

Book reviews

GUANNAN LI

This posthumous publication brings together 15 articles by Frederic Wakeman that were produced over the four decades of his academic life. The volume covers a wide range of topics, offering a comprehensive portrayal of Wakeman's career. It includes essays that contributed to Wakeman's career as a historian of the

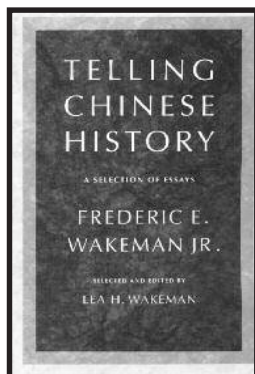
Ming-Qing transition (Part Two), a pioneering researcher of Kuomintang efforts at policing Shanghai during the Republican period (Part Three), and an analyst of the relationships between the Chinese state and society (Part Five). It also sheds light on Wakeman's global outlook in the writing of Chinese history (Introduction and Part I), his involvement with the transformation of the historiography of modern China (Part Four), and finally, his advocacy of the value of historical narrative (Chapter 14: Reflection).

In the first part of the book, an introductory essay by the distinguished sociologist S. N. Eisenstadt, "China in the Context of World History," challenges Wakeman's image as a China-centred historian by connecting his scholarship to a recent orientation within the modern China field that aims to reconsider the boundaries of Chineseness from the perspective of world history. Wakeman's own piece, "China and the Seventeenth-Century World Crisis," examines the severe

consequences of the global depression from 1620 to 1640 that damaged the Ming Dynasty's monetary system. Wakeman argues that late Ming economic difficulties were caused by the fluctuating

world trading system that led to a systemic breakdown affecting its entire political and social order. Among these global causes and local effects, Wakeman identifies a strong connection between the extensive levels of official embezzlement and the inflationary trends of the late Ming in which Ming officialdom experienced diminishing stipends due to constantly rising grain prices. By positioning the Ming-Qing transition in global history, Wakeman suggests that the fall of the Ming and the rise of the Qing were part of much broader historical processes that included "the economic decline of seventeenth century commerce, the social disintegration of the Ming order, and the political consolidation of Qing rule" (p. 28). Interestingly, *The Great Enterprise*, Wakeman's celebrated masterpiece on the Manchu conquest, completely drops this global theme, and devotes its entire energy to the last two aspects of this dynastic transfer. Although these essays draw attention to Wakeman's global outlook, they need to be read against his major works, which do not indicate that this global framework was an overarching theme in structuring his historical writing, including his later scholarship on Shanghai.

In fact, it may be suggested that Wakeman established himself as a historian of China with a strong emphasis on a local-centred if not China-centred approach. Wakeman's strength lay in his masterful command of historical narrative. In the last essay, entitled "Reflection" in reference to the ideal type of historical writing, Wakeman identifies the interpenetration of history and literature as the distinctive characteristic of great historical works. For Wakeman, the historian often meets in the middle ground with the novelist by blending together fancy and fact, fiction and history in historical narrative, while at the same time bringing analytical coherence into the multiplicity of historical voices through the reconstruction of a new struc-



**Frederic E.
Wakeman Jr.,
Telling Chinese
History:
A Selection of
Essays,**

Selected and Edited
by Lea H. Wakeman,
Berkeley, University
of California Press,
2009, 480 pp.

tural totality. Wakeman quotes Hayden White to identify narrative as a unique kind of historical thinking advocated by a group of “historical thinkers without philosophical position who defended ‘the craft notion of historical studies’ and who ‘view narrative as a perfectly respectable way of “doing” history—that is, the doxa of the profession’” (p. 419). Wakeman declares that, it is with this kind of historical writing “I have identified myself most closely” (p. 419).

Two essays in the volume on the Ming-Qing transition exemplify Wakeman’s notion of doing history through the craft of “telling history.” By writing on two of the most intriguing moments in Chinese history (the brief transitional period of the Sun Interregnum of 1644 in Beijing ruled by the rebellion leader Li Zicheng, and the Ming loyalists’ defence of a local city in Jiangnan against the formidable Manchu conquest), Wakeman positions his works on the borderland between “wild histories” (*yeshi*) and “reliable” historical accounts, aiming to bring out from the historical narrative the maximum dual effects of historicity and historical validity. Interestingly, in its implicit questioning of Enlightenment ideas of scientific “History,” Wakeman’s literary and popularised notion of histories implicitly confirms what Frederic Jameson has described as the “cultural logic of late capitalism” in that it is a fictionalised history available for popular consumption and commodification. It is therefore no surprise to find in this essay that Wakeman highly praises Jonathan Spence’s success as both an academic historian and a popular writer of history (p. 412). Within Wakeman’s completely positive articulation and defence of this “historian’s craft,” his wholehearted embracing of this post-structuralist or post-modernist notion of “telling history” bypasses critical problems associated with the emergence of post-modernity. Essays in Part Five, “Modernity and State,” recount Wakeman’s strong interest in the relationship between the Chinese state and society. In “Chinese Archives and American Scholarship on Modern Chinese History,” Wakeman reviews how the opening of Chinese archives in mainland China and Taiwan set the objective conditions for the emergence of the “new social history” among American scholars. For instance, based on the preliminary opening of the so-called “Canton Materials” captured by the British army during the opium wars, Wakeman’s first book, *Strangers at the Gate*, built upon a common theme of militarisation of Chinese society by examining Chinese local responses to the onslaught of imperialism. In

