

## Reviews

Angela Falco Howard et. al, *Chinese Sculpture*, New Haven; London; Beijing: Yale University Press & Foreign Languages Press, 2006, 521 pp., ISBN: 0-300-10065-5 (hbk.).

This lavishly illustrated book is the latest publication in 'The Culture and Civilization of China' series, a joint enterprise between Chinese and Western scholars and publishers aimed at illustrating the cultural riches of China in conjunction with the best of recent scholarship. All books in the series are published in both English and Chinese. This is an extremely well resourced undertaking, and this book lives up to the high standards set with earlier volumes in the series.

The book is divided into two parts, the first of which is devoted to 'the secular tradition', with a focus on burial art and spirit paths. Wu Hung's chapter covers the period from the Neolithic to the Han (206 BCE–202 CE), while Yan Song's chapter deals with the period from the Han to the Qing (1644–1911). The second part of the book is called 'the religious tradition'. Here, again, there are two chapters, and in both the major focus is upon Buddhist sculpture. Angela Falco Howard covers the period from the Han to the Southern Song (1127–1279), while Li Song deals with the period from the Northern Song (960–1127) to the Qing. In addition, Angela Howard and Li Song provide brief, separate introductions to the book, and there is also an epilogue by Howard. The accompanying information is concise but useful, with tables covering dynastic periods and the dates for individual emperors from the Song dynasty onwards, and some useful maps. But what will strike most readers immediately on opening this book are the illustrations. There are hundreds of beautiful images of Chinese sculpture, from the astonishing bronze heads recovered at Sanxingdui in Sichuan (late thirteenth century BCE) to the beautiful eighteenth century silver gilt statute of Zhangjia Khutukhtu Rolpay Dorje, now held in the Palace Museum in Beijing.

While the imagery in the book is exceptional, the scholarship is also of a high standard. In his overview of early Chinese sculpture, Wu Hung provides a very good account of what we now know about the formation of Chinese civilization. Archaeological excavations have identified the existence of numerous regional Neolithic cultures, mostly clustered in river valleys, but by 5000 BCE two major regional cultural complexes had emerged, the Eastern and the Northwestern, although it is clear that there was

a great deal of interaction between them. During the next 2000 years an extensive cultural network gradually took shape and this provided the foundation for an emerging 'Chinese' civilization. The sculpture that survives from this period reveals an interest in the human form, as with the Neolithic human-headed pot excavated from a site in Luonan County, Shaanxi, but also in abstract shapes and zoomorphic imagery, which can be seen in the fine jade pieces uncovered from sites in Shandong and the lower Yangzi region.

The end of the Chinese Neolithic coincided with a powerful expansion of the Eastern tradition represented by Longshan culture, and it was against this background that the Chinese Bronze Age began. As Wu Hung notes, 'the development of bronze casting was undoubtedly the most significant phenomenon in Chinese art during the second millennium BCE' (25). The earliest bronzes were similar to Longshan pottery vessels, but by the early-to-mid Shang dynasty (1600–1400 BCE) a transformation began with the beginnings of the monumental bronzes which are now so familiar, even to those with only a passing interest in Chinese culture and civilization. This brings Wu Hung's account into the period that he has written about before, most notably in *Monumentality in Chinese Art and Architecture* (Stanford University Press, 1995), but unlike that earlier book, in which the images were all in black and white, here the discussion is complemented by beautiful colour reproductions of the objects under discussion. Wu Hung also brings that earlier work up to date by including what he considers to be the most important achievement in Chinese archaeology over the past few decades, the discovery of highly advanced regional Bronze Age cultures that were contemporary with the late Shang (c.1200–c.1046 BCE) and early Western Zhou dynasties (c.1046–c.850 BCE). In some cases, as with the material uncovered from Ningxiang in eastern Hunan and from Sanxingdui in central Sichuan, the bronze sculptures 'often surpassed Shang metropolitan products in both scale and iconographic diversity' (29). This has become one of the most exciting areas in Chinese scholarship, and, when read in conjunction with a work such as Lothar von Falkenhausen's *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius* (Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, 2006), this chapter gives a good indication of how understandings of early China are being radically transformed as a result of recent archaeological work.

During the Western Zhou, ritual art was further systematized and increasingly dispersed from the royal household to aristocratic families. Much of the sculpture that survives from this period onwards has been excavated from the tombs of members of such families. The great exception, of course, is the tomb of the First Emperor of Qin, which is given extensive treatment here, but increasingly it is from the tombs of lesser figures that we find evidence of the great artistic creation and renewal that began during the Warring States period (476–221 BCE) and continued on through the Qin (221–206 BCE) and Han dynasties. Sculpture from this period demonstrates an increasingly strong three-dimensionality, vivid imagery and rich ornamentation. Similarly, the range of objects becomes greater, and it is

clear that many of them were made not to commemorate important historical events or facilitate ancestral sacrifices, but simply to enrich the lives of the élite families who owned them. Evident also throughout this early period is the productive interrelationship between the sculptural traditions that developed in different parts of China, and, by the Han dynasty, the increasing interplay between 'Chinese' traditions and those of the steppe. It was also during the Han dynasty that stone begins to be used as an architectural and sculptural material. The First Emperor of Qin had been satisfied with terracotta warriors and bronze chariots, but by the end of the second century BCE monumental stone sculptures were being created in the metropolitan region. This marks the beginnings of the use of a material that would become increasingly common in imperial art, especially for textual inscription and in funerary monuments.

Yan Hong explores the development of this funerary tradition in a largely descriptive chapter that covers the long imperial period from the end of the Han down to the Qing. Yan focuses on the monumental figures that lined the spirit paths leading to and from tombs and mausoleums, particularly those of emperors, and also on the smaller sculptures that were placed within tombs. Over time the terracotta and brick figurines that were buried with the entombed body became more diverse in nature, particularly during the Tang (618–907), when, Yan Hong claims, Chinese sculpture reached a new zenith. While often indicating the increasing engagement with foreign cultures, especially those to the west, these figurines also came to reflect the flourishing commercial life in Chinese cities, as well as changes in social mores and the increasing popularity of *zaju*, or variety drama. Perhaps the best known of these are the tricolour figurines, which were glazed and fired at low temperatures, and which often featured horses and camels. While examples of these survive from Song (960–1279) and Yuan (1271–1368) dynasty tombs, they are emblematic of the flourishing of culture during the Tang dynasty, when the engagement with the wider world reached a new level of intensity and when Buddhism began to transform the way that virtually all Chinese engaged with the world.

The Buddhist transformation of China, as represented in sculpture, is the subject of the final two chapters in the book. Angela Falco Howard traces the early stages of this process, from the proto-Buddhist images found in tombs in Sichuan (second century) down to the flourishing of Buddhist monastic and temple sculpture in the Tang dynasty. Howard devotes considerable space to the cave art of Gansu, using the Jintasi Monastery to indicate the significant influence of Buddhist regions further to the west on the development of Chinese iconography. She also gives a good summary of the stylistic and iconographic development of Buddhist art in the Magao cave complex at Dunhuang, a subject that has generated a great deal of scholarly attention over recent years.

The three great Buddhist projects sponsored by the Northern Wei dynasty (386–534), at Yungang, Longmen and Gongxian, also feature prominently in this chapter. It was only during the fifth century that stone

sculpture began to be produced regularly in China, and this was facilitated by imperial patronage of the grand cave temples at Yungang. Howard argues that this cave complex demonstrates how the Tuoba became gradually acculturated to a settled lifestyle through an increasing reliance on Chinese institutions and customs and through an active sponsorship of Buddhist culture. Turning her attention then to the gilt bronzes and stone steles produced during this period, Howard conveys a strong sense of the enormous impact that Buddhism came to have in China during Northern Wei. She continues her discussion by considering how this initial impact spread and deepened during subsequent periods, concluding with an overview of her earlier work on the very distinctive Buddhist culture that emerged in Yunnan during the Song dynasty. The images selected to accompany the text reinforce Howard's argument about the majesty and grandeur of the Buddhist contribution to the culture of China.

