gangs represented miniature bureaucracies, they did nevertheless require people with a number of specialties. Accountants or trained clerks were always in demand to oversee the storage and distribution of ammunition, padded coats, small arms and cash-on-hand. Veterinary doctors were welcomed by the leaders who depended on horses. Fortunetellers were especially useful because they were the perfect intelligence scouts who could move about the countryside into rural villages and periodic markets without ever being challenged.

If maintaining a mounted gang was not as simple a proposition as one might imagine, then how did the gang form? Shibusani tells us that almost all of the major gangs had a well-to-do patron, usually a fairly rich landowner who was a member of the local elite and who provided the funds necessary to obtain horses, firearms, food and other equipment. The purpose of financing a gang was the opposite of causing chaos in the country-side. It was rather to promote the local stability that would allow the landowner's tenant farmers to plant and harvest their crops, to sell the crops to agents who would then be able to transport the crops to market. Many gangs were known locally as a *baoxiandui*, a protection unit, and in the eyes of their patron they were like a local militia corps. Of course keeping the peace was another way of running a protection racket whereby the local farmers were asked for payments in order to prevent their land from being fouled or their crops destroyed. It was a way for these units to generate some of their own income.

Shibusani provides a concrete account by looking at the early career of the powerful warlord Zhang Zuolin (1875–1928). For decades he has been portrayed as a rough-hewn bandit leader who came to control the three eastern provinces of Manchuria through terror and lawlessness. In fact, his father-in-law was a local wealthy landowner named Zhao Zhanyuan who provided the funds for the protection unit that Zhang organized. They protected the lands of their patron in the Zhaojiamiao area to the west of Fengtian city, and extracted protection money from farmers and rural inhabitants. Within a few years Zhang Zuolin was hobnobbing with the influential local elite of southern Manchuria and himself buying land along the Liao river. When Zhang Zuolin's eldest son Xueliang (1901–2001) was ready for school, the curriculum approved by his father included English conversation, Western political science and international relations. Hardly the education to be prescribed, one would think, by a wild mounted bandit, but Zhang had never seen himself as merely a mounted bandit.

During the first two decades of the 20th century, Manchuria was rocked by a series of highly disruptive conflicts, the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905 fought in south Manchuria and the 1911 Revolution being only two examples, which served to strip the region of all control from the central government in Beijing. In the extreme power vacuum that resulted, it was natural for regional authority to fall into the hands of local groups, and the formation of Manchurian *bazoku* was one result. Here again, Shibutani points out that this traditionally-accepted picture is accurate but too simplistic, because money and influence from the international big powers was actively used to organize and finance mounted bandit gangs in this period. For example, the Russians used them to gather intelligence on Japanese troop movements and to harass Japanese lines during the Russo-Japanese War. Later the Japanese financed them in the hope of destabilizing Manchuria and encouraging it to split off from the rest of China. (This scenario, choreographed by the Japanese, was eventually played out when Manchukuo was established in 1932.) In other words, some gangs came into being because of the availability of funds from a foreign big-power. With major funding from contesting international powers, joining a bandit gang in Manchuria was for some young men in their 20s and 30s a career opportunity.

Shibutani, who teaches at Toyama University, has given us this new look at the once-feared *bazoku* of modern Manchuria. She shows that in important ways they were quite different from their romantic image of lawless, free-roaming renegades. They were connected to the very top of local society and often had a steady source of funds, either from their patron or from a foreign government. She also points out that many gang members were able to blend back into local society with ease when not engaged in gang activity. This was especially true for the wagon drivers, small traders and cooks, who seamlessly lived a double life. In studying the *bazoku* phenomenon, Shibutani urges researchers to consult the widest range of available materials possible, to include memoirs and fictionalized accounts as well as the more typical archived police and government reports. She has used the work of Philip Billingsley, *Bandits in Republican China* (Stanford University Press, 1988), and other works in English, Chinese and Japanese. She has written a lively and three-dimensional account of Manchuria's fabled mounted bandits.

