

The most outstanding chapters are those that attempt to bring ideas generated in China into an emergent sphere of generality. Gloria Davies's chapter "Knowing how to be: the dangers of putting (Chinese) thought into action" is exemplary in this regard. Davies argues that theoretical inquiry in China is a spiritual pursuit aimed at moral self-cultivation and an abiding concern with affairs of the state. The Chinese preoccupation with *how to be* is a powerful reminder that thinking is always about being in relation to the world. In terms of social scientific inquiry, Davies's argument limns the complex relationship between intellectual production, patterns of conduct, and state power in contemporary China. Timothy Cheek's chapter, "Attitudes in action: Maoism as emotional political theory," develops a general understanding of the role of emotional and cognitive dispositions in the "normative and motivational forces of political life and in political theory" (p. 90) from the history of Maoist theory and practice. According to Cheek, Mao recognized that political judgments are rooted in embodied experiences, which combine cognitive and affective dispositions. From this insight, it follows that *attitudes (taidu)* are malleable and subject to modification, cultivation and manipulation. In addition to the theoretical questions it raises, Cheek's chapter casts light on today's CCP, which has never abandoned the Maoist understanding that political power both shapes and maintains itself through people's everyday thoughts, emotions and attitudes.

The main weakness of the edited volume is that as an integral whole it falls short of its goal to generate new global theories from the basis of local Chinese contexts. For example, Guanjun Wu's chapter "A (psycho)analysis of China's new nationalism" offers a critical analysis of the obscene and hidden fantasies that underpin publicly acceptable articulations of Chinese nationalism via a reading of Lacan and Žižek. Although Wu's argument is compelling on its own, it does not generate new theories from the basis of Chinese contexts. Similarly, Michael W. Dowdle's chapter "China's present as the world's future: China and 'rule of law' in a post-Fordist world" is a fascinating argument about China's transition to a post-Fordist regulatory state, with a discussion of China's New Left intellectuals tacked on at the end. I also wonder whether the promise of "generalizable knowledge" is a scaled down and anodyne version of the aspiration of universality and could benefit from being phrased in more robust terms.

Overall, I strongly recommend this edited volume to anyone interested in finding new resources for conceptual thinking. It is a salutary intervention heightened by a world perilously retreating into parochialism and xenophobia. Our political futures depend on such new conceptual experimentation to guide us out of the darkness of present contradictions.

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Children in China

ORNA NAFTALI

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How has childhood been transformed in post-Mao China? In this book the anthropologist Orna Naftali examines this question by reviewing and weaving together research on Chinese childhood, a topic which has attracted much attention in recent

decades. Naftali identifies changes in the meaning of the child and children's experiences in post-Mao China while recognizing the challenge of generalizing about the country's huge and diverse population.

Her main argument is that children now enjoy much greater individual autonomy and material wealth than earlier generations of children, but this development is uneven among children of different genders, ethnicities and socioeconomic backgrounds, and it has been accompanied by ambiguities, dilemmas and contradictions. The book shows that the state, the school, the family, the media, the market and children themselves all play a part in defining what it means to be a child. Multiple discourses are at work. Thus, notwithstanding a modernizing trend, Chinese childhood should be regarded as "composed of distinct multiple categories that are products of ideational, demographic, and socioeconomic processes" (p. 6).

The book's eight chapters, which constitute a coherent whole, cover historical change in the notion of childhood, current child rearing norms and practices, the effects of the one-child policy, children and consumption, and urban–rural and ethnic disparities in childhood experiences.

Chapter one offers an overview of the major shifts in official and popular thinking about childhood in modern China from the late 19th century to the late 1970s and show how these shifts undermined the traditional concepts of the child, including the hegemonic Confucian filial piety. It is argued that modernization and the socio-political transformations created by the republican and socialist revolutions led to the rise of "a decidedly 'modern' yet unmistakably 'Chinese' concept of childhood." This chapter provides a useful historical context for the dramatic change in childhood discussed in later chapters.

Chapter two provides an overview of child-rearing discourses and practices since the late 1970s. Children have gained empowerment within the family and at school due to "a global, neoliberal discourse which seeks to educate children as innovative and independent-minded" individuals, "modern" "scientific" childrearing ideas, growing wealth, the one-child policy and the wish of parents and grandparents to compensate for deprivations in their own childhood. New ideas of childcare, child vulnerability, and child agency have developed. Children are increasingly seen as autonomous agents worthy of rights and respect. They have gained emotional value for parents and become consumers in their own right in the market economy. However, this trend is met with ambiguity, criticism and resistance by the state and by those who remain attached to Confucian notions of social order and ideals of filial piety. Greater autonomy for children is also accompanied by social control and pressure for educational achievement. Child-centeredness is most evident among urban, middle-class families. Rural and rural-migrant children, especially girls in remote ethnic minority groups, are much less able to assert their autonomy. These points are repeated throughout the book.

Chapter three reviews China's one-child policy, a key factor that has unintentionally contributed to children's empowerment. It describes the policy's history and demographic impact and its widely recognized, and often contradictory, effect on childhood. On the one hand: children's rising status, the greater emotional value of the child, improved material wealth, and enhanced educational opportunities, especially for urban girls. On the other hand: the "missing girls," a skewed sex-ratio, the tendency for children to be "spoiled," the strong pressure for achievement, and the constant parental surveillance.

Chapter four notes that Chinese children of the early 21st century have grown richer and less frugal. They exercise great influence over their family spending on food, entertainment, and even large items. Children have also become avid consumers

of television and new electronic media. The author sees this trend to be in keeping with children's general "empowerment." It has also given rise to much public concern. The avid consumer child mainly applies to urban middle-class families, much less to children in rural and remote areas. Again, the book's main arguments are repeated.

Chapter five explores effects of marketization and the rural–urban gap upon the lives of rural children. It reviews the main problems rural children have faced in education, family relations and social wellbeing. It also discusses the special difficulties experienced by girls, ethnic minority children, and children with disabilities or HIV/AIDS-affected family members. It also considers how parental absence due to migration negatively affects the schooling, emotional wellbeing and social relations of "left-behind" children.

Chapter six discusses the difficulties that rural migrant children face in the cities in the context of newly relaxed migration restrictions, the still-in-effect *hukou* policy, and the widening disparities between rural and urban areas. It examines their perceptions, expectations, social identities, relations with peers and teachers, and their education attainment. Migrant children have experienced severe exclusion from urban public schools. Compared with their urban counterparts, migrant children find it much more difficult to pursue their personal interests at home and at school. The findings in chapters five and six usefully contrast with what the author nonetheless describes as the general empowerment of Chinese children.

This book is the most comprehensive account on contemporary Chinese children available to date in English. Well-informed readers may not gain much new insight from this book, but it offers comprehensive and valuable information to those interested in understanding contemporary Chinese childhood. It is suitable as course readings in childhood studies, China studies and cultural studies at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Its many repetitions may even prove useful to readers unfamiliar with the field.

The book lacks a discussion of the impact which the rising divorce rate may have on children. Although the author sometimes passingly differentiates between younger and older cohorts of parents, the book tends to treat present-day children's parents as a homogeneous group whose childhood was during the Cultural Revolution. Obviously, many parents of children in China today are much younger. These, however, are negligible weaknesses compared with the book's major merit.

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Women Warriors and Wartime Spies of China

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Louise Edwards has published extensively in the intersecting fields of Chinese gender, culture and society spanning the period from the late Qing to the present and brings this wealth of expertise to this current book. Taking a roughly chronological approach, Edwards focuses on nine women who constitute a comprehensive representation of the different categories of women warriors and wartime spies in the Chinese