Li Song takes up this story by turning to the heartland of the Chinese world during the Song dynasty (excluding Yunnan). Li first places Buddhist developments within a wider religious and cultural context, then turns to explore the changes in Chinese sculpture during the Song. It was at this time that bodhisattvas gained unparalleled status, increasingly set apart as individual figures, something that is most obvious with Guanyin, whose rise in popularity is clearly demonstrable by this period. The more gentle and feminine portrayals of Guanyin that we are now so familiar with began to appear during the Song and the depiction of arhats also became more lifelike. At the same time, Li Song argues that figurine sculpture from this period reflects the infusion of folk and secular concerns into religious practice.

During the Yuan dynasty Tibetan Buddhism came to exert considerable influence over Chinese religious art, producing a new richness and complexity in sculptural forms, developments that were further refined in both monastic and temple art during the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing periods. Li concludes this chapter, and the book, with a brief account of how the making of Buddhist imagery was increasingly regulated during the Ming and Qing, drawing here on the *Classic of Measurement for Making Buddhist Images*. This aspect of Chinese sculpture, the techniques used in the making of objects, is largely ignored throughout that book, so it is pleasing to see it receive some attention in this final chapter.

This book provides the best single collection of images of Chinese sculpture now available and for this reason alone I suggest that it is something that should be ordered for all university libraries.

*Reviewed by BRIAN MOLOUGHNEY*  
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Sherman Cochran, *Chinese Medicine Men: Consumer Culture in China and Southeast Asia*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2006, x + 242 pp., ISBN 0-674-02161-4 (hbk.).

At first glance, the title of this book, *Chinese Medicine Men*, could lead one to believe that it is about the practice and provision of Traditional Chinese Medicine, and so would be most relevant to those with an interest in this subject. However, the impression the title might give is far from accurate. The book will most definitely be of interest to medical historians, but also to a very different and much broader audience that includes business and marketing historians, as well as scholars of Chinese politics and Southeast Asian studies.

Gradually *Chinese Medicine Men* covers fascinating ground as it works through its subject matter. It is about the way in which Chinese medicine dealers developed and extended the reach of their businesses, both through China as well as Southeast Asia. It is also about how they marketed their products, often in the face of adversity, especially during the Japanese invasion and subsequent Communist takeover of China. The book touches on marketing strategies, politics, and business developments. The book also provides wonderful insights into the business environment and behaviour of Chinese entrepreneurs at the various points in time covered in the different chapters.

*Chinese Medicine Men* takes a case study approach. The opening chapter provides a background historical discussion of consumer culture in China and looks at the various ideas put forward by other scholars in relation to consumption. Issues covered include how early Chinese entrepreneurs extended their lines of trade and distribution to the far reaches of the country; how they negotiated the political system to maintain their business, often under adverse conditions; how they localised their businesses in a country where local knowledge and family connections are crucial; and how they homogenised their products. The arguments through the chapter are that *Chinese Medicine Men's* case studies raise questions about existing understanding of these issues.

The five case study chapters that follow offer the most interesting material. Each is a study of one individual, his products and company and is developed in a manner that gives the reader a compelling introduction to the individual personalities of some of China's genuine business characters. Chapter two looks at the history of Tongren Tang, a long-lived Chinese medicine shop established in 1669. It shows how under the leadership of various members of the Yue family the shop survived several setbacks, and how the family developed and used its connections with the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911 CE) to advantage. After the fall of the Qing Dynasty, and despite Tongren Tang's close association with this, Yue family leaders developed strategies to take Tongren to new heights. These included creating a Western-style 'chain' of stores throughout China, but with managers trained to run them in a way that locals would see businesses as traditional

‘family operated’ concerns. Tongren also used Western-style advertising, including pictorial images, to promote their products, and built schools and sponsored events to raise their public image.

Chapter three examines Huang Chujiu, the so-called ‘king of advertising’. Huang began selling Chinese medicines in the 1880s. Despite no contact with the West, he quickly moved to using Western imagery in his shop design and advertising. His key product was Ailuo Brain Tonic. Huang promoted this as working to improve brain health in accordance with a ‘Western’ scientific theory he had discovered. A most colourful character, he worked political situations and consumer perceptions to his advantage. For instance, his ‘Humane Elixir’ imitated a Japanese medicine following its success in China. When Japanese goods were boycotted in 1915, Huang then promoted his Elixir as one of China’s ‘national goods’. Huang went on to hire top commercial artists to produce calendar posters of his products, beginning in 1914 with paintings of semi-naked women. Later, he used large billboards and even founded a radio station that routinely advertised his products.

Chapter four covers the ‘Great Five Continents Drugstores’, perhaps the most important in the trade in the 1920s. This is the story of Xiang Songmao who applied distribution chain concepts from Japan and the West to his business in China. Xiang and his son expanded their business into all of China’s regions. They too used advertising as a tool to promote custom and ensured control over their business network by recruiting managers only from their native home. A fundamental philosophy was to make products available by promoting their accessibility. Thus, in Shanghai, shops were opened in many districts, meaning travel to the city centre would not be necessary for customers. Another promotional tactic was to give the medical shops a Western appearance to contrast with competitors’ businesses.

Some of the most fascinating material is in chapters five and six. These respectively look at Xu Guanqun’s ‘New Asia Pharmaceutical Company’, and Aw Boon Haw, maker of the famous ‘Tiger Balm’. Both remained in operation during the Japanese invasion and Communist takeover. Both extended the reach of their businesses through China and Southeast Asia. Both worked to build alliances with politicians of any type to further their businesses. Xu’s promotional tactics included establishing professional journals and publications that carried articles about the efficacy of various treatments. The primary aim of these journals was to carry advertising for his products, but also to create an air of science around New Asia’s products. Aw developed his reputation by building amenities such as amusement parks – long before Walt Disney did – and by creating a network of newspapers throughout China and Asia. Like Xu’s publications, these were designed to carry Tiger advertisements: they ran at a loss by undercutting competitors, but served important promotional purposes. Most controversially, Aw courted both Chinese and Japanese leaders during the war, using his relationships to promote his products.

This reviewer is no expert in the subject matter of this book, and so it

is difficult to provide a firm judgement about its overall quality. That said, *Chinese Medicine Men* is a great read, very well put together and concise. For the uninitiated, it would make superb bedside reading. The book will also provide rich material for a range of scholars and students.

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Peter J. Carroll, *Between Heaven and Modernity: Reconstructing Suzhou, 1895-1937*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006, xvii + 325 pp., ISBN: 0-8047-5359-8 (hbk).

Michael Marmé, *Suzhou: Where the Goods of All the Provinces Converge*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005, xiv + 369 pp., ISBN: 0-8047-3112-8 (hbk).

Both of these books began as Ph.D. theses, and together they demonstrate the continuing value to Chinese studies of North American graduate education. Each book marks a substantial contribution to our understanding of Chinese urban history, and when read together they provide a unique perspective on the issues that now concern historians of late Imperial and early Republican China. Carroll's is the more adventurous of the two books, exploring the impact of modernity in urban China in novel and productive ways. In contrast, the issues that interest Marmé are ones that historians of late imperial China have long been concerned with, although his concentration on the early-to-mid Ming period marks a welcome contrast to the usual focus on the late Ming and early Qing.

In his exploration of the impact of modernity in Suzhou, Carroll integrates the cultural historian's interest in symbolic space with the social and economic historian's more familiar concerns about community and class. The result is an imaginative book that Dorothy Ko boldly suggests will redefine the grounds for writing modern Chinese history (see the dust-jacket of the book). Carroll examines the ways in which the material, intellectual and experiential legacy of the past shaped attempts to transform Suzhou into a modern city during the late Qing and early Republican period (1895-1937). He notes how 'this inheritance played an essential but ambiguous role in the distillation of modernity', as 'the scope of urban reconstruction provoked concerns regarding the integrity of "Chinese" or Suzhou local cultural identity' (1).