RONALD SULESKI

*Corruption By Design: Building Clean Government in Mainland China and Hong Kong.* By MELANIE MANION. [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004. x + 283 pp. £32.95. ISBN 0-674-01486-3]

Melanie Manion's *Corruption By Design* is the most recent addition to growing literature on corruption in contemporary China. Whereas Gong (*The Politics of Corruption in Contemporary China*) analysed how shifts in policy affected corruption, Kwong (*The Political Economy of*

*Corruption in China*) examined the socio-economic context of corruption, Lu (*Cadres and Corruption*) explored why corruption flourished in the post-Mao era, and Yan described the shifting pattern of corruption (*Corruption and Market in Contemporary China*), Manion focuses on controlling corruption. She argues that the dilemma facing China is that the spread of corruption has pushed the political system past a dangerous “tipping point,” beyond which corruption has become so widespread that enforcement capabilities no longer provide a credible deterrent and hence corruption will to grow at exponential rates and become uncontrollable. Given that the current leadership seems to be aware of this looming threat and has signalled a willingness to attack the problem, Manion posits that the key question is whether the regime can engineer a shift from an equilibrium of “widespread corruption” to one of “clean government.” In hopes of finding some indication, she begins with a comparative analysis of Hong Kong’s success in controlling corruption.

Although Hong Kong is now considered one of the less corrupted governments in the world (Transparency International (TI), for example, has scored it roughly on par with the United States), as Manion points out, in the past it was beset by widespread corruption, including a form of corruption known as “syndicated corruption” which involved the police in systematic extortion and protection rackets. Despite the extent of corruption, Manion argues that a combination of intensified enforcement by the Independence Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) designed to break down syndicated corruption, an educational program aimed at weakening a cultural expectation of corruption and strengthening citizens’ moral expectation of honesty, and an ongoing effort to redesign public institutions to eliminate opportunities for corruption, led to a real decrease in corruption during the 1980s and a shift from widespread corruption to a new equilibrium of clean government. The fact that Hong Kong’s government remained clean after the 1997 Retrocession proves, Manion concludes, that it is possible to reduce corruption, but only if a government attacks it on multiple levels and tackles the problem as a whole, rather than going after it in a piecemeal manner that emphasizes high visibility and short-term bursts of enforcement.

The bulk of the book is given over to an analysis of China’s efforts to respond to what Manion terms the “explosion of corruption” as market reforms deepened. The analysis and data are sufficiently rich and detailed such that it is impossible to provide even a superficial overview in the course of a short book review. I shall, therefore, concentrate on the core of Manion’s analysis: the viability of China’s corruption effort. In short, Manion finds a host of shortcomings. Whereas in Hong Kong the ICAC was granted independent and “draconian” authority, on the mainland multiple agencies have been granted partial and often overlapping authority. Party agencies are positioned to trump and block judicial agencies. The misappropriation of public funds and misuse of public authority are viewed as “irregularities” rather than criminal malfeasance. Transgressions by party members are frequently covered up for “political” reasons. Public officials and cadres are often “exempted” from criminal

prosecution, even when their offenses involve the theft or misappropriation of large sums. Despite threats of harsh punishment, offers of clemency during the early phases of anticorruption campaigns have transformed them from exercises in harsh enforcement into “peaks of leniency.”

Manion concludes that the lack of an effective, co-ordinated response has pushed China past the tipping point and into the “widespread corruption” equilibrium. But is the damage irreparable? Is China rapidly becoming a “kleptocracy?” Here Manion seems rather indecisive. Having argued that China is past the critical tipping point and that the continued growth of corruption is a significant challenge to political stability, she seems to back away, arguing that, on the one hand, the institutions needed for clean government are incompatible with Leninism but that it is plausible that the CCP might nevertheless embrace the non-Leninist structures needed to build clean government. In other words, even though corruption has passed the tipping point, it has not reached the “point of no return.”