the early 1990s, the translation into English of Jurgen Habermas’s *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1989) and the field’s enormous attention to local conditions generated a heated debate on the applicability of Habermas’s concepts of “civil society” and “public sphere” to a distinct Chinese political and cultural context. Wakeman’s position on the con side of the debate is clearly manifested in his article “Civil Society in Late Imperial and Modern China,” included in this volume. This article sharply denounces William Rowe’s acclamation of late Qing elite independent activism by arguing that the interpenetration of the state and social elites during the late Qing and early Republic made it difficult to clearly define a “civic power” against the state. As might be expected in light of his views on narrative, Wakeman was among the historians who questioned approaches that made modern European history into a universal standard of development, which was a problem he perceived in the idea of the “public sphere” that gained currency in response to the fall of socialisms in the 1980s. His work anticipated more recent scholarship that has shown a strong tendency to move beyond this highly charged question by suggesting the need to examine the historically specific configuration of the public in China in the late Qing and the early Republic, albeit not in a “China-centred” manner. Wakeman’s interest in the Chinese state and society as the primary model of historical change further motivated him to study the modern Chinese police and their regulatory and disciplinary functions. The two articles in this volume on smuggling and prostitution in Shanghai survey Nationalist efforts from 1927 to 1949 to regulate these “vices of capitalism” in order to create a modern civic culture without “Western” materialistic and moral contamination. These articles later became the blueprint for Wakeman’s monographs on the authoritarian if not fascist state in the 1930s, such as *Policing Shanghai* and *The Shanghai Badlands*. By stepping into the underground world of gambling, opium smoking, and smuggling, prostitution, and other “unhealthy” elements of the entertainment industry, Wakeman’s essays on policing introduced subaltern issues into the new social history. More crucially, situated in a colonial urban setting (particularly modern Shanghai), the study of the Chinese subaltern implicitly connected the new social history to the new cultural history with a particular focus on culture and modernity. Wakeman’s essays and his monographs played a leading role in the emergence and the later domi-

nance of “Shanghai Studies” in the field, stimulating further work on the formation and transformation of (semi)colonial urban culture, issues of cultural and social identity – particularly for urban women – and the spread of commercial and popular culture. This new paradigmatic change designated modernity and globalisation as prominent topics of research on modern China and accordingly rendered socialism and revolution into outdated modes of thought and practice. “Shanghai Studies” also articulated the ideological shift accompanying China’s embrace of globalisation, and the consequent marginalisation of the revolutionary past.

The collection gives readers a useful introduction to the wide-ranging interests of a distinguished scholar. The 15 essays together recapture the three main areas of Wakeman’s scholarship that had a significant impact on the field of Chinese studies – the Ming-Qing transition, the relationship between the Chinese state and society, and “Shanghai studies.” Often produced at the same time as his monographs, these essays especially give insight into the connected but shifting intellectual interests that led to the production of Wakeman’s major scholarship. For this reason, this volume is a valuable addition to Wakeman’s well-known monographs. Moreover, for those who are interested in Wakeman’s China career, the volume also offers some interesting glimpses into his personal, educational, and political experiences with a multiple-faced China during its four decades of transformation. •

PIERRE-ÉTIENNE WILL

The “Incredible Famine of 1878-1879” (*dingwu qihuang* 丁戊奇荒),⁽¹⁾ which devastated the northern provinces early in Emperor Guangxu’s reign, may be said to have been China’s first internationalised famine: it took place under other countries’ gaze, it was much reported in Europe, and within China itself it came to be deemed a national shame because of the sorry spectacle it offered foreigners. The multiplicity of views and interpretations that famine sparked within and outside China is at the centre of this solid, undeniably original, and quite successful book – my only (slight) reservations being a certain penchant for sentimentality and an occasional overly didactical style, probably out of a de-

sire to cater to the undergraduate market. Apart from a detailed account of the famine and its horrendous consequences in Shanxi Province, the book attempts a “cultural” history of the event by reviewing the extremely divergent and even contradictory perspectives of the victims of the catastrophe, of local officials, of the “modernisers” and traditionalists among the upper strata of the state, of the *North China Herald* and its self-important foreign readership in the Shanghai concessions, of missionaries on the ground, of leaders of new Buddhist philanthropy also centred in Shanghai, and of the *Shenbao*, which they used as their organ.

It is extremely difficult to piece together how ordinary people lived through the events. The sources are crammed with platitudes and rhetorical exaggerations, hence all sorts of problems of interpretation, which the author – I hasten to say – has in general been able to handle successfully. Such is the case, for example, with remembered accounts that she recorded from the field. Because of their very accuracy one is not sure what to think of these “reminiscences” told in the early 2000s by elderly Shanxi residents (the young seem no longer interested in the events), these “folk-tales” recorded from interviews with old men narrating what their grandparents had told them when they were little. However, Edgerton-Tarpley also got hold of accounts from periods closer to the events, such as an extensive “Song of the Famine Years” (*Huangnian ge* 荒年歌) composed some two decades later by a Xiezhou resident and said to have maintained local memory of the famine long afterwards, which she uses as a narrative thread in Chapter 2 and elsewhere.⁽²⁾ In the chapter on the causes of the catastrophe, the author says she interviewed 51 “local historians and village elders.” What they have to narrate seems rather conventional, but it may be noted that they



Kathryn Edgerton-Tarpley,
Tears from Iron: Cultural Responses to Famine in Nineteenth-Century China,
 Berkeley, University of California Press, 2008, xxiii + 332 pp., illustrations.

1. 1878 and 1879 (*dingchou* 丁丑 and *wuyin* 戊寅) were the worst famine years, but the drought that caused the famine started in 1876.
2. This sort of material was probably not rare. I myself found in the Xi'an Stele Forest Museum a “Ballad of the famine years” (*Huangnian ge* 荒年歌) carved in stone, much shorter than the text cited in the book and pertaining to the same Guangxu drought in a county in Shaanxi.

are not always in agreement, and while their debates depart from historical reality they still retain some interest. Also interesting is the fact that all of them speak very highly of Emperor Guangxu, even though he was only six years old when the famine started and the throne was able to do very little in his name. The salience of the model pitting the virtue and humanity of top leaders, from whom everything is sought, against the local authorities' indifference and sabotage, surely deserves noting.