One of the strengths of the book is the concrete manner in which Carroll engages with these issues. He divides the book into three two-chapter

sections, and in each he examines a key physical and conceptual site in the reconstruction of the city. In the first section, he explores the impact of the first macadamized road, the so-called horse-road built just outside the city wall, and adjoining the foreign concession established in the wake of the signing of the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895. In the second section, he turns his attention to the political, architectural and social transformation of the Prefectural Confucian Temple. The temple was the site of official sacrifices and its academy the source of communal scholarly achievement, the foundation for much of the city's wealth and power. Finally, in the last section of the book, Carroll discusses the conflict over and preservation of a number of 'historical sites' or 'traces of the past' (*guji* 古跡), including the celebrated Hanshan temple, a number of gravesites that came under threat from urban development, and the Xuanmiao guan Daoist temple. The physical expression of the modern transformation of the city was first evident along the sealed horse-road, hence that is where Carroll begins, but as these developments spread throughout the city, conflict and contestation were most often focussed on the communal spaces that embodied best the community's collective memory. Carroll shows how these traces of the past were reinscribed with a range of new meanings as they were transformed into modernist monuments.

By focusing on these communal spaces and their symbolic and material formations, Carroll demonstrates how they were used to integrate overarching ideals of National Essence, nationalism and modernity into the changing urban space of the city. These traces of the past became the sites where local people negotiated the meaning and significance of wider developments. Too often the modern is represented as a sudden and complete break with the past, as if, in Zhou Zuoren's words, people could transform their world simply by donning a new set of clothes. In a very concrete way, Carroll demonstrates how the past continued to shape the present, and how, in an urban setting like Suzhou, the sites of memory were the focus for the remaking of the city and its citizens. This is a rich and stimulating book. As with many other books that began life as Ph.Ds, it is extremely well researched, incorporating a great deal of illuminating Japanese material as well as Chinese and Western sources. But what distinguishes the book is the imaginative way in which Carroll engages with this archive. Perhaps Dorothy Ko is right; it may well help reshape the writing of modern Chinese history.

While Carroll's study of late Qing and early Republican Suzhou charts new territory, Marmé's book about the city during the early Ming period engages with a more familiar terrain. The predominantly social and economic cast of the questions and arguments at the heart of this book will be familiar to anyone who has had any engagement with historical writing on late imperial China. Perhaps the greatest value of the book is that Marmé



raises these familiar questions with regard to the early-to-mid Ming period (1368-1550 CE), and in doing so he enables us to assess the validity of generalisations made about late imperial China that have been based mostly on the late Ming and Qing periods.

It is becoming increasingly clear that the reign of the Hongwu emperor (r.1368-1398 CE) marks an aberration in late imperial history. From at least the Song period onwards (960-1279 CE) the imperial state relied heavily on commerce as a source of income, and thus, despite pronouncements to the contrary, trade and commerce were integral to the economy of late imperial China. With the turmoil of the late Yuan years fresh in his mind, the Hongwu emperor sought to constrain commercial activity into areas sanctioned by the state and to (re)create the empire according to the ancient ideal as an agrarian state. As Marmé notes, this involved ‘nothing less than a wholesale reorientation of the Middle Kingdom’s fiscal system, making the land tax the predominant source of government income for the first time since the mid-Tang’ (69). Through much of the early part of the book, Marmé explores the impact of this decision on Suzhou, especially its prominent families. Incorporating a vigorously commercial city like Suzhou into an agrarian state posed considerable challenges for the early Ming administration. Marmé develops a more positive picture of this process than those who focus only on the authoritarian measures which the administration resorted to achieve its aims, yet he still acknowledges the profound impact these measures had on the residents of the city.

In the first two chapters, Marmé provides a sketch of Suzhou and its immediate hinterland and traces developments in the city in the years leading up to the founding of the new dynasty in 1368. The remainder of the book explores the interaction between the state and local elites over the first two centuries of the Ming dynasty. This is done through a series of chapters that are divided chronologically: Suzhou under the Hongwu emperor; Suzhou from 1398-1430; Suzhou from 1430-1484; economy and society during the fifteenth century; élite culture in the city during the fifteenth century; and Suzhou from 1506-1555. Marmé argues that throughout this period the local élite

proved adept at evading the inconveniences and exploiting the opportunities afforded by official initiatives. Their ingenuity created new realities both on the ground and in the relation of Suzhou to the rest of the empire, realities to which the state responded with further reforms. By the time the process reached an impasse in the mid-sixteenth century, it had transformed Suzhou and created a Suzhou-centered world system. For the first time in Chinese history, that system was centered on a commercial and manufacturing center, not a

political capital. A new, and profoundly different, world had been born (5).

In tracing this interaction between the state and local elites, Marmé examines that fate of a number of local lineages, with each chapter providing both an outline of general developments during the period and a discussion of the particular experience of each lineage. This helps ground the discussion and enables the reader to gain a richer understanding of the complex texture of state-society interactions. Unfortunately, as with the quotation above, Marmé is at times tempted to lift up from the detailed analysis of the particular circumstances of these residents of the city to make sweeping generalisations about the significance of Suzhou in Chinese and world history. And there are times when his attention is diverted into issues that emerge from early modern European history, such as proto-industrialisation, which do little to enhance understandings of the dynamics of the society and economy of late imperial China. At such times, the origins of the book in a thesis seem all too evident. There is a great deal that is of interest in this book, but often the particular significance of Suzhou gets lost amidst a concern with the broader debates about social and economic development in late imperial China or the early modern world.

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Mikael Adolphson, Edward Kamens, and Stacie Matsumoto, eds., *Heian Japan: Centers and Peripheries*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007, xv + 450 pp., 47 maps, figures and tables, ISBN: 13-978-0-8248-3013-7 (hbk.).

Explanations of Japanese history during the Heian period (794 to 1185 CE) have traditionally been largely informed by knowledge of the élite circles surrounding the Imperial court. This is not really surprising since the court was, throughout this period, a central force in the political, religious, social and cultural life within the capital, and, by extension, beyond. The court itself seems also to have provided an intrinsically attractive focus of attention, logically, because its more tangible artefacts like its temples and sculptures, and even the grid structure of the capital itself, reflected the ethos and dictates of the court. Logically also, since many of its cultural artefacts, its collections of verse, its contemporary literature, have survived. In particular, texts like Murasaki Shikibu's *Genji monogatari* and Sei Shōnagon's *Makura no sōshi*, and less well-known court diaries like *Sarashina nikki* have provided engaging and enduring accounts of the privileged lives of the court and its various attendants.

Engaging, because their accounts form entertaining and articulate narratives of the remote, esoteric and elegant lives of the ‘good people’, in curiously modern and accessible literary forms. They provide a voyeuristic glimpse into a privileged and cloistered world. They describe the highly refined manners and habits of their era with frankness, clarity and wit. Their authenticity and authority is enhanced by the participant status of their authors, whose observations can be confirmed against broader knowledge of life in the capital. That contextual authentication is necessary to discourage the tendencies to license or romanticising they can encourage. In particular, the records they have provided about Heian court sensibilities offer a rich insight into a key source of the development of Japanese aesthetic sensibilities.

While a court centred scholarship has its attractions, it also has severe limitations. Its mono-dimensional construct fails to recognize the very foundations upon which survival of court life depended. The indulgent and privileged social engagements of the élite could not have been sustained without the intricately stratified bureaucratic structures of the capital itself. The combined interests of Heian-kyō were in turn dependent on the supporting organization of provincial activities. Provincial infrastructures were, conversely, dependent on the directive machinations of the capital. The fifteen papers collated into this volume focus on the complex, often subtly modulated, sometimes precarious, relations between the political, economic, imperial, aristocratic or bureaucratic interests of Heian-kyō – the ‘centre’ of the book’s title – and the diverse, changing, and equally complex interests of provincial regions – the ‘peripheries’.