Manion is convinced that China has passed the tipping point, but her indecision about whether it has reached the point of no return reflects what I see as the potential shortcoming of the book. Although I agree that corruption has intensified as reform has deepened, I find Manion’s claim that corruption continues to explode problematic. In reality, we really do not know how bad corruption has become because we cannot measure the “actual rate of corruption.” We can make guesses based on either the “revealed rate of corruption” (i.e., data on arrests) or the “perceived rate of corruption” (i.e., experts’ impressions), both of which are inherently imperfect proxies. Manion recognizes this, stating that the official enforcement statistics are some fraction of the actual rate. She appears to assume, however, that the revealed rate is a linear fractional function of the actual rate and hence that positive linear relationship between criminal cases investigated and time she finds by de-trending the official data (p. 89) is indicative of an explosion in the actual rate of corruption.

I think this problematic because, as Manion’s formal model reveals, the gap between the revealed and actual rates of corruption will vary with the intensity of enforcement. If this is true, then the combination of periodic clampdowns and progressive – albeit slow and often haphazard – improvements in routine enforcement capabilities Manion describes ought to have narrowed the gap over time. If so, then the trend line may be curvilinear, rather than linear. This implies that the current “protracted war” against corruption may have actually kept China closer to the tipping point than Manion suggests. I bring this up because, after all, for all of the talk in Sinological circles about an explosion of corruption in post-Mao China, indices such as those published by TI and the World Bank do not rank China among the more notoriously corrupt. Instead, they place it pretty much in the middle of the pack. TI’s ranking, moreover, has remained relatively steady over the past decade, which would be in keeping with a stabilization of corruption rather than an explosion as Manion contends.

Questions about whether corruption has worsened, intensified, or stabilized, cannot, however, take away from the outstanding quality of Manion's book and her insightful analysis of the inner workings of China's anti-corruption drive. By combining a theoretically grounded model of the corruption-enforcement relationship with detailed data drawn from a deep reading of Chinese law, anti-corruption regulations, institutional structures and organizational relationships and case data, Manion provides a sophisticated yet highly readable analysis of how the design of anti-corruption efforts in both Hong Kong and mainland China affects their efficacy and hence the spread of corruption. In the process, she has set a new standard for the analysis of corruption.

ANDREW WEDEMAN

*Génération perdue: Le mouvement d'envoi des jeunes instruits à la campagne en Chine, 1968–1980.* By MICHEL BONNIN. [Paris: Editions de l'école des hautes études en sciences sociales, 2004. xvi + 491 pp. €39.00. ISBN 2-7132-2016-5.]

This remarkable historical survey of *xiaxiang* looks into the movement to send down educated youth (the *zhiqing*) to the countryside from the last year of the Cultural Revolution until the consolidation of Deng Xiaoping's hold on power. There was a first wave of *xiaxiang* between 1955 and the onset of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, but Michel Bonnin has decided to focus on the relaunching of that movement in 1968 and its continuation amidst the growing social and economic problems it raised, because the relative failure of the first wave begs the question of the motivation behind its revival. More than 16 million youth aged over 15 during the period were sent down to the countryside, with two peaks, in 1968 and 1975, of more than two million *zhiqing* for each year. The movement was launched with the avowed purpose that after they "eat bitterness" among the peasants, urban students would learn from them and reject bourgeois values. This "moral movement" instigated by Mao and his followers was considered a failure after his passing, but it would continue for another three years, despite popular resistance: initially a misguided policy, its continuation appeared as a terrible injustice. The implementation of the *xiaxiang* was made possible all along despite the divergences between pragmatic leaders such as Liu Shaoqi and Zhou Enlai and radicals led by Mao, because each faction had its own motivation. Bonnin reviews them in the first three chapters of his book, and concludes that if the first wave of *xiaxiang* had genuine economic motivations, the last wave represented primarily an ideological offensive serving political objectives. He presents his case by describing in the second section of his book the evolution of the policy, recalling the lived experience of *zhiqing* in the two chapters of his third section, and describing informal resistance to the *xiaxiang* in a fourth section. The amount of evidence marshalled to make his case is impressive and makes the argument very convincing. Michel Bonnin has spent a quarter of a

