

claims that the US mistreatment of POWs is worse than that of the Japanese during the war.

As historical evidence, the Sasakawa diaries do not reveal much new. The more informative daily entries unfortunately end on November 20, 1946 (he either stopped writing them or they got lost). Sasakawa does not offer us insight into the relationships that developed in Sugamo between him, Kishi, and other Japanese conservatives who would go on to dominate the political scene of the 1950s and beyond. Nevertheless, the diaries and letters nicely describe the microcosm of prison life. Moreover, they are a testament to Sasakawa himself and as such provide fascinating reading. One will not solve the enigma of this man, but will come much closer to knowing him.

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China in the 21st Century: What Everyone Needs to Know. By Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. 164 pp. \$16.95/£9.99 (paper).

Particularly with the rise of China and the evolution of Sino-US relations, academia is still divided on how to evaluate China's past, present, and future. As Chancellor's Professor of History at the University of California, editor of the *Journal of Asian Studies*, and the co-founder of a blog entitled *The China Beat*, Jeffrey Wasserstrom has proven expertise and qualifications in China studies. This does make *China in the 21st Century* more inclusive, and it offers contributions to "normalize discussions of China" (p. xv).

This impressive book features two thematic sections. In the first section (chs. 1–3), "Historical Legacies," Wasserstrom gives an illuminating overview of China's two-millennia history, and examines the corresponding impacts on contemporary China. The following pages (chs. 4–6) analyze contemporary Chinese society, question some fallacies about China, and predict the tendencies of Sino-US relations in the foreseeable future. At the end of the book are reading suggestions and notes for further study.

For the literature of China studies, this book corrects four fallacies about China, and provides moderate contributions to establish a

balanced approach to China studies. First, Wasserstrom stresses that China has its own multistranded democratic traditions, which “are not just recent imports from the West” (p. xxi), but are “more democratic than authoritarian” to a large extent (p. 17). For instance, there is a constant democratic tradition in Confucian thinking, that is, the conception of the “Mandate of Heaven” (Tianming). As Mencius explained, China’s rulers are responsible for protecting the interests of those below them. If rulers fail to do so, Heaven will turn to support those that aim at establishing a new dynasty. In such case, insurgencies or rebellions would be morally justified. In most cases, the “Mandate of Heaven” is the most essential rationale behind the dynastic cycle in China’s history. In the words of Wasserstrom, this is an important sentiment of democracy. It is worth noting that the top leaders of the Communist Party of China also keep the “Mandate of Heaven” in mind. In contrast with democracy, as Wasserstrom analyzes, Chinese leaders really worry about four challenges facing China: the economy, the environment, energy, and endemic corruption.

Second, many policies promoted by the Chinese government do have foreign equivalents. In other words, “many things going on there parallel those that have occurred or are occurring in other countries” (p. 98). In the case of Internet censorship, for many years China has been criticized for controlling online communications and access. In the opinion of Wasserstrom, many countries monitor access to online material. According to reports issued by Reporters Without Borders, many countries publicly took charge of Internet surveillance systems, such as the United Arab Emirates and India. Moreover, China and the United States do have many similarities in other fields, such as the death penalty.

Third, Wasserstrom reveals that the most deeply rooted US misunderstanding toward China comes from overlooking China’s diversity. In other words, dichotomic terms are always introduced to interpret China—for example, dichotomy between loyalists and dissidents. In fact, there are many noticeable divides in China, especially religious and regional divides. At present, there are a significant number of Buddhists, Christians, and Muslims residing in disparate regions of China. It’s noteworthy that the divide between Chinese Christians has become more significant. For instance, many Chinese Catholics do not acknowledge the papacy, while others respect the authority of the pope.

Fourth, Wasserstrom addresses one of the leading factors in Chinese misunderstanding of the United States, which is “failure to

appreciate how differently media systems work” in both countries (p. 112). In China, most Chinese consider that the media system always reflects official opinion. Following this logic, they will easily assume that US commercial media (e.g., newspapers) often represent the standpoints of the US government. But they don’t. As Wasserstrom argues, some US media are biased against China and even emphasize negative news.

As Wasserstrom confesses, a book of this length could be encyclopedic, and there are several emerging issues left for further studies in the future, such as the rising divide between public and private sectors, especially the rise of the private security industry in China. At the same time, discussion about the Chinese food security dilemma is also critically needed. Therefore, readers may look forward to the publication of Wasserstrom’s follow-up work on China.

Overall, *China in the 21st Century* not only provides valuable and alternative explanations for academics, students, and journalists who are interested in China and Sino-US relations, but also helps general readers know more about China’s nature. Wasserstrom should also be commended for his work to provide alternative avenues for future research.

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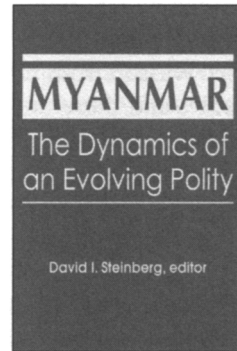
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