The opening section of this book draws together papers by Fukutō Sanae and Takeshi Watanabe, Joan Piggott and G. Cameron Hurst III in the task of ‘Locating Political Centers and Peripheries’ during the Heian period. In fact, each initiates their approach from the centre, from the point of view of three domains of court influence and power during this era. The first describes the differing functions of women’s influence within court circles, from sovereign power through the sometimes contradictory private and public roles of noble women within court circles and beyond to the exertion of female court influences in functional relations in the provinces. The complexities of relations it constructs do, incidentally, explain something of the unique and privileged positions of women like Murasaki Shikibu, within court circles, and the air of intrigue that so often affects their observations.

The two following essays examine the development of the extraordinary power of regency in Heian government through the figures of Fujiwara no Tadahira and Fujiwara no Michinaga. They each construct a deep insight into the complex balances of leadership and power within the intricate diplomacies of court government. They develop insights, in the first instance into the dimensions of rank and position, the forces of liaison,

nepotism and privilege within court circles, and in case of the second the astute management of marital, familial and personal influence within court structures. At the heart of both arguments, however, lies an analysis of the necessary interdependence between court and provincial interests – in economic, bureaucratic and political terms. They illustrate the structures of interaction between court, aristocratic and monastic interests in relation to the various powers of management, influence and appointment by which the court was able to maintain its control. Through their construction of a picture of strategic relations of conflicting or competing imperatives of Machiavellian intricacy and subtlety, both between Heian-kyō and the provinces, and between nobles, courtiers and the imperial court, they chart the necessary development of positions of real, apparently unassailable power. Michinaga's awareness of the extraordinary power attending his own position is realized frankly in his own poem:

This world, I think,  
Is indeed my world.  
Like the full moon  
I shine,  
Uncovered by any cloud.

(Fujiwara no Michinaga, 1018CE, quoted 68)

The functional relations between central and peripheral forces described here were necessary ones. Sustaining the indulgent habits of court life was entirely dependent on the productive capacity of the provinces. Management of stable government and taxation in these centres was dependent on successful management from the centre.

Elsewhere this volume investigates the less obvious, but equally interdependent, relations between central and peripheral interests in the world of the arts. Within the literary world though, the notion of periphery is extended outwards, and historically backwards, to the Chinese sphere. This was a period which saw the elevation of the status of literary knowledge, and especially poetic skill, within Heian court circles. Literature in general, and *yamato* verse in particular, was nourished and promoted. This development coexisted with a corresponding status of Chinese literature. *Kanbun* (Chinese written in Japanese) and *kanshi* (Chinese verse) remained as important components of literary learning and engagement as Confucian ideology in general, and as central an aspect of social engagement as Japanese verse. Indeed, the Japanese reverence for Chinese poets like Bai Juyi was sustained

right through to the later Tokugawa period.<sup>1</sup> Here Ivo Smith also examines the peripheral status of fringe forms like erotic parody within the Japanese literary world.

Knowledge of Chinese literary examples had a pervasive presence in Heian court life. As Murasaki herself acknowledged:

Whenever my loneliness threatens to overwhelm me, I take out one or two of them [*fumi domo*, or Chinese books] to look at; but my women gather together behind my back. ‘It’s because you go on like this that you are so miserable. What kind of lady is it who reads Chinese books?’

(Murasaki Shikibu quoted 129)

Any ambivalence Murasaki’s ‘women’ might have had, presumably had more to do with her other eccentricities than with attitudes to Chinese literature in general. Far from simply providing cultivated solace in moments of boredom, *kanbun* and *kanshi* occupied a central position in the life of the Heian court. Composition of *kanshi*, often within the context of *utaawase* (poetry competitions) was a popular form of social engagement, and an important component in court intercourse at every level.

This syncretic intermesh of Chinese and Japanese literary spheres occurred largely within the academically privileged court circles. Relations between central and peripheral domains in Buddhism during the ninth century seem to have been more exclusive in nature. Regional temples flourished throughout this period, and their increasing autonomy was reflected in a parallel independence in the maintenance of rites and practices and in the sculptural representations of its deities. As Samuel Morse explains here, this is clearly evident in the spread of the cult of Eleven Headed Kannon and in the attendant development of distinctive forms of unpainted wooden sculpture in temples throughout Japan.

Again focusing on the early Heian period, Ryūichi Abé describes a different kind of central/peripheral shift or reversal. Here the focus is on Buddhist writing, and specifically on a shift away from Confucian-oriented textual preoccupation with doctrinal matters, as the previously peripheral and competing preoccupation with ritual discourse began to take a central role in Buddhist intellectual engagement. While Confucian ideologies retained their appeal in court circles, increasingly independent Buddhist activities became central to the development of the Japanese state.

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<sup>1</sup> Bai Juyi and a number of other Chinese poets, and Japanese poets in China, were to occupy the Tokugawa artist Katsushika Hokusai in his mature years.

Relations between central and peripheral interests were not necessarily oppositional. One source of developing tension between court and monastic interests lay in the proliferation of private temples during the ninth century. This development led not to a polarization of interests so much as towards a more complex and paradoxically interdependent relation between temple and court interests:

Whereas private Buddhist temples were established outside the parameters of the bureaucratic state and thus not recognized by it, the leading courtier families were dependent on them in sacralizing the succession of the imperial family and the position of their own clan or lineage. By the same token, the religious world was an indispensable alternative to outmatched nobles and ranking members of court who were no longer active, for a number of reasons, in the secular affairs of the imperial court. (204)

The practice of the burial of *sūtras* in sacred places and temples around Japan reinforced the dichotomy between Heian-kyō and regional religious centres. Even within practices like this however, a central/peripheral division in motivating ideology can be detected, in the divergence of rationales for the practice: saving the Dharma, or saving oneself and one's family.

In many ways, relations between the court and the spiritual or artistic worlds seem to have been fluid and interdependent. In economic terms though, the Heian court's reliance on stability of production in its provincial domains could not be reconciled with repeated failures of production and inevitable famine in rural areas. The ineffectiveness of central powers in dealing with these periods of crisis, together with the extravagance of court living standards, inevitably destabilized the delicate relations with the provinces. In economic terms, the capital and the provinces were functionally co-dependent. Provincial interests were dependent on central government for the management of provincial infrastructures, communications, transport and taxation. Central government was entirely dependent on provincial production to supply its own material needs. Mismanagement within either domain could generate hardship and grievance in the provinces. Even as provincial governments became increasingly competent and autonomous, the symbiotic nature of their relationship with court circles remained evident. As Karl Friday explains, even where unruly warrior leaders flexed their muscles within the provincial domains, both central and peripheral interests were able to coordinate their responses, and errant leaders found themselves obliged to re-establish relations with governments through the offices of the court.

The inclusion of China as a peripheral entity was key to understanding the roles of Chinese arts and letters and Confucian ideology in the

construction of Heian culture. In the broader sense, central interests also benefited from access to the kinds of knowledge, especially diplomatic, that might enhance their own power. Since unofficial contact with foreign interests had the potential to erode that position, however, border interactions were carefully regulated. The result was the maintenance of complex relations, from Heian-kyō to its domestic peripheral centre of Hakata in Kyushu, and beyond to the external peripheries of Korea and China. Here Bruce Batten describes the shift from a period of tight central control of the frontier during the eighth and ninth centuries, to the relinquishing of control to the peripheral institution of Dazaifu.

This paper and the subsequent study of the continental travels of the monk Jōjin in 1072 and 1073 lend the lie to assumptions of relative isolation of Japan during the Heian period. Their demonstration of regulated intercourse rather than restriction, explains the maintenance of links that sustained the economic, diplomatic, monastic and artistic development of Japan's governmental and religious centres, and which were doubtless of reciprocal benefit to Chinese interests. Coincidentally, they blur the boundaries between differing understandings of periphery, internal or provincial and international, governmental and diplomatic, commercial and ideological, in ways that enrich understandings of the complex character of the centre itself.

This multi-disciplinary study certainly provides an antidote to the mono-dimensional and readily romanticized view of Heian Japan through the cloistered lives of privileged women of the court elite. Its dominating theme of fluid and shifting relations between central and peripheral interests in and beyond Heian-kyō through a diverse range of academic perspectives makes for a densely packed volume. Its density is a necessary quality. It ensures a depth of investigation in each domain, and the inclusion of sufficient evidence to validate each argument, to ensure that each investigation is replete and coherent. That depth allows also for a recognition of the complexities of issue or intercourse within each area; the intricacies of relations within the imperial centre, competing peripheral interests and power relations, and the dynamic and inter-dependent relationships between all of these.