century researching this subject, starting with interviews of refugees in the mid 1970s in Hong Kong, and – following through the 1990s – when he interviewed former *zhiqing* who were willing to describe their experiences. The author bases his argument on an impressive amount of sources other than his interviews: reports from the official press; statistical data made available only in the 1990s, when research on the topic ceased to be taboo, *neibu* provincial yearbooks documenting internal directives from party and state leaders, *dazibao* and the unofficial press that emerged briefly in 1978–1979. The pursuit of this research represented a daunting task prior to 1987 since this was a forbidden topic in China. Graduate students who can read French need not wait for an English translation: the prose is fluid, the tale this book tells is gripping. That said, *Génération perdue* should be translated because it contains a wealth of information from which researchers may also benefit. This work represents a major contribution to the field of Chinese studies and should not be limited to those who have an interest in the discipline of history. The *zhiqing* represents an important demographic cohort of contemporary Chinese society that has been hit hard twice in the space of less than two decades: once, by the *xiaxiang* movement itself, and then, by the policy of reform. Many of the *zhiqing* have lost precious years of schooling and as a result have had difficulty finding regular employment as they reached maturity. This research serves a very useful purpose because it sheds light on a major social problem faced by current leaders: the tragedy of an important segment of the population that was cheated of its youth, experienced adulthood handicapped by low qualifications, and is now about to hit retirement with very little perspective. In doing so, Bonnin warns analysts of Chinese politics – or the politics of other authoritarian regimes – against the danger of reducing ideological claims to mere masks that cloak ulterior and more pragmatic goals. Sometimes, unfortunately, leaders *do* believe in the virtue of their hubristic utopian ideals despite all the evidence of the suffering it inflicts on people. This book serves as a well-argued, abundantly documented reminder of this terrible reality.

ANDRÉ LALIBERTÉ

*Community Participation in China: Issues and Processes for Capacity Building.* Edited by JANELLE PLUMMER and JOHN G. TAYLOR. [London and Sterling, VA: Earthscan, 2004. xxv + 358 pp. ISBN 0-84407-086-7.]

This book aims to evaluate previous experiences of participatory projects in China and to contribute to building up capacity for participation amongst practioners. The volume is timely for several reasons. There is little English literature on projects in China that involve community members in their design, implementation and monitoring. Key government departments such as the China Leading Group on poverty are now considering how to encourage mainstream participation in their projects.

Chinese universities are starting to teach participation to students of ecology and forestry. And increasing number of international agencies are running projects in partnership with Chinese government bodies with the donors commonly making “participation” a condition of funding.

Part one of the book considers how socioeconomic liberalisation, the rise of civil society and the expansion of village elections have created opportunities for participation. It also delineates the factors that threaten to derail participation. Factors within the institutional environment include Party-state dominance; top-down mobilization methods; a cadre evaluation system focused on outputs rather than on impacts; a lack of financial accountability; and sectoral divisions within government. Factors within development agencies involve the strategic use of “participation” to legitimize projects and to achieve pre-determined targets. Community factors include gender, class, clan and ethnic inequalities as well as institutional arrangements and time factors that make farmers reluctant to participate.

Part two presents translations of six case studies written mostly by Chinese researchers. These studies deal with biodiversity and natural resource management, irrigation management, resettlement and poverty alleviation. Each study explores the institutions that conspire against innovation and self-organization whilst trying to identify some achievements in the implementation of participation.

The chapter by Liu et al on forestry management is interesting for its elucidation of the difficulties in creating incentives for staff to adopt participation: the salary benefits, reimbursements and promotion of forestry cadres mean that their performances are all geared towards demonstrating competence according to conventional technical criteria and quota completion. Also, the requirement that the forestry workers implement birth planning quotas and collect taxes alienates them from the farmers. Nevertheless, the authors indicate that the forestry cadres’ experiences of international projects have encouraged them to transfer participatory methods to domestic projects such as the grain-for-green program. The top-down coercive nature of grain-for-green described in Xu et al (2004, *International Forestry Review* 6: 3–4), however, makes me wonder if Liu *et al* are too earnest in their efforts to remain optimistic about the transformative potential of participation, given that it not pursued as part of a wider radical political project.