At the same time, one never tires of admiring the continuity in discourse, interpretation, and even language when it comes to the causes and manifestations of famine, from Antiquity and often until today. We are treated to the usual considerations regarding the famine's moral causes, upright citizens and profiteers, honest officials and corrupt subalterns, the people's suffering, dispersed families, refugees dying of hunger by the roadside, and so on. But again, the author rarely allows herself to be taken in by these "idealised" anecdotes: on the contrary, she takes them apart and reaches beyond them. The entire third part of the book, "Images, Myths and Illusions," is devoted to such an effort. Still, Edgerton-Tarpley may not always be aware of the antiquity of certain tropes and of the amount of terminology going back to the Classics. Guarding against famine by building up reserves is an obsession whose canonical expression, repeated like a *mantra* in the sources, harks back to the *Book of Rites (Liji)*: "Out of three years of ploughing, conserve one year of supplies, out of nine years of ploughing, conserve three years of supplies" (三年耕必有一年之食, 九年耕必有三年之食).³ Viewing natural disasters as a heaven-sent punishment meted out to a dissolute society is also commonplace – though it is not uninteresting that missionaries should have harped on this theme – and extolling frugality as a precaution against disasters occurs in the oldest texts, not only since the eighteenth century (pp. 74-75). But what matters, of course, is that these notions had been deeply internalised by authors contemporary to the Guangxu famine and by so many of their successors.

As Chapter 4 recalls, senior leaders were far from agreed on what to do. Those favouring stronger maritime defences, headed by Li Hongzhang and the Zongli yamen, wanted the least amount of state resources diverted to Shanxi and its hungry masses, whereas the "Purification Party" (*qingliu*) activists, hewing closer to the Censorate and the Hanlin Academy, held that the most urgent need

was to restore the legitimacy of the state and the dynasty, which had been badly damaged since the mid-nineteenth century, by means of mobilising the maximum of relief supplies. Alongside this controversy there was the debate – going back at least to the Song dynasty, not to the eighteenth century as the author seems to suggest (p. 103) – between letting merchants transport grain to famine areas as they saw fit and maintaining strict checks on them, or even keeping them out. And then there was the (much more recent) debate over opium: some favoured a total ban, holding that opium production was one of the main causes of famine conditions as it led to the neglect of food production (this is still a dominant notion today), while others – again, Li Hongzhang and foreign affairs experts – argued that the monopoly of opium production should not be left to foreigners as it was an important source of income for local people.

The commercialisation versus self-sufficiency debate is, of course, a classic one. Edgerton-Tarpley cites several accounts suggesting that on the eve of the "Incredible Famine," Shanxi (at any rate the hinterland of Taiyuan and the province's southern prefectures), far from being as miserable and isolated as usually described, was a prosperous region, almost an El Dorado where "luxurious customs" extended even to ordinary people. In fact this prosperity, probably less widespread than suggested by the sources cited, was in trade, manufacturing, and mining. It did not depend on agriculture, which had long ceased to feed the population and generate sufficient taxes to balance the provincial budget. How could even as catastrophic a drought as that of 1877-1879 lead to such a sudden reversal of fortunes, disrupt trade networks, destroy transport and mining industries, and turn Shanxi into a poor, isolated enclave for a long time thereafter? The book offers some explanations, such as the diversion of state resources to combat rebellion in the 1850s and 1860s and the disruption of the well-known Shanxi merchants' networks – the latter due to the same reason and even more to the reorientation of Sino-Russian trade after the 1860 treaties. Still, that things failed to get back to normal seems intriguing, as is the fact that the considerable commercial wealth amassed since the early Qing appears to have been of little use during the calamity.

3. See pp. 78, 227. Curiously, Edgerton-Tarpley interprets the formula as meaning "planting three [rows of grain] but saving one, or planting nine but saving three" (author's brackets).

Another interesting aspect of the famine is its varying impact on people depending on age group, sex, and social class. A famine's social effects are by definition differential, but as the author recounts, the distinctions evaporate as crops begin to fail in succession, as all classes end up suffering one way or another and even profiteers find themselves in dire straits: that is par for the course (recall the descriptions of the late Ming major famines in Jiangnan, another rich and highly commercially area). It is above all in her descriptions of the different effects suffered by men and women that Edgerton-Tarpley has interesting things to say. One might think that when conditions became impossible and choices needed to be made, young women and girls would have been the first to be sacrificed. Chapter 7 contains many anecdotes of just such examples, where families in straitened situations try to adopt strategies based on "Confucian" values, above all filial piety (which explains why elderly mothers have a better chance of surviving). All these accounts stress the importance of upholding morality, with virtuous women starving themselves to death or committing suicide rather than jeopardise other people's survival, or worse, compromise family honour by abandoning their home in order to survive at the risk of losing chastity, that being the *ne plus ultra*.

But these are the "correct" accounts that notables and officials strove to carve on steles, inscribe in local monographs, and circulate among the populace. As shown by Edgerton-Tarpley, the reality reflected in more objective sources was less edifying than in such stories. Descriptions abound of women sold for a fistful of coins or abandoned by the roadside, ready to give themselves to the first comer in order to live, and whose usual fate was to end up in the hands of so-called "southern traders" who sold them on as concubines or prostitutes. Trafficking in women and the cynical and cruel treatment of women figure prominently in the denunciations in Shanghai's English language press and in the reformers' lamentations over "national shame." The book reproduces some gripping accounts by both European observers and Chinese philanthropists who had been in famine-struck areas and seen first-hand the desperate condition of women and young girls brutalised, raped, and treated as chattel.

Yet the book also shows that things were more complicated. Some studies on mortality suggest that being a woman could be an advantage during severe famines. Because of their relative

scarcity, thanks to the practice of female infanticide, women were not sacrificed so easily, and penury was shared somewhat equally within families. Moreover, women were a form of capital: during famines their market value was greater than that of men. As for those who fell into traffickers' hands, they had perhaps a better chance of survival by being spirited out of famine areas. In short, as Edgerton-Tarpley notes, when faced with such tragedies, society functioned on a pragmatic mode far removed from Confucian schema – and I would add that it did so more or less in normal times too.