The diversity of views challenges the orthodox logic of explaining Heian Japan only through the evidence of its dominant ideologies or hierarchical institutions. It embraces and values the interests of some areas that the original participants of the centre might have dismissed. Inevitably, some veins remain untapped. The importance of Chinese knowledge, conventions and precepts for explaining the development of aesthetic taste in court engagement in the visual arts would have provided a rich avenue for investigation, and one that would have complemented the discussions of literary engagement during the period. The discussions within the political,

cultural, spiritual, ideological, economic or geographical domains do, however, draw together many of the threads of the complex of competing forces that contribute to a more satisfactory, if less comfortable, understanding of the period. Continuities running through several of the papers – relations between *kugyō* (nobility) and *zuryō* (provincial officials) for example, or between court and monastic interests – provide the necessary cohesion to maintain the central focus of the book's theme while recognizing the complexity of its differing interests. Its thematic focus on the interactions of central and peripheral forces itself provides a thematic continuity between relational, sometimes symbiotic, sometimes opposing, sometimes paradoxically related worlds. This focus is also an instructional one, illustrating the necessity of different but intricately interacting explanatory arguments to account for or construct the socio-cultural worlds that underpinned the distinctive histories of the Heian period. As such *Heian Japan: Centers and Peripheries* provides enriching and satisfying explanatory insights into the development of Japan during this period.

*Reviewed by DAVID BELL*  
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Mary Elizabeth Berry, *Japan in Print: Information and Nation in the Early Modern Period*, Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006, xvii + 325 pp., ISBN: 0-520-223766-8 (hbk.).

*Japan in Print* is a valuable addition to the literature on print and material culture in Japan. Mary Berry's contribution lies in her lively and powerful analysis of the informational text genre and its reflection of a sense of nation in the early-modern period. She offers an integrated account of this genre, and the broad commercial and political trends that prompted its emergence after 1600 and fuelled its evolution in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The very first chapter provides an insight into the myriad of materials that emerged during this period. A hypothetical clerk preparing to travel between Kyoto and Edo in the early 1700s consults a catalogue of published works at a book store. The range of useful texts includes a map, a traveller's guide, a pictorial survey of the main trunk route, a gazetteer of the provinces and a travelogue account of famous places, an Edo street index, an urban directory, a personnel roster of the Tokugawa shogunate (a 'military mirror'), a roster of prostitutes and actors and fictitious works treating Edo life. Each text is named and described in detail. Several other genres are noted in passing. By the end of this brief but intense perusal of the available texts, the clerk is faced with the decision as to which to borrow for more leisurely inspection, and which, because indispensable, to purchase immediately; he is exhausted. The reader's journey, however, is just beginning.



In the second chapter Berry introduces the book's core concept and organising principle: the library of public information that took shape after 1600, in the 'early modern transition', during which state cadastral and cartographic surveying programmes intersected with the nascent publishing industry to create new categories of information and new publics. Four subsequent chapters are devoted to four major types of informational text: maps; official personnel rosters; street directories and urban surveys; and the instructional book.

The discussion of cartographic medium and practices begins with a consideration of the medium of maps, their iconic codes, and the 'particular ways of thinking' revealed by the cartographic 'classification of space' (77). The classification of space in early-modern maps reflected both the 'code-mindedness of the new rulers' and the redistribution of land holdings with the consolidation of Tokugawa authority (78). There follows a chronology of mapmaking from the late 1500s overlaid with an analysis of the stories told by particular examples of provincial, national and city maps.

The first official personnel rosters – lists of current *daimyō* – appeared around 1643 and were succinct in scope, but they grew increasingly rich in detail, becoming 'mini-encyclopaedic' (108). The Tokugawa administrative rosters articulated a 'knowable polity' (107), a conception of rule linked to 'history, heredity, honor [sic] and ritual' (106), in a utilitarian form accessible to all with money. The various forces, political, commercial and economic that shaped developments in the content of and audience for, the rosters, are outlined, followed by a description of examples from several phases of this development.

In the Tokugawa era, street directories, urban surveys and other texts related to urban life documented the growing contrast between the city and village, between urban and agrarian life. Descriptions of city streets and wards relied not only upon lists of famous goods, objects and places, but also drew upon the classical tradition of associating place names with poetry, legends and folk etymologies. In conceptualising the city and its functions, these texts played a part in the formation of an early-modern social and commercial culture and space largely independent of the state.

Kaibara Ekiken's guide to Kyoto exemplifies the instructional book. Unlike urban surveys, tour guides were accessible to ordinary people irrespective of their motives, a 'radical assumption underlying much of the library of information' (194). The only prerequisite was a willingness to be informed. Other types of instructional books (Berry's second example is *Everyone's Treasury*) also presumed a general knowledge about Japan, 'a collectivity of knowledge that binds together an otherwise centrifugal society of consumers and strangers' (195).

It is this sense of a public that is discussed in Chapter Seven ('Nation'), which serves both as an articulation of the sense of nationhood inherent in the public information library, and as a conclusion. The orientation of the early modern nation is outlined in reference to Ihara Saikaku's fiction ('a close

cousin of the texts of the informational library' [214]). In turn, this orientation is analysed in terms of notions of territory, state, culture, public.

At its heart, the subject of *Japan in Print* is the 'public information library', a term coined by Berry. Its holdings share the purpose of examining and ordering 'the verifiable facts of contemporary experience for an open audience of consumers' (15). Considered together, they reflect a will to observe and desire to investigate, document, organise, catalogue, and systematise the human and natural worlds in all their complexity. The public information library reflects a remarkably modern sensitivity and confidence, a rational stance and 'common attitude' expressive of 'pervasive habits of mind'. It affirms 'the knowability through observation of worldly phenomena', and a commitment to 'holistic and taxonomic modes of analysis' (16). This stance is reflected in the library's common features: a commitment to empirical methods, encyclopaedic scope, microscopic detail; the conviction that space as well as the mundane and the normal can be classified and known; and a propensity to make truth claims.

The new investigative style that fundamentally distinguished these seventeenth century texts from their predecessors was made possible by the development of commercial publishing and state-making initiatives. In turn, commercial publishing was an important factor behind the revolutionary shift to vernacular Japanese that underpinned the increased circulation of the genre. The circulation of informational texts was also ensured by the dynamism of a non-state public sphere, characterised by the early modern city, as well as social commerce, mobility and consumption.

*Japan in Print* explodes the erroneous association of Tokugawa society with the static "premodern". Berry deftly points out that the library is more than an accumulation of facts, details and information, and more than an accretion of practical knowledge. She detects in the library the basis of something larger: a modern nation. Underpinning the library is an assumption of a "public" – a readership with shared understanding – the notion of a collective identity defined by the parameters of this shared knowledge.

*Japan in Print* will appeal primarily to students of the material, particularly print, culture of early-modern Japan. Its attention to the contexts in which texts circulate, and the multiple functions of informational texts, will also make it attractive to anyone interested in the history of Japanese cartography, publishing and books, as well as the early-modern circulation of ideas. The book contains an extensive bibliography (half of the titles are English-language works), revealing to the student of twentieth century Japan the extensive body of primary and secondary materials available to scholars of early-modern Japan, added to which is a useful, comprehensive index. It is an elegantly-designed and beautifully-produced book. Philip E. Lilienthal imprints want only one thing: a ribbon to mark pages when referring to the endnotes. (The use of footnotes instead would obviate this need somewhat.)

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Gregory Clancey, *Earthquake Nation: The Cultural Politics of Japanese Seismicity, 1868-1930*, Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 2006, xiii + 331 pp., ISBN: 0-520-24607 (hbk).