The chapter by Zhang Lanying on a community health and rural reconstruction movement is important because it highlights the role of history in shaping approaches to rural development and the potential for participation to become indigenized. It also reveals, yet again, the difficulties in achieving participation within existing institutional constraints. For instance, project workers in Zhang’s study were subject to random “inspections” and interference from upper levels. And inadequate co-ordination between departments responsible for waste treatment frustrated efforts to initiate an integrated and environmentally sustainable program.



In part three, lessons are drawn about how to make participation in China more mainstream. This section observes that under present institutional arrangements, implementing participation depends on support from charismatic leaders, so these methods only occur in sanctioned projects and end when the projects end. The key lesson therefore is that local understanding and capacity need enhancing. The editors' suggestions to achieve this include incorporating participation into education curricula, including the use of participation in cadre evaluations, and making County Planning Commissions stakeholders in participatory projects.

Although the contributors examine the constraints and opportunities for participation in China, a weakness is that they focus on matters of implementation to the exclusion of evaluating the concept of participation itself. This is problematic for three reasons. First, the contributors assume that participation is good – it would have been useful for this to be debated in light of literature that identifies it a tyranny and a rhetorical device which facilitates the managerial domination of interventions. Secondly, it is unclear which aspects of project implementation constitute participation and which aspects are socialist mobilization methods. Certainly the authors highlight that owing to recent political history Chinese people associate participation with mobilizing community labour and resources for top-down projects rather than with community stewardship. But many methods described by the contributors as “participatory” are in fact also established components of mobilization, for instance, holding meetings at various levels down to that of village groups and arranging visits to model projects. Even “notifying” a community of an impending intervention is said to constitute an explicit step in a uniquely Chinese formulation of participation! This raises the question: how different are socialist and developmental participatory methods given that both occur in a top-down and undemocratic institutional culture?

Finally, although the contributors are astutely aware of the constraints and inequalities produced by China's institutional environment, in limiting the discussion to implementation, the contributors restrict their recommendations to those that seem feasible within the existing political system. They therefore sidestep the question of whether true participation is possible in the absence of systemic transformation and democratization. A valuable companion to this book is Bin Wu's (2003) monograph *Sustainable Development in Rural China* which showed that although farmer self-organization is central to alleviating poverty, bureaucratic dominance and ineptitude stifle the developmental potential of local networks and innovations. Bin Wu argued therefore that rural China needs democracy in the sense of development *by*, rather than *for* the people.

Although the book would have benefited from more critical analysis, it nevertheless deserves recognition for innovation and meticulousness. The volume itself was compiled through participatory methods: the material is richly empirical and the writing was facilitated by intensive workshops involving Western and Chinese scholars and practitioners. The end product presents an assemblage of useful information for persons interested in

development management, natural resource management and rural administration and for anyone embarking on fieldwork or development projects in rural China.

RACHEL MURPHY

*Rhetoric of the Chinese Cultural Revolution: The Impact on Chinese Thought, Culture, and Communication.* By XING LÜ. [Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2004. xiii + 250 pp. \$49.95. ISBN 1-57003-543-1.]

In August 1966, a group of Red Guards in Beijing distributed a broadsheet that denounced foul and vulgar language and called on their comrades everywhere to join forces in an effort to eradicate such language. “Slang that is intolerable to the ear and extremely shameless” was an “opium of the working people,” they argued, and therefore “incompatible” with Beijing’s reputation as “the home of the Party Centre and Chairman Mao and the birthplace of the world revolution.” Today we can be certain that these particular Red Guards were in the minority: in due course, the Cultural Revolution became all but synonymous with the spread in China of foul and vulgar language and political speech saturated with angry dysphemisms and ugly weasel words.