In the eyes of the most trenchant upholders of prevailing mores, the fact that a desperate woman should be ready to sell herself as a wife or servant in order to survive merely demonstrated the women's immorality or even the danger they posed, given that their misconduct was at times blamed for causing disasters. (Perhaps it was not essential to mention Queen Baosi and Yang Guifei here.) But some people had a more realistic view. We find in a late nineteenth century anthology of judicial decisions a case involving a certain Mme Xue who had fled the Shanxi famine in 1877 with her two adolescent children, probably with the consent of her husband, Mr. Zhang. She had ended up in northern Shaanxi where, after further misadventures, she had sold herself in marriage to a Wu family. The case concerned her feud with her mother-in-law nine years later (her new husband had died by then). I cite this because the magistrate, a comparatively well-known scholar-official named Fan Zengxiang 樊增祥 (1846-1931), noted in his judgment that Wu had had the best of reasons to flee the famine and remarry elsewhere rather than trying to "preserve her chastity" at all cost (even though it meant bigamy!): she not only escaped certain death, but thanks to her choice, her son remained alive to carry on the Zhang line. From this point of view at least, Fan did not find fault with her morality and did not shirk from calling her a "highly meritorious person" (*gongchen* 功臣). Although she hardly wished it, he sent her back with her son to her original family in Shanxi.⁴ To be sure, this is no more than a footnote to the rich work of Edgerton-Tarpley; still, the contrast to the heartrending descriptions she cites, the calculated and effective way in which Madam Xue managed to survive the famine and rebuild her life seems to me worth mentioning.

4. See *Fanshan pipan* 樊山批判, in *Lidai panli pandu* 歷代判例判牘 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2005), vol. 11, pp. 609-610.

GINA MARCHETTI

There is much more that one can commend in this book, which contains many references to events outside China (the 1845-1849 Irish Famine being a favourite yardstick), and occasionally alludes to more recent ones in China.⁽⁵⁾ One might mention Edgerton-Tarpley's discussion of the emergence of the "new charity" born of the competition with Western philanthropy, where for the first time the entire society of one region of China went to the aid of another region. One should also mention the last chapter, which, after some perhaps non-indispensable considerations on Orientalism and semiotics, offers a clever analysis of cannibalism as metaphor – indeed, the metaphor par excellence of the "Incredible Famine" in twenty-first century Shanxi, as the extremely voluble elderly people met by Edgerton-Tarpley appear to have perfectly incorporated into their "memory" the propaganda put out during the Great Leap Forward, to the effect that cannibalism during the Guangxu famine represented "old society," whereas things were much better now. The Guangxu famine, in other words, was made into a sort of "frightening historical Other." Finally a word must be said of the importance accorded in the book to images among the panoply of representations of famine,⁽⁶⁾ and the ingenious use to which they are put.

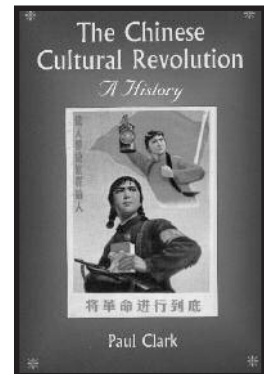
In short, all this shows *Tears from Iron* to be a book that will doubtless stand out on a subject that, for reasons that remain to be understood, appears to have become quite popular among historians in China and elsewhere. •

• Translated by N. Jayaram

5. Basically the Great Leap Forward famine, which is the natural point of comparison for those questioned today. However, North China suffered other "incredible famines" that were also compared with the one in Guangxu (and said to be worse): one thinks especially of the great North China famines of the early and late 1920s, when China became known as a "land of famine" (*China, Land of Famine*, the influential book by Walter H. Mallory, appeared in 1926).
6. Notably compilations of prints entitled *tielei tu* 鐵淚圖, a phrase that Edgerton-Tarpley translates as "pictures to draw tears from iron" – hence the book's title – which by itself makes not much sense. The author of one of the first such books, the *Jiangnan tielei tu* (devoted to the destruction caused by the Taiping wars), explained that the horrors depicted in the text and illustrations are such that "seeing them, even an iron man would give way to tears" (所謂鐵人見之，亦當墮淚也).

In this fascinating book, Paul Clark goes against the grain of mainstream English-language scholarship and puts the "culture" back into the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR, 1966-76). Rather than divide the movement into a series of public demonstrations, factional battles, political proclamations, and government initiatives, Clark explores the last decade of the Mao era through the arts by organising his study around those forms used to critique the old and attempt to establish a new revolutionary culture; namely, Chinese opera/model opera, film, dance, music, drama, the fine arts, architecture, and literature. He sets out with three goals in mind: "...to offer a history of culture during the Cultural Revolution; to provide more insight into life beyond the political or social elites during these years; and to place this decade more firmly into its twentieth-century Chinese context" (p. 2). He accomplishes all these things and more through the course of his study, and the book shows that "culture" was crucial to many caught up in the movement beyond Mao's wife Jiang Qing, the putative head of the "Gang of Four."

Clark goes further, however, by placing what is often seen as an insular and peculiarly Chinese political movement into the context of global cultural and aesthetic history. Culture, during the GPCR, was not just about "Chinese" culture, but about Mao's place and the Chinese revolution's position within world art, politics, and ideology. More specifically, it was a continuation of China's attempt to enter the modern world on its own terms. Culture provided the yardstick to measure the nation's and the revolution's progress. Clark, in fact, is at the forefront of re-examination of the Cultural Revolution as a world event as indicated by conferences such as *China and the World in Mao's Last Decade, 1966-1976* (University of Hong Kong, January 2009), which included several panels exploring the relationship between aesthetics and ideology during the GPCR. Ballet, for example, may have had Russian/Soviet roots, but the way in which *The White Haired Girl* or *The Red Detachment of Women* blended Western



Paul Clark,
The Chinese Cultural Revolution: A History,
Cambridge,
Cambridge University Press,
2008, 352 pp.

dance with Chinese folk and minority forms created a modern, distinctly Chinese performance style. These characteristically Chinese ballets then became ambassadors for the Cultural Revolution as troupes toured outside the PRC's borders.