If you were ever under the illusion that engineering and the physical sciences are somehow devoid of culture in the sense that they express fundamental relationships about nature and the forces that make it dynamic, then reading *Earthquake Nation* will soon give you cause to think again. Gregory Clancey has written the first full-length study of the cultural politics of seismicity in Japan from the beginning of Meiji to the end of Taisho, a period corresponding with the introduction of Western influence and the reassertion of nationalist sentiment. Set against these formative years in the making of the modern nation, Clancey traces the no less turbulent subterranean forces at work beneath the ground, forces that manifested themselves in the Nōbi earthquake of 1891 and in the complete devastation of Tokyo in 1923. This is not your usual “disaster-book”, however, replete with its lurid descriptions, its full share of pathos and dire forebodings of worst still to come. In fact, such passages are kept to an absolute minimum. Instead, what intrigues the author is how culturally distinct knowledge systems developed and how they were ordered. In looking at two different knowledge systems – one foreign, the other native – he addresses the question of building safely in a very active seismic zone against the backdrop of rapid modernisation and all its promises.

The structure of the book follows these debates and the rise of the new science of seismology from the late 1860s until 1930, to provide an account punctuated by the two major earthquakes that struck Japan during this period and that became “tests” of men, material and design. The study opens with a discussion of the youthful Meiji rulers’ decision to rebuild their “wooden” homeland in masonry and iron and the nature of the technological transfer that involved. The following two chapters explain how this was realised through the employment of thousands of foreign, particularly British experts and the establishment of colleges of western learning. Not only were traditional *daiku* construction techniques dismissed as mere carpentry but the use of wood was judged totally inadequate in providing the strength needed to withstand earthquakes. The whole issue of the seismic resistance of buildings and how to assess it forms the subject of the third chapter that examines the founding of modern seismology in Japan and the invention of the first seismographs. Already, however, doubts were surfacing about the appropriateness (or, indeed, the safety) of the new masonry buildings. This criticism became widespread in the late 1880s, as a western-educated generation of Japanese architects and seismologists were able to “speak back” to their mentors in the language of science, art and the nation as they strove to rediscover the *kokusui* or “national essence” of the land.

Chapter Five opens with a description of the unusually powerful earthquake that rocked the Nōbi Plain near Nagoya in 1891. The utter failure of many iron and brick structures and the widespread dissemination of that fragility through journalism and photography effectively placed western science “on trial” reversing the trope of previous decades that had cast Japan as the weaker vessel and things European as the symbols of strength. Chapter Six charts the rise of the new science of seismology as a state ideology to replace that of Confucianism in the previous regime but where its value is seen in its potential for predicting earthquakes and protecting a built environment. The search for a Japanese architecture that finally breaks with the form and detail of Europe in the aftermath of Nōbi is the subject of the penultimate chapter. The book reaches its grand denouement amidst the ruins of Tokyo wracked by the Great Kantō earthquake and ensuing fires of 1923 that seemed to prove once and for all that the solution to building in a seismically active landmass lay in the newly developed indigenous construction technique of ferro-concrete (concrete poured around a lattice of iron bars). The opinion of Japanese urban planners and engineers has changed little in this respect since then.

What this book does so well is to lift earthquake and architecture from the exclusive expertise of the physical scientist and engineer and place it squarely in the hands of the historian. For too long disasters have been perceived as purely physical events to be analysed in accordance to the emergency management cycle of mitigation, preparation, response and recovery with little regard to their medium and long-term effects on society. Hazards may be natural phenomena but the conditions of vulnerability that give rise to disasters are quintessentially historical ones. Clancey’s study implicitly recognises this relationship and skilfully weaves it into his discussion of how architects and scientists were able to refashion a modern sense of Japanese identity in the face of a western imperialism that extended well beyond the political, military and economic sphere to that of culture. The real strength of this book lies in its author’s ability to link cultural discourse with hard science, the doings of individuals with the politics of the state, a rare combination at any time and especially so for a non-western setting.

Yet another pioneering dimension of this study is the manner in which Clancey discusses how occupations were progressively professionalised during the late nineteenth century, how a newly-trained body of architects was able to subordinate traditional *daiku* carpentry masters, reducing them to little better than skilled tradesmen, while claiming for themselves the grander designation of scientists and engineers. This was a process taking place all over the industrialising world but its realisation remains largely unrecorded outside of Europe and North America. Any study that sheds light on this important social transformation in Asia is especially welcome and provides an important basis for historical comparison to societies undergoing similar changes in the twentieth century.

Clancey quite clearly subtitles this volume the *Cultural Politics of*

*Japanese Seismology* and so it may seem a trifle unfair to criticise him for something he says he is not going to do. But the book would have had a much greater impact if the discussion of how to resist western “colonial” influences and still construct “modern” buildings in a seismically active zone had been integrated or at least placed in context into the wider national debates about foreign influences in Meiji and Taisho Japan. As it stands now, these sorts of matters seem rather remote and divorced from the wider society, a dispute among a handful of mainly expatriate academics and a select group of western-educated Japanese architects. Earthquakes and other hazards are much more than that and perhaps the author let pass an ideal opportunity to make that point more forcefully. In the end, too, for a book that is all about Japan much of it is dedicated to the thoughts, ideas and opinions of foreigners. And while the intent of the author is clear in wishing to demonstrate how ‘all artefacts have their meanings transformed as they are picked up, re-illustrated, and redeployed in new places’ (208) perhaps too much space has been accorded to non-Japanese voices and not enough to indigenous ones.

*Earthquake Nation*, however, remains a highly original work of scholarship, lucid and thought-provoking. It deserves a wider audience than simply historians of Japan or historians of science and could be read with equal benefit by those engaged in emergency planning and management who might profit from a greater historical understanding of how vulnerability is constructed not by nature alone but by culture as well.

*Reviewed by GREG BANKOFF*  
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Yang Jiang, *Baptism*, translated by Judith M. Amory and Yaohua Shi, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2007, xviii + 282 pp., ISBN: 978-9622098312 (pbk.).

Yang Jiang (b. 1911), pseudonym of Yang Jikang, is renowned both as a prolific translator of Western literature and a talented writer of Chinese narrative literature. Yang and her late husband Qian Zhongshu (1910-1998) spent most of their working lives on literary research and translation. Nevertheless, their creative writings from both before 1949 and during their retirement years in the 1980s are highly esteemed even though rather few in number and focussed mostly upon social manners of China’s educated elite. Yang’s best-known literary writings include four plays during the early 1940s, an understated 1981 memoir of the Maoist Cultural Revolution entitled *Ganxiao liu ji* [A Cadre School life in six chapters], and in 1987 her lone novel, *Xi zao*, literally “Taking a bath”, which the translators have imaginatively rendered as *Baptism* to express the ideologically transformative aims of what the psychologist Robert Jay Lifton has described as the Mao Era ‘cult of confession’ in public. The lengthy climax of the novel features

the forced but colourful public confessions of exaggerated sins and omissions by a small circle of around ten literary intellectuals at an early 1950s literary research institute in Beijing. Although the Maoist metaphor of “taking a bath” referred directly to the cleaning off of ideological filth left over from the “bad old society” of traditional China and from the West’s influence of insidious “bourgeois decadence”, the term also resonates closely with the unofficial homegrown term of *xi nao* or “brainwashing”, a popular but state-censored version of *sixiang gaizao*, “thought remoulding” (often ambiguously translated as “thought reform”). Chinese scholars who have researched thought remoulding and published their results in Hong Kong rather than the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) such as Hu Ping have traced the Chinese version of the term “brainwashing” back to unofficial or unpublished Chinese sources rather than to American or other Westerner commentators, who for decades have often been wrongly credited with this innovative terminological coinage.

