

situation facing China's Christians today, as well as the tribulations caused by the "legalist" inclinations within the Chinese state (p. 294). Thus ends the cycle of chronological and thematic excursions into the Christian contextualization debate presented in this volume.

Is this volume as good as the sum of its – outstanding – parts? Peter Wang's encounter with the old conference volume spectre was a fortunate one, circumnavigating the cliffs of lack of coherence and thematic inconsistency. Upon second or third perusal, the critical eye would discern problems, though these are probably of little consequence to the interested reader. For instance, it is not always clear why some contributions ended up in the parts to which they are allocated: Tiedemann's article on Pang Sanjie could as easily have been allotted to Part III, dealing with "individuals"; Vincent Shen's introduction to Matteo Ricci (Part I) seems merely part of the first chapter by virtue of the time frame and would have been equally welcome in the subsequent part, dealing precisely with aspects of theological inculturation; Claudia von Collani's consequent isolation could have been prevented by means of turning her excellent article into a thematic introduction for the entire volume. In fact, another equally theoretical chapter would not have gone amiss, given the relative lack of references to the development of "contextualization" and the related terminology (e.g. Standaert, Costa).

All in all, this is a useful contribution for students of the history of Christianity in China. The editor also deserves praise for translating the authors' conclusions into Chinese summaries and for producing a long and detailed glossary.

**Lars Peter Laamann**

RUNE SVARVERUD:

*International Law as World Order in Late Imperial China: Translation, Reception and Discourse, 1847–1911.*

(Sinica Leidensia.) x, 322 pp. Leiden: Brill, 2007. €71. ISBN 978 90 04 16019 4.

*International Law as World Order in Late Imperial China* is an engaging and important study of hitherto under-researched aspects of the discourses within Chinese reformist circles in late imperial times on China's engagement with a world order increasingly dominated by "Western" notions of the nation state, equality of sovereign nations and international law. The book focuses on the transformation in attitudes held by differing groups of Chinese intellectuals in the latter half of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century that occurred in connection with the intrusion of "Western" international law and its ideas of interstate relations. Professor Svarverud's account is a welcome addition to the literature on the language and complexities of reform, including legal reform, which took place as China became increasingly influenced by globalization processes in the final years of the Qing. It is an excellent case study of the localization of the globalism of international law (with its embedded understandings of international relations), and perceptions of China's place in the new world order. The author explores the ways in which international law "gradually became a new system of reference for the discourses on international relations and China's intellectual position in late Qing China" (p. 8).

The core of the book is a long, final chapter (“International law as world order in early twentieth century China”) which examines the manner in which Chinese reformers and other intellectuals drew on international law through a wide range of translated texts in order to offer new visions of the international position and developmental direction of China. Through careful analysis the author shows an active response on the part of Chinese thinkers to the arrival of international law, and considerable creativity in their synthesis of the ideology and norms of international law with indigenous Chinese thinking about the best trajectories for reform. Particular attention is given to the ideas of Kang Youwei and his acolytes for refurbishing the Chinese state while also maintaining a central role for Confucian ideology, and the arguments of Liang Qichao and other supporters of Kang for greater reliance on principles of public international law in order to construct arguments for enhancing China’s position in the world. There is also a detailed examination of the writings of the reformist intellectuals and officials centred on Changsha in Hunan, such as Tang Caichang and Tan Sitong, and their embrace of Darwinian ideas of evolution, as well as efforts to incorporate also Daoist understandings in a reconstructed view of the world and of China’s place in it. The important impact of Chinese student involvement in Japan, as well as the influence of anti-Manchu and anti-Russian sentiments, are also explored to good effect. A useful appendix surveys key aspects of translations into Chinese of international law texts from the middle of the nineteenth century to the ending of the Empire in 1911

Preceding that lengthy analysis we find in chapter 2 a scene-setting account of the major features of public international law in the shape that it had developed by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the perceptions of China within the Western discourses of public international law, and the manner in which China became a part of the new international legal framework through “unequal treaties”. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 consider the processes by means of which international law “as a discipline of western learning” (p. 18) was translated into Chinese – increasingly with the mediating effect of Chinese students in Japan, as well as Japan’s own experiences of adapting to public international law – and examine in particular the ways in which a range of public international law translations became part of domestic debate about reform in China.