Clark, of course, is the ideal scholar for this project, since it extends his research in post-1949 Chinese film history⁽¹⁾ and provides more information on a period that marked a low point in film production but a time of enormous political and aesthetic debate within film circles. It was also a formative moment for the "sent-down youth," later known as the Fifth Generation, who established their reputations in films critical of the GPCR. Mao's "continuous revolution" may be dead in its tracks, but the impact of the Cultural Revolution on all aspects of Chinese society – including the arts – is still very much with us.

In this assiduously researched study, Clark excavates the roots of each model opera and ballet performed during the Cultural Revolution. In fact, each work tells a different "story" – not only of revolutionary heroism but also of the Herculean efforts that went into every production. What emerges is a picture of meticulous preparations, professional determination, cascading revisions, expanding versions across media, and the transplanting of national forms into regional and local vernaculars. Clark shows that creativity and commitment belie the notion that there was no "culture" to be found during the period. He begins each chapter with a brief profile of a cultural figure, and these individuals help bring a human face to works that are often regarded as "anonymous" or "collective" political exercises.

Reading Clark's account is genuinely eye-opening, since the model operas often spurred creativity, and the firm hand of Jiang Qing was not as keenly felt as the craftsmanship of composers, writers, and directors who had the green light to "modernise" and experiment as well as politicise the opera stage. What emerged was arguably a national "model" with very distinct regional, local, and ethnic accents, and the limitations of the form could also stimulate creativity, cutting through old methods, encouraging hybrid versions, and crafting a mass art out of indigenous as well as foreign aesthetic elements. The relative autonomy of many local troupes, the discretion they had in redesigning model works, as well as their ability to negotiate the terms of their dissolution in some cases, eliminated many misconceptions I had about the apparent chaos of the reorganisation and centralisation of the arts industries during the period. While

the model performances put off many, the GPCR's ideological commitment to workers, peasants, and soldiers also provided a protected cultural space for amateurs, and some were able to enter the cultural arenas with a DIY approach and politically correct attitude – further shaking up the old order and opening up some new opportunities.

However, Clark balances the opportunities some enjoyed with the hardships faced by many other cultural leaders, artists, and intellectuals. Film was hit particularly hard during the GPCR, and the chapter devoted to that medium stands out as one of the most informative in the book. In 1966, Jiang Qing criticised 54 PRC films, and in the following years, production of most feature films halted, foreign films dubbed in Chinese were pulled from distribution, and many films labelled as "poisonous weeds" were summarily recalled. However, motion picture professionals still had a vital role to play in producing films that would become the definitive versions of the model operas and ballets. How Xie Tieli, for example, was brought back from the "cowsheds" to make a film version of *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy* provides some fascinating insights into how politics and personalities chafed against each other at the time. As Clark points out, the films did, indeed, move Chinese theatrical films in a new direction: "They captured the forceful and theatrical nature of the originals with remarkable felicity. Yang Zirong [the hero of *Taking Tiger Mountain*], with his tiger-skin waistcoat, beams his proletarian determination into the lens and the world can be set right, at least on the silver screen" (p. 126). Xie Tieli in fact went on to direct several other model opera films, including *On the Docks* in collaboration with Xie Jin, another noted film director who had made features, such as *Two Stage Sisters*, that were banned at the advent of the GPCR.

It was not until 1974 that new features not based on model performances again appeared on Chinese screens. However, documentary production, the development of new film equipment and colour stock, as well as training (political and otherwise) for film personnel did continue. Also, foreign films – primarily from North Korea, Albania, and North Vietnam – continued to be shown. Clark decisively demonstrates throughout the book that cultural production across the arts – not just in the realm of the model opera or filmed performances – took place during the GPCR, and often in unlikely

1. Clark has written two books on film in the PRC. See my review of the first: Gina Marchetti, "Chinese Cinema: Culture and Politics since 1949," *Film Quarterly*, vol. 43, no. 3 (Spring 1990), pp. 54-7.

places. The line between underground and agit-prop blurred as Red Guards battled for aesthetic as well as ideological space and took their militant forms of amateur cultural expression to the countryside. Moving from the unofficial to the subversive, literature, in particular, saw the mimeograph machine as a tool of not only political propaganda but also romance novellas, porn, autobiographical accounts, and translations of foreign works. Rather than heaping opprobrium on the model operas, films, and other cultural products of the Cultural Revolution, Clark takes these works seriously, tracing the roots of each in earlier works, and pointing to the creative input of the professional and amateur artists involved. In fact, this book begs for others to go a step further and look even more closely at individual texts for further insight into the ways in which these works made – and continue to make – waves aesthetically as well as politically. Clark has opened the door and put “culture” back on the agenda for scholars still struggling to come to grips with the domestic as well as international impact of the GPCR. •

GUOGANG WU

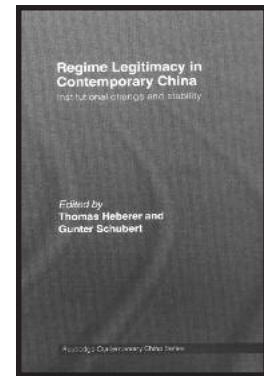
This is a timely collection of mostly solidly-researched papers addressing a number of significant questions in understanding contemporary China. Readers may expect too much, however, if they read the book because it is about “legitimacy” and authored by scholars who are Max Weber’s countrymen. The volume under review has difficulties meeting the high standards of Weberian scholarship, but the editors fulfil their promise of providing “sound analyses and in-depth case studies of a wide range of political, social and economic reforms in contemporary China” (p. 2). Perhaps because of the breadth of its range, from rural-tax-for-fees reform to the media market in transition, the editors have not had an easy task focusing the 12 individual chapters on a central theme. They have chosen “legitimacy” as this theme, but considerable attention is paid to the connections between institutional change and political stability. What is the conceptual relationship between those connections and regime legitimacy? The editors seem to follow the line of research opened by Samuel Huntington in *Political Order in Changing Societies*, which emphasises order and stability in the process of

modernisation, more than Max Weber’s conceptualisation of legitimacy, which explores how rulers gain acceptance by the ruled. In this sense, the title of the book is somehow misleading.