What were they *thinking*, the people who heard, read and spread the rhetoric of the Cultural Revolution? That is what the author of this book tries to explain – not merely to her readers but also, one senses, to herself. She is the president of the Association for Chinese Communications Studies, based in the United States, and professor in communications at De Paul University. Born and raised in China during the Cultural Revolution, her characterization of her CCP cadre father – sacked in the fall of 1966 – and of herself as a young girl speaks volumes about the assumptions that inform her book: her father, she explains, was someone who “throughout his life... had almost no private thoughts and never learned how to think critically and independently” (p. 14); and about her own teenage self, she says “I had virtually no private thoughts and no individual expressions during those years” (p. 26).

To go from a theoretically falsifiable claim that she herself and her father never actually *expressed* anything that might be deserving of the label “private,” to positing that therefore neither of them entertained critical, independent, and individual *thoughts* strikes me as dangerous. But, fuzzy as it is, that is the position that the author takes. The relevance of her initial characterizations of intellectual activity, or the absence thereof, becomes clear when she introduces the theoretical underpinnings of her analysis of the rhetoric of the Cultural Revolution, a rhetoric “through immersion in [which] the Chinese masses were deprived of their critical-thinking abilities” (p. 199). “In this book,” she explains in chapter two, with respect to “the causal relationship between language and thought” (a.k.a. the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis), “I take *both* the ‘weak form’ *and* the ‘strong form’ positions” (p. 30). Sometimes, she explains,

language merely “influences” thought, at other times, however, it does “determine” it. Unfortunately, in the remaining six chapters, her adoption of both positions is if anything *not* conducive to clarity. Assuming for the sake of argument that thoughts and languages really do relate in some fashion that can fruitfully be described as one of language sometimes “influencing” and sometimes “determining” thought, one would naturally want to be told the circumstances under which one is the case, and not the other. But one is not.

*Rhetoric of the Cultural Revolution* reveals itself in due course to be not so much a sophisticated scientific work as a broadly descriptive monograph with a fair amount of emotionally-charged commentary, as in the observation on the language used by one interviewee’s ex-husband: “He apparently does not have a vocabulary and thoughts of his own” (p. 197). Intellectual tastes differ greatly and other readers may find some of the author’s claims mildly interesting, not to mention be comforted by assertions like “as China becomes a member of the international community,... Western cultural values will help China grow into a more rational and rule-governed society” (p. 203). Personally, I could not help but be profoundly bored by what has to count as one of this century’s least successful works, so far, on a most important topic.

MICHAEL SCHOENHALS

*Chinese Medicine in Early Communist China, 1945–1963: A Medicine of Revolution.* By KIM TAYLOR. [London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005. 236 pp. £55.00. ISBN 0-415-34512-X.]

With the appearance of a few recent books, it is finally becoming possible to learn much about the history and sociology of medicine in modern and contemporary China through English-language studies. Kim Taylor’s book, *Chinese Medicine in Early Communist China*, is a gratifying addition to the list of genuinely new historical studies. In it she offers access to an archive of the process through which “traditional” Chinese medicine, between the end of the Second World War and the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, came into existence in its contemporary institutional forms.

Gathering materials from official reports of the policy process, interviews, the few detailed histories in Chinese, medical journals, and textbooks, Taylor meticulously details the policy process that was so influential in framing the institutions and practices of Chinese medicine. Her overall argument is that “TCM” – her term for the modern systematized form of “the medicine” – is entirely a creature of the Communist state and its shifting priorities. She claims that state “manipulation” outweighed any consideration of Chinese medicine’s “actual therapeutic value” (p. 151) in achieving the current level of state support.