The book contributes significantly to the discourse on late Qing debates on the need for reform and new developmental directions in China, and clearly builds on the work of Lydia Liu and others on the growing understanding and reception of public international law principles in the late Qing and beyond. Because the author’s central concern is with China’s changing place in the world order, so “international law” is seen throughout the book primarily as *public* international law. This restricted vision is not a serious limitation given the author’s central concerns with the political and governmental aspects of law. But it does mean that Svarverud’s excellent account does not do full justice to the complexity of the Chinese response to the intrusion of western legal ideas and institutions in the final decades of Qing rule. For in addition to the public law and the political dimensions of this local response, important changes in thinking about private law (especially legal aspects of commerce and international trade, including *private* international law), criminal law, and procedural law were also taking place (see, for example, Joseph Cheng’s unpublished but well-known 1976 study *Chinese Law in Transition: the Late Ch’ing Reform, 1901–1911*, and Marinus Meijer’s important analysis (1950, republished 1967) of criminal justice reform: *The Introduction of Modern*

*Criminal Law in China*). This new thinking informed the continuing efforts at legal reform in the early years of the Republic and helped to lay the ground for the eventual adoption of continental-style codes under Nationalist rule in 1930. It thereby encouraged domestic law reforms that were often a key requirement in agreements between China and Western powers to end extra-territoriality. The book might usefully have explored the significance of its findings for this broader process of reform and the debates within China about such reform in the concluding chapter that it rather noticeably lacks.

**Michael Palmer**

BARUCH HIRSON and ARTHUR J. KNODEL (ed. Gregor Benton):  
*Reporting the Chinese Revolution: The Letters of Rayna Prohme.*  
 xiii, 196 pp. London and Ann Arbor: Pluto Press, 2007. £19.99.  
 ISBN 978 0 7453 2642 9.

Rayna Prohme was one of the first in a succession of young American women of independent mind and spirit who became involved with the Chinese revolution in the 1920s and 30s. Crossing the Pacific to China – “going West” as she put it – was not necessarily a political step: after a brief touristic visit in 1923 Rayna returned with her husband Bill two years later, as freelance journalists responding to job offers in Honolulu and then in China, where they worked for the English-language Kuomintang press initially in Peking

It is at first an inconsequential account, mostly based on letters to Rayna’s best friend Helen Freeland. She is deafened by the cymbals in Chinese opera; she is nauseated by the dirt and spitting and concludes that “much of Chinese hour by hour life is not beautiful”. But Rayna has an observant eye and the narrative soon begins to grip the reader as the couple become enmeshed in Kuomintang politics: through Rayna’s own story – and ultimate tragedy – we glimpse the story – and ultimate tragedy – of the 1927 Chinese revolution.

Rayna and Bill edited the *Peking People’s Tribune*, owned by Sun Yat-sen’s former secretary Eugene Chen, for a year, and after it was closed down moved to its successor, the *Canton Gazette*, and finally to the *Hankow People’s Tribune*. Their China trajectory thus followed the rise and fall of the left Kuomintang, and in summer 1927 Rayna fled from China to Moscow in company with Madame Sun Yat-sen (Soong Ching-ling) and Chen: Bill was left marooned in Shanghai. In November Rayna died unexpectedly from meningitis in Moscow before they could be reunited.

It was during the brief Hankow period that Rayna became closely involved with Madame Sun – a “marvellous person” to whom she confesses to having “lost my heart”. She also caught the eye of the Soviet adviser Borodin, becoming his unofficial appointments secretary in dealings with the foreign press: “He has impressed me more than any person I have met in a long time, as a man, a personality, a social force”, Rayna wrote from Hankow.

Soon the couple were deeply involved in the split between the KMT militarists and the revolutionaries. Rayna had no doubt whose side she was on, denouncing “the new militarists ... (who) call themselves nationalists”. The past six months, she wrote in August 1927, had been the most “exacting, stupendous and maturing” of her life, and she had no hesitation in following Madame Sun first to Shanghai where they were harassed by British intelligence and then on to Moscow.