Efforts are made, of course, to connect institutional change and stability with legitimacy, particularly in empirical analyses of politics. These analyses take up one-third of the volume, as the entire book is evenly divided into three parts: politics, political economy, and society, with each part containing four chapters. A contradiction between the different understandings of “stability” that the volume employs does not strengthen the conceptual coherence: the Introduction cites the concept of stability contributed by German political scientist Wolfgang Merkel, listing five very useful indicators, but, as in the paragraph that immediately follows, the application of “stability” in the Chinese context often slips from this notion to something closer to the Chinese Party-state’s understanding of “stability,” which emphasises the sustainability of one-party rule.

The quality of individual chapters varies, but most are well-researched and well-written. Part I, which deals with “politics,” starts with a discussion of ideological change, and the author, Holbig, places her major focus on Jiang Zemin’s “Three Representations.” That is followed by Gobel’s well-researched chapter on China’s rural tax-for-fee reforms based on fieldwork in Anhui Province. Schubert, one of the co-editors, tries to synthesise studies on China’s village elections, but his argument that village elections replace “complain villages” with “trust villages” lacks empirical support. The chapter by another editor, Heberer, deals with a parallel subject in urban China, namely the election of residential committees, and his approach is more careful and cautious than his co-editor’s. Taken together, they provide insufficient evidence to bolster the assumption that the Chinese Communist Party has successfully avoided a “legitimacy crisis” based on the fourth of Merkel’s five indicators of stability, which is “political participation of the population.”

Merkel’s fifth indicator is “a fair distribution of GNP by state intervention.” This is apparently a



**Thomas Heberer
and Gunter
Schubert (eds.),
Regime
Legitimacy in
Contemporary
China:
Institutional
Change and
Stability,**
London, Routledge,
2009, 308 pp.

question of political economy, and perfectly applicable to analyses of the Chinese case. Part of the volume is dedicated to “political economy,” and all four of its chapters explore significant issues. But they seldom touch on either the issue of stability and legitimacy or on Merkel’s fifth indicator. Through the single example of Zhejiang Province’s Hengdian Enterprise Group, Taube examines institutional change of township-village enterprises in terms of property rights. The next chapter, authored by Herrmann-Pillath, tries to deal with a number of cases, its scope rather broad for an article. The subject of the following chapter is China’s capital market, which author Schlichting analyses from two sides: those of the market players and the regulators. The reader then comes to one of the best chapters in the collection, in which Fischer highlights how “marketised” financial incentives are harnessed by the political authorities to reinforce media self-censorship.

The section on “society” begins with an examination by Darimont of China’s social security system. Hebel and Schucher then explore the emergence of a “socialist” market labour regime in China. Gransnow’s paper looks at the role of NGOs in China’s anti-poverty campaigns, while the last chapter, contributed by Oberheitmann, deals with China’s environmental policy, telling us that, regretfully, environmental policy is still a minor consideration, even though China is increasingly challenged by environmental issues both domestically and globally. The author attributes this mainly to China’s priority on economic policies. Indeed, in the view of this reviewer, a political economic approach, as taken by the authors of Part II, would be much more powerful in explaining the nature and character of China’s environmental situation.

The collection justifiably applies the term “institutional heterogeneity” to characterise transitional China, and this quality increases the challenges faced by China scholars in grasping the essence of the transition. As in the Chinese folk tale, some may highlight the gold side and others the silver side. This collection is no exception, including two types of papers oriented through different research strategies: some emphasise officially announced changes and construct optimistic predictions on that basis; others look at institutional operations and policy implementation. Both sides are important for understanding China, but in this reviewer’s humble opinion, the latter type of research is often more solid and convincing. No sin-

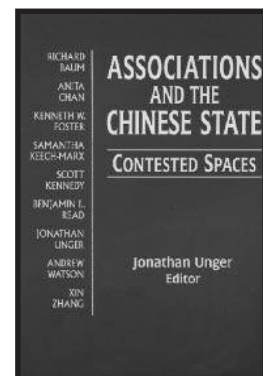
gle collection is broad enough to cover all the important and relevant issues, but I regret that this volume does not touch on topics such as governmental corruption, popular protest, and distribution inequality, all of which have an enormous impact on stability and legitimacy. •

ANTHONY J. SPIRES

The study of associational life in China has been squarely on the scholarly agenda since the early 1990s. The contributions to this new volume, edited by Jonathan Unger, reflect the increasing diversity in Chinese associational forms and in the conceptual lenses being utilised to analyse developments on the ground. The book perhaps best serves as an anthology for those scholars looking for an overview of the field. While some chapters are essentially reprints of previously published work, others are based on more substantial revision of prior articles, and still a few others offer original data or perspectives (most notably a chapter by Samantha Keech-Marx).

Andrew Watson opens the book in Chapter One by highlighting the variety of associational life in China and positing the existence of a diverse civil society. He identifies nine categories of associations that comprise the field, including mass organisations, government-organised NGOs and foundations, service-based non-profit groups, independent foundations, research or study associations, business associations, issue-based groups, rural associations, and grassroots groups. He locates these along a spectrum of autonomy, with mass organisations and GONGOs situated closest to the state and grassroots groups just outside of or on the fringe of state control.

Chapter Two, by Jonathan Unger and Anita Chan, offers a contrasting theoretical and empirical perspective to Watson’s. As in prior works by the pair and individually, here they argue that the civil society perspective is not appropriate for a general analysis of Chinese associational life. While they



Jonathan Unger
(ed.),
Associations and the Chinese State: Contested Spaces,
Armonk-London,
ME Sharpe, 2008,
ix +275 pp.

concede that some relatively autonomous (and innocuous) groups have sprung up at the margins, they hold that associations in China are still best understood through the lens of state corporatism. In their view, corporatist structures and practices dominate, and the Chinese government, rather than ceding ground to autonomous civil society organisations, has been quite successful at and insistent on incorporating, controlling, or overseeing any extra-Party, extra-government organisations that could pose a threat to the political status quo.