The subject matter of both Yang Jiang’s 1981 memoir and her 1987 novel were considered too sensitive for publication in the PRC even during that post-Mao cultural thaw decade, so were published in Hong Kong instead. In fact, the inaugural PRC edition of *Baptism* was not printed until 2003. One might wonder why these writings that are entirely lacking in a spirit of dissidence or protest with respect to the PRC, a single-party Leninist regime, could not be published in China for so many years during the Reform and Opening (*gaige kaifang*) Era. One searches in vain in Yang Jiang’s books for any critical reference to Mao Zedong, his party-state, his lieutenants, or his successors. As is typical of novels of manners, Yang Jiang works within a microcosmic form and leaves the macrocosmic realm untouched. For example, the reader encounters no discussion of the way the “Three Antis” political campaign was formulated at the top of Mao Zedong’s pyramidal party-state or actually implemented throughout the nation as a whole, but merely how this campaign played out within the single small work unit of the literary research institute. Any generalizations about the larger significance of the Maoist thought remoulding campaign are left to the reader or critic – such as Kirk Denton’s comment that it is ‘a new and nasty political culture that demands ideological purity and uniformity’. The author herself remains silent in this regard, though her tone in the novel and her reputation for avoiding the Maoist party-state’s pressures to embark on such denunciations of both oneself and others suggests a tacit disapproval on her part.

Although a number of the central personages of *Baptism* exhibit foibles that receive satiric treatment, the lack of heavy-handed satire allows the reader to feel some sympathy or at least compassion for all those pressured to concoct a self-flagellating confession and then present it in public. The human costs of such a harsh and time-wasting Maoist campaign become all too evident, and must raise questions in the ordinary reader’s mind about the motivation and wisdom of the leaders who designed such a campaign. Moreover, the novel’s indication that the Maoist ideological remoulding campaigns were already in full swing by the early 1950s throws doubt on

standard Chinese Communist Party (CCP) historiography, which insists that the first few years of the new party-state were successful and that Mao Zedong did not start making significant errors of judgment until the disastrous campaigns of the late 1950s such as the Great Leap Forward (which resulted in one of the worst famines in world history, with tens of millions of villagers starving to death between 1959 and 1962). What *Baptism* illustrates without saying in so many words is that even the best educated of China's urban élite were being treated quite roughly by the PRC party-state very soon after its inception in late 1949.

A major frame of suspense in the novel swirls around the intense but tightly restrained and ultimately platonic relationship between the unmarried heroine Yao Mi and the unhappily married professor Xu Yancheng, who longs to divorce his wife and marry Yao Mi. A certain level of poetic justice appears near the end when Yao manages to elude the net of public confession that had trapped most others, and Xu's very circumscribed and almost perfunctory confession is accepted instead of being thrown back in his face with impatient demands for more damning revelations, as was the case with the initial confessions from some of the less sympathetic male characters such as Yu Nan and Zhu Qianli.

In the informative and lucidly written introduction to their translation of this novel, Judith M. Amory and Yaohua Shi make a convincing case for adding an occasional footnote when the general reader would benefit from a short explanation of a particular allusion or reference in the literary text. An example of the occasional necessity for a footnoted explanation of a reference is when the translators explain how a group of four members of the institute who jointly wrote a hack article denouncing the interpretive writings of their colleague Yao Mi had developed a three-character authorial pseudonym that alluded to all four of their names.

This novel is recommended for anyone interested in China's educated élite, PRC history, fine recent East Asian novels of manners, or inquisitorial campaigns with Orwellian overtones. Alternately humorous and chilling, *Baptism* lends itself to appreciation in a number of different registers.

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David Der-wei Wang and Carlos Rojas, eds., *Writing Taiwan: A New Literary History*, Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2007, x + 412 pp., ISBN: 978-082233867 – x (pbk.).

*Writing Taiwan* brings together sixteen essays about Taiwan's modern and contemporary literature. This collection is the first of its kind in terms of scale and is a superb contribution to the growing field of Taiwan cultural studies. As far as this writer is aware, the volume is the first English-

language collection about Taiwan literature since Jeannette L. Faurot's edited volume, *Chinese Fiction from Taiwan: Critical Perspectives* (Indiana University Press, 1980).

*Writing Taiwan* builds on the accumulated events of the past twenty years – the period since Taiwan's democratization of the 1980s. The events include debates about Taiwan literature in the early years of that decade; the rise of pluralism that accompanied liberalization; and, more important for our purposes, the literary developments that have gone from strength to strength since then. The literariness is clear: *Writing Taiwan* is embedded within the increasingly sophisticated nature of recent literary production together with the analysis that has similarly matured. The volume reflects the positive effects of the transnational cultural flows that, during the past decade, have enfolded the island's intellectual community both locally and abroad. A further strength of the collection is the crossing of the 'great divide' of 1949 to incorporate the Japanese colonial period of 1895-1945. The colonial era was the historic and conceptual birthplace of Taiwan's new literature (*xinwenxue*), but due to political factors, has tended to be neglected. Finally, the editorial integrity of this excellent collection takes to new heights the ideals of cohesiveness and readability that are often found wanting in conference volumes. Several of the essays, in particular, stand out in terms of the intrinsic value of the topic being addressed together with the superior merit of the writing.

The synchronic and multifaceted structure of *Writing Taiwan* resonates with the 'multifaceted Taiwanese cultural and political modernity' (x) that informs the essence of modern Taiwan literature. In other contexts, this statement could be deemed simplistic. Here, however, it puts the lie to the dysfunctionality of the recent past, including the taboo otherness of the local tradition, the heritage that was once lost to oblivion and the interdictions that at one time engendered amnesia about the meaning of the past. The discussions cross mode, genre, and discipline and range from the more linear-based examinations of modernism/nativism to the trendy discursiveness of post-colonialism/post-modernism, mirroring the newfound openness since hegemony. The volume crosses boundaries that are historic and geographic and satisfies the critical objectives that, David Der-wei Wang notes, are 'to critique the methodological frameworks of Taiwanese literary studies to date, to lay forth the enunciatively endeavours in the discourse of cultural politics, to revisit time and memory in the formation of Taiwan's literary history, and to examine the cartographic coordinates that form Taiwan's imaginary communities' (x). The implementation of these objectives provides a framework for the examination of the vibrancy and diversity of Taiwan literature, which transcends that of China and has thrived despite political constraints.

Sung-sheng Yvonne Chang's 'Representing Taiwan: Shifting Geopolitical Frameworks' is a thoughtful position paper that inaugurates Part One: 'The Limits of Taiwan Literature'. Chang mounts a genealogy of the strategies – conventional and otherwise – that have historically been used to



represent Taiwan. She points out that studies about Taiwan have been accompanied by a limited number of analytic models that reflected the associated stakes in the academy. A binary mode, which was determined by the Cold War ideology, informed an early model in which Taiwan was classed as 'the other China.' Other models relegated the island to the role of a 'surrogate China' or a case study that was used as a practical substitute for 'China proper.' Chang uses the term bracketing to refer to a tendency that nominally treated Taiwan as a part of China, but which neglected historical contextualization. Since the 1980s, more nuanced models have emerged, including discourses of feminism, queer theory, postcolonialism and postmodernism. The author subtly suggests that, when opting for our methodological preferences, we would all do well to reflect carefully on the unstated agendas and objectives that underwrite each.

Fangming Chen, who is a *bentuhua* (variously translated as localism and indigenization) spokesperson and theoretician, is the author of 'Postmodern or Postcolonial? An Inquiry into Postwar Taiwanese Literary History'. With this essay, the reader should keep in mind a recent debate by Taiwan-based scholars about whether Taiwan of recent years could be more fittingly described as 'post-colonial' or 'post-modern'. Chen argues that Taiwan's society must be examined in light of the country's historical trajectory, which followed a path defined primarily by colonialism. The Japanese colonial period was succeeded, for instance, by what Chen terms the 'recolonization' of the decades after the war. Chen takes his argument one step further by stating that the tactics of violence of the Nationalist regime replicated *Kôminka*, the imperialization movement during the latter part of the Pacific war. Accordingly, the anti-communist literature of the 1950s conjures up the political context of the wartime *kômin* (collaborative) literature. Chen maintains that both modernism and its successor postmodernism amount to a form of neo-colonialism, which did not necessarily come to an end with the lifting of Martial Law (1987). Despite the tenor of his discussion, Chen concedes that it is still possible to find works with postmodern characteristics during the mature postcolonial period.