This position is at one level difficult to argue with. The documents and Chinese historical accounts brought together in the book certainly

demonstrate that state medical policy, especially as mediated through the Ministry of Health (MOH), was extremely formative in the establishment of the current range of institutions – schools, research centers, curricula, textbooks – in which Chinese medicine more or less thrives today. Of course these materials also demonstrate considerable vacillation and struggle among the powerful interests in play, and the policy and implementation process was quite “piecemeal” as a result (p. 63). Though it is hard to generalize (and Taylor’s writing does not succeed very well at this level), the main contenders noted here are the modernizers and scientizers who dominated the MOH and parts of the Party, and the anti-expert Left allied with Mao Zedong. In this respect, the story told here does not differ a great deal from the earlier, less detailed and document-based research of David M. Lampton. But Taylor’s account can be credited with one very important achievement: this book makes it impossible to sustain the naive idea that “Chinese medicine” is somehow naturally suited to the needs and desires of Chinese people, and thus maintained as an institutional presence for purely cultural reasons. Rather she shows eminently well what a long and arduous political struggle it was for those who saw some usefulness for Chinese medicine to combat the widespread notion that the only serviceable modern medicine was Western biomedicine.

There are many fascinating moments in the process narrated in the book. One of my favorites is the subtle but all-determining shift that takes place when Xu Yunbei, speaking for the MOH, “misinterprets” Mao’s famous 1958 directive that “Chinese medicine is a great treasure-house,” in a reading that leads away from the “Western doctors study Chinese medicine” programs actually emphasized by Mao toward an autonomous path of development for Chinese medicine itself (pp. 120–123). Another, less dramatic but even more practical turning point is the sudden vast expansion of Chinese medical personnel and services in 1955 (pp. 75–77).

The book’s overall argument about the oppressive role of the state could be read as rather cynical, and it is true that Taylor – perhaps because she has not attended to internal debates among Chinese medicine specialists – is insensitive to the stratagems and agenda of many specialists who quietly manoeuvred many small but cumulative changes over these important years. But chapter one, devoted largely to the work of Yan’an medical cadre Zhu Lian in developing “new acupuncture,” is quite inspiring in its capture of an idealistic revolutionary moment in representing technical knowledge that had a significant aftermath for policy and practice. This relatively early step in the unification of Chinese medicine and Western medical anatomy is a fascinating demonstration that today’s Chinese medicine is actually quite modern. The remaining chapters proceed in a step-by-step, more or less chronological presentation of the policy and implementation process as “TCM” institutions grew.

The courses in which this book might be taught would be rather specialized. For students and teachers who have reason to care about the

concrete details of the development of the contemporary form of Chinese medicine in the PRC, it would serve as an excellent resource. But readers seeking a more comprehensive explanatory narrative – one that is coherent about the mechanisms and agencies of historical developments in modern China – should look elsewhere. Taylor's own explanatory remarks tend to be internally contradictory and unambitious. At this level, despite countervailing evidence in the same pages, the Chinese "state" is totalitarian, "Western medicine" is obviously superior, and "TCM" has become an "easy-access nutshell." The actual story told here, however, is far from being so simple, as most of the book demonstrates with its wealth of fascinating detail.

JUDITH FARQUHAR

*Dangerous Strait. The U.S – Taiwan – China Crisis.* Edited by NANCY BERNKOPF TUCKER. [New York: Columbia University Press, 2005. xiv + 272 pp. ISBN 0-231-13564-5.]

This is a very good and useful book. It does not cover all aspects of the Washington-Taipei-Beijing triangle. But in eight chapters, written by seven different and distinguished authors, it greatly helps the reader comprehend the complexity and danger of this evolving triangle.

As the editor Nancy Tucker reminds us in her introduction, relations across the Taiwan Strait, as well as this triangular relationship, are in constant flux. To put it bluntly, there is no status quo, and the multiple variables at play make any prospective work particularly arduous. The only two pieces of evidence that impose themselves on everyone are: 1) Taiwan will remain 100 miles away from the Chinese mainland (p. 15); 2) the situation is increasingly dangerous. Partly drawn from this book's title, the second conclusion is my own assessment. But I do not think that the contributors to this volume would object to it.