Chapters Three to Six stay mostly within the corporatist framework. Focusing on China's trade unions in Chapter Three, Chan offers an insightful comparative analysis that draws on communist theory and actual experiences during the communist period in Eastern Europe. She goes on to discuss the development of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) under Mao, through the economic reform era and up to the present. Although she identifies the "seed-germ" of societal corporatism in recent legal reforms, she ultimately finds that worker control of Chinese unions is still heavily constrained by the demands of capital and management.

The authors of Chapters Four (Kenneth W. Foster), Five (Jonathan Unger), and Six (Scott Kennedy) take business and trade associations as their key area of interest. Drawing on extended fieldwork in the city of Yantai, Foster argues that China's business associations are essentially "appendages of government or Party organizations" that are used by the party or state to carry out mandates from above. Unlike the membership-based Chamber of Commerce familiar to readers in North America and other democratic societies, business associations in Yantai – and by extension other parts of China – are not organisations designed to represent the interests of businesses to the public or government.

Unger, in Chapter Five, draws on two periods of fieldwork with business associations in Beijing. After fieldwork in the early 1990s, although he viewed these groups as essentially corporatist creations designed to further the goals of their state overseers, he also saw signs that civil society-type associations could emerge as members became more assertive. During a return visit in 2004 and 2005, however, Unger found that any nascent autonomy had been quashed by the authorities. State corporatism had reasserted itself. In Chapter Six, Kennedy provides a different perspective in his study of manufacturer associations

and their efforts to create price-setting cartels. He found that the associations were unable to completely control their members and at times were actually influenced by the members. The associations' ultimately unsuccessful attempts to create cartels in the 1990s lead him to conclude that corporatism failed to live up to its potential in this case. He also contends, though, that a civil society framework does not hold great explanatory power either, as the members of these associations were unable to assert real and lasting autonomy. He sees a more complicated picture of rival interests in the field, one that precludes applying one simple label to government-business relations in China.

While the published literature on associations in China has been unfortunately (although understandably) dominated by studies of government-controlled or government-initiated organisations, the three final chapters of this volume focus attention on grassroots organisations. In Chapter Seven, Samantha Keech-Marx takes a close look at three "popular women's organizations" in Beijing. These groups provide legal support for women in need and also engage in policy advocacy where possible on issues such as domestic violence. Eschewing the civil society framework for its seeming strict division between state and society, Keech-Marx draws on insights from social movement theory to show how these groups frame their concerns in ways that resonate with government rhetoric and official goals.

Chapter Eight, by Xin Zhang and Richard Baum, analyses the origins and operations of "Sanchuan Development Association (SDA)," an NGO in rural Qinghai that works on community development and poverty alleviation. Preferring to avoid the normative connotations of "civil society," they describe what they term a "people's NGO" that is "almost wholly autonomous and self-directed... [and] only loosely and intermittently linked to the state" (p. 203). They conclude by pointing to the need for further research on grassroots groups and offering questions that may well animate the field for years to come, including: "Do such NGOs weaken or strengthen local state capacity? What is the optimal division between the state, the market, the local NGO, and external donors?... Do autonomous associations like SDA help to 'empower' their own members and/or the wider rural populace?" (p. 215). To be sure, these are questions applicable to grassroots groups in China and elsewhere.

The final chapter by Benjamin Read looks at homeowners' associations that have sprung up in

new private housing complexes. Close study reveals that many of the most active leaders of these associations have no qualms about working closely with the state that seeks to regulate them, but they also “evince an enthusiasm for organizing in a democratic and self-initiated fashion” (p. 252). Read thus places them squarely within the realm of civil society.

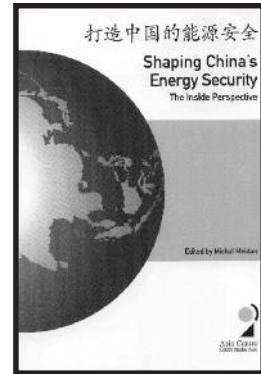
While generally framed in terms of the debate between civil society and corporatist perspectives, the richness of the case studies presented here reveals the complexity of contemporary Chinese associational life and allows the authors to push a bit beyond these rather narrow ideal-type concepts. In particular, the final three chapters on grassroots organisations point the way towards future research agendas that should keep China scholars busy for some years to come. •

THIERRY KELLNER

Claude Mandil, former Executive Director of the International Energy Agency, said last year that the global system is facing a triple crisis: supply crisis, climate crisis, and economic crisis.⁽¹⁾ Those who are part of this system will have to ensure increased energy output even as they are forced to make significant cuts in greenhouse gases in order to deal with climate change. Mankind thus faces an unprecedented challenge. A crucial part of the effort in resolving this new energy equation will have to be implemented in Asia, especially in China. The average Chinese now consumes less than one TOE/year,⁽²⁾ against four TOE/year used by a European and eight TOE/year by an American. This situation is bound to change. After more than two decades of rapid economic growth, a rising number of Chinese wish to enjoy the same levels of consumption as in industrialised countries. In the automotive sector alone, should China reach European levels, it would have a fleet of 700 million cars and the entire oil output from the Middle East would be needed to keep them running! Such examples of astounding potential demand can be extended to other sectors. In this context, Beijing’s energy choices will have a major bearing not only on China itself but on the planet as a whole. A knowledge of China’s energy sector, the reforms it has undergone since the 1990s, reasons behind and hurdles facing these reforms, its current organisa-

tion, key actors, the difficulties and myriad obstacles confronting it, the policies pursued and achievements made, the advances of recent years, and finally, future priorities and constraints, all make for major fields of study.