The construct of 'Taiwan literature' is a key analytic category in any relevant discussion and is inseparable from endeavours such as this. Up until recently, the category was a problematic one, but has become normalized due to the effects of liberalization and the influence of the pro-local trend of *bentuhua*. Historically, the problem of how to define, categorize or even to label Taiwan literature was a thorny one and was linked to the 'ambiguous epistemological hinterland' of Taiwan itself; issues of identity and cultural genealogy (1-2); and, to put it bluntly, national politics. Xiaobing Tang's 'On the Concept of Taiwan Literature' is a seminal contribution to our understanding of the issue. The essay traces the process of normalization from the debates of the early 1980s through to an analysis of the field of Taiwanese literary studies in the China Mainland. Suffice it to say, the rubric of 'Taiwan literature' is no longer politically incorrect; it no longer runs foul of political and other taboos; and it no longer questions or puts to the test the

partisan position of those who adhere to the term as much as for convenience as for any other reason. The shedding of political connotations has been a major hurdle to cross in the progress toward a fuller acceptance of local cultural production.

The focus of Part Two is the sociocultural backdrop of traditions, genres and movements. The part opens with Joyce C. H. Liu's 'The Importance of Being Perverse: China and Taiwan, 1931-1937', which dredges up from relative obscurity the modernism of the 1930s and 1940s and its corresponding motifs of waste and filth. Liu argues that Taiwan's first modernist poet, Yang Chichang, used such 'perversity' as a means to resist the system. The author positions her discussion with respect to the *Anti-Oedipus* by Deleuze and Guattari, specifically, the collective desire to normalize all discourses so that they fit into the symbolic order of the nationalist construction.

In "'Our Destitute Dinner Table": *Modern Poetry Quarterly* in the 1950s,' Michelle Yeh traces the modern poetry debate of the early 1970s to the rise of modernism in the 1950s. Modern poetry came into being despite the opposition to it by the advocates of old poetry (*gushi*) and the official cultural policy that promoted 'combat literature and art' (*fangong yishu*). Unsurprisingly, the policy impacted on Zhong Lihe, Taiwan's first nativist, who died in relative obscurity in 1960. In 'The Literary Development of Zhong Lihe and Postcolonial Discourse in Taiwan,' Fenghuang Ying discusses this writer with respect to the anti-communist propaganda and the debates that occurred from the 1970s through to the 1990s. Given Taiwan's current socio-cultural environment, Zhong is difficult to position because of his wartime sojourn in China.

The part closes with Sung-sheng Yvonne Chang, who offers an insightful discussion of Wang Wenxing, a leading modernist of the contemporary period. In 'Wang Wenxing's *Backed against the Sea, Parts I and II: The Meaning of Modernism in Taiwan's Contemporary Literature*', Chang dissects Wang's 1981 writerly text with respect to the techniques of voice, parody and black humour, and the thematic concern with materialism and poverty. Like the postmodernists, the modernists seek to counteract the lacks and excesses of contemporary society. Chang claims that Wang is distinguished through his elitism, which exemplifies the modernists' ongoing high culture quest for stylistic and intellectual excellence.

Part Three deals with time and memory in Taiwan history, or literary attitudes toward history. David Der-wei Wang's 'The Monster that is History: Jiang Gui's *A Tale of Modern Monsters*' interweaves a philosophical discourse on the nature of evil with ancient historiographies that date back to Chu. The recounting of evil for the purpose of admonition – the intent of such historiographies – is countenanced through the trope of the *taowu*, a monster from ancient times and an alternative reference to 'history'. These ideas frame his discussion of Jiang Gui's *A Tale of Modern Monsters* (renamed *The Whirlwind* in 1957), which chronicles the communist activities in Shandong in the 1920s and 1940s and re-writes the mandate to exorcise

the monster received from the Ming and Qing. Despite the fiat, the author concludes that texts such as these inadvertently perpetuate the monster by adducing elements that belie the search for good and suggest complicity with strategies of political legitimization.

Questions of history and amnesia re-emerge in Yomi Braester's 'Taiwanese Identity and the Crisis of Memory: Post-Chiang Mystery', an essay about the post-trauma mystery genre of the whodunit. The gap between personal and collective memory, the silences in the narratives of identity and the inability to generate memory that could explain the present configure two narratives – Chen Yingzhen's 'Mountain Path' (1983) and Liu Daren's 'Azaleas cry out Blood' (1984) – that are symptomatic of the inability to find an answer to any story of history. At the same time, the strategy of personal memory enables the works to go far to address the aporia of modern Chinese and Taiwanese history.

The writing of Su Weizhen reflects the sociocultural reality of the *juancun* (military compound). In 'Doubled Configuration: Reading Su Weizhen's Theatricality,' Gang Gary Xu reads Su's theatricality as a performance that affirms the embodied identity of self. Su's epistemological ambiguity contrasts with the disdain and negativity of her contemporary, Zhang Dachun, who was a local favourite during the 1980s. Kim-chu Ng's 'Techniques behind Lies and the Artistry of Truth' foregrounds three aspects of Zhang's work: the themes of mendacity and rebellious youth; the writer's persona and ideology; and the relationship between the enlightenment and commodity aesthetics. Ng is sharply critical of Zhang, saying that he does not engage with broader social issues, never grew up and has internalized the mendacious logic of totalitarianism. Nonetheless, as a replica of advertising strategy, Zhang's aesthetic innovation illuminates a truth – the effect of the trends of commodity consumption upon the Taiwanese urban experience.

Spectral topographies and the circuits of desire are themes in Part Four that opens with Ping-hui Liao's 'Travel in Early-Twentieth-Century Asia: On Wu Zhuoliu's "Nanking Journals" and His Notion of Taiwan's Alternative Modernity'. In his travelogue of 1942-43, Wu informs the reader that he travelled to China in order to escape the oppressiveness of Japanese occupied Taiwan. In China, his subsequent alienation and disenchantment led him to re-assess the modernities of both China and Japan. Wu's notion of Taiwan's 'alternative modernity' captures the difference of the island together with an ideational ideal of absolute freedom.

The transnational borrowing of a Japanese novel – Yasunari Kawabata's 1961 *Ancient Capital* – is the subject of discourse in Lingchei Letty Chen's 'Mapping Identity in a Postcolonial City: Intertextuality and Cultural Hybridity in Zhu Tianxin's *Ancient Capital*.' The novel provided the model for Zhu Tianxin's *Ancient Capital* (1997) that recounts a homecoming by a second-generation Chinese émigré in a place that she originally did not conceive of as home. Chen argues that the act of intertextual borrowing mirrors the depiction in Zhu's novel of Taipei as 'a hybrid intersection of multiple transnational flows' (284). In 'Li Yongping

and Spectral Cartography', Carlos Rojas takes one step further the relation between transnational movement and local concerns through his exploration of the metaphorical implications in the sexual imagery in two novels by the Malaysian-Chinese novelist, Li Yongping. Rojas suggests that Li's 1998 novel *Zhuling's Wanderings in Wonderland* and its predecessor *Haidong qing* (1992) constitute allegorical narratives about Taiwan's political identity with respect to China.

A Lacanian reading of Li Ang is the subject of Liao Chaoyang's 'History, Exchange, and the Object Voice: Reading Li Ang's *The Strange Garden* and *All Sticks are Welcome in the Censor of Beigang*'. Liao argues that, despite their bad taste and lack of political correctness, Li's works incorporate a new sensibility that is based on loyalty and commitment to historical memory. Gaze and voice comprise operative strategies in the narration of the circularity of exchange that negotiates a viable way to transcend psychic and historic trauma.

Ban Wang's 'Reenchanting the Image in Global Culture: Reification and Nostalgia in Zhu Tianwen's Fiction' is a fitting finale to the dialogue with Taiwan's multifaceted modernity. The essay reiterates the global flows of capital and the anxiety about 'Taiwan' as a heuristic chronotope. The foregrounding in 'Fin de siècle Splendour' (1996) of Taipei with its shifting visual imagery of postmodern culture throws into relief the paper trail left by many Taiwan works