Let's look, with Shirley Rigger, at Taiwan's democratization: this is clearly an "unfinished business." Democratic consolidation is far from being over, in particular in view of the bad records of Chen Shui-bian's administration in terms of governance. One piece of good news is that part of the institutional reform hoped for by this contributor was passed in June 2005. However, a minority government will remain likely, with all the problems of parliamentary obstruction attached to it.

Steven Phillips's chapter on the history of Taiwan's independence movement is in a way more reassuring: this movement's chances of winning over a majority of the island's population are slim. But its impact on de-Sinicizing Taiwan has been real since Chen's first election in 2000, contributing to strengthening a separate Taiwanese national identity better accepted by the younger generation of citizens of the Republic of China.

This brings us to the next contribution on Lee Teng-hui's "separatism", authored by Richard Bush, former managing director of the American Institute in Taiwan. Bush makes the very convincing argument that when he was ROC president and Kuomintang's chairman, Lee never formally

rejected eventual unification with the mainland. Actually, Lee's personal evolution until 2000 at least is quite representative of the growing "sovereignist" consensus on the island: that ROC is part of China but at the same time a sovereign state which should be represented as such on the international stage. One can add that whoever sits in the Presidential Palace in Taipei, he or she will defend this viewpoint, even if neither the People's Republic of China (PRC) nor the United States share it. The changes that Lee went through after 2000 could have been better explored (the impact of aging and his close relations with the Presbyterian Church). But this remains a must-read chapter.

T.J. Cheng's contribution on China-Taiwan economic interdependence is also a good synthesis of this growing linkage. Cheng convincingly concludes that this asymmetrical integration does not really provide more leverage to Beijing on Taipei. Though the *Taishang* (Taiwanese business people established on the mainland) would require a special study, it is striking how little influence they have acquired so far on their government's mainland policy.

Defence and security are the most delicate issues related to Taiwan today. Both Michael Swaine and Michael Chase offer in the two next contributions a very comprehensive overview of improvements and lingering weaknesses of the ROC armed forces as well as their cooperation with the US. One reservation, however: I would not have put most of the blame on the Chen government. There are trends in the pan-blue camp (the KMT and James Soong People's First Party) that go beyond a refusal to co-operate with their government: some leaders of these parties have started questioning the usefulness of high defence spending, as if they thought both sides of the Taiwan Strait had already moved too close to contemplate an armed conflict. This position is tantamount to speeding up the changing military balance across the Strait and probably jeopardizing the status quo in a way that the US would not welcome.

The complexity of US interest in the China-Taiwan equation is very well underscored in this volume. Some of the unsaid or unwritten implications of the US commitments, however, could have been discussed further. An example would be how the support brought to Taiwan's security after the island democratized constitutes an indirect support for Taiwan's nation-building process and the emergence of a politically constructed identity that shares many similarities with, say, Singapore: a new state with elements of Chinese culture that have been integrated in a new political project. In other words, in guaranteeing the status quo in the Strait, the US has contributed to consolidating the opposition of the Taiwanese's large majority to unification. This was safe when the Beijing regime was weak. But today, as the PRC is becoming more powerful economically and militarily, the risks attached to this policy have inevitably increased.

In such circumstances, can the US stick to its policy of "strategic ambiguity" as Nancy Tucker argues in an ultimate chapter? The reasons given by the author are all well known and well founded. Nevertheless, it is hard to deny that since the 1995-96 missile crisis, and George W.

Bush's "whatever it takes" statement in April 2001, the room left by the US government to ambiguity has been narrowing. Beyond the differences that can be perceived between the Democrats (as well as their questionable insistence on the "three nos") and the Republicans (as well as their belated vigilance towards Chen), because of the inevitable tilt of the military balance in favour of the PRC around 2010, whatever the Taipei authorities do in terms of defence modernization, the US will have no choice but to utter more clarity and be more involved in the security of the Taiwan Strait. Does that mean that Washington will one day force Taipei to agree upon an unwelcome agreement with Beijing? This is not certain. In any case, this book shows very well that the security dilemma dominating the Taiwan Strait is far from being over.

JEAN-PIERRE CABESTAN