This book edited by Michal Meidan, stemming from a 2006-2007 research project including five roundtables that brought together Western and Chinese academics and industry insiders, is a timely effort to clarify some of these issues with the help of a wealth of data. The chapters of the book, which has an extensive introduction by François Godement and Meidan, are in four parts. The first deals with “institutional challenge,” one of the often ignored major problems China faces in energy security matters. In the first chapter, Meidan, Philips Andrews-Speed, and Ma Xin lay out an analytical framework for China’s energy policy (structure, players, influences, determining factors, and constraints). The second by Erica Downs recounts the evolution of institutions dealing with energy issues in China and the institutional obstacles in the way of ensuring energy security. The book’s second part explores sector-wise dimensions of energy security. Brian Ricketts offers a global perspective of the coal sector – China’s most important source of primary energy (chap. 3). In the following chapter, Shi Dan considers structural reforms in China’s oil industry, achievements, and problems. In Chapter 5, Wei Bin examines reforms in the power industry. The third part turns to policy tools and incentive systems. In Chapter 6, Yang Lan, Mao Xianqiang, Liu Zhaoyang, and Xing Youkai explore the question of adopting an energy tax as well as its positive, and negative, effects on China’s economy and society. Wang Mingyuan in Chapter 7 offers a legal analysis of the supervision system for implementing the clean development mechanism (CDM) under the Kyoto Protocol, of which China is a major beneficiary. Finally, Part Four deals with China’s energy security issues in a global perspective. Yu Hongyuan in Chapter 8 dwells on China’s diplomacy in handling the deli-



Michal Meidan
(ed.),
**Shaping
China's Energy
Security:
The Inside
Perspective,**
Paris, Asia
Centre/Centre
études Asie, 2007,
239 pp.

1. Claude Mandil, “Foreword,” in Jean-Marie Chevalier (ed.) *The New Energy Crisis: Climate, Economics and Geopolitics*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. xiv.

2. Tonnes of oil equivalent.

cate issue of climate change. He provides a clear background to help understand Beijing's positions during the Copenhagen conference (December 2009). Chapter 9 by Tadakatsu Sano recounts Japan's experience in energy policy since the end of the Second World War and points to courses of action China could learn from. The book ends with Meidan's useful synthesis of the major points raised.

This important book not only brings an original perspective to China's energy security issues but does so relying largely on analysis by Chinese sector players themselves and their perceptions of the energy challenges facing the nation. It contains valuable factual information – for instance on the nature of relations between national oil firms and the government – and erudite analysis space does not permit recounting. More generally the book helps correct some clichés rooted in Western literature. To take just one, the reader finds that the perception of “energy insecurity” has evolved considerably in China, and that since 2006, many Chinese experts have come to see that “oil security” – which has been a preoccupation in the West and elsewhere – is not, in fact, a problem for Beijing. The book usefully points out that a major part of China's energy insecurity is owing to internal factors (institutional weakness, environmental insecurity, price-setting ignoring market forces ...) and not due to the international situation. This book should be essential reading for researchers, students, and journalists, but also decision-makers who want to be well informed of the challenges and constraints facing China as well as of the initiatives and some highly impressive responses that the Beijing authorities have come up with. It is to be hoped that the book will be updated and reissued to take note of the substantial changes since 2007. It would be useful also to explore other sector analysis (of the gas sector but also renewable energy and nuclear power, for example), changes in China's positions on climate change, relations with the International Energy Agency, or the proliferation of bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the energy field. •

- Translated by N. Jayaram

Books received

Xiaobo Zhang, Shenggen Fan and Arjan de Haan, *Narratives of Chinese Economic Reforms. How does China cross the river?*, Singapore, World Scientific, 2010, 200 pp.

Caroline Grillot, *Volées, envolées, convolées... Vendues, en fuite ou re-socialisées: les "fiancées" vietnamiennes en Chine*, Paris, Ed. Connaissances et savoirs, 2010, 408 pp.

James Cahill, *Pictures for use and pleasure: Vernacular Painting in High Qing China*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 280 pp.

Roman Malek S.V.D, Gianni Criveller P.I.M.E. (eds), *Light a Candle. Encounters and Friendship with China*. Festschrift in Honour of Angelo S. Lazzarotto P.I.M.E, Institut Monumenta Serica, Sankt Augustin, Steyler Verlag, Nettetal, 2010, 564 pp.

Janette Ryan (ed), *China's higher education reform and internationalisation*, London/New York, Routledge, 2010, 262 pp.

Kevin J. O'Brien, Suisheng Zhao (eds), *Grassroots Elections in China*, London/New York, Routledge, 2010, 235 pp.

Andrew D. Morris, *Colonial Project, National game. A History of Baseball in Taiwan*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2010, 290 pp.

Ellen Oxfeld, *Drink water, but remember the source. Moral discourse in a Chinese village*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2010, 321 pp.

Thomas S. Mullaney, *Coming to terms with the Nations. Ethnic Classification in Modern China*, Foreword by Benedict Anderson, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2010, 256 pp.

Shao-hua Liu, *Passage to Manhood. Youth migration, heroin, and aids in southwest China*, Stanford, California, Stanford University Press, 2011, 232 pp.

You-Tien Hsing, *The great urban transformation. Politics of Land and Property in China*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010, xiv +258 pp.

Deborah Brautigam, *The Dragon's gift. The real story of China in Africa*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009, 397 pp.

Charles Zaremba and Noël Dutrait (eds), *Traduire. Un art de la contrainte*, Aix-en-provence, Publications de l'Université de Provence, 2010, 296 pp.

Wu Hung (ed), *Contemporary Chinese Art. Primary documents*, with the assistance of Peggy Wang, Duke University Press/Moma, 2010, 464 pp., 129 illustrations.

Ashok Gurung, Brian McGrath, Jianying Zha (eds), *Growing Cities in a Shrinking World: The Challenges of Urbanism in India and China*, Foreword by Arjun Appadurai, Published by India China Institute, New Delhi, Macmillan Publishers India, 2010, 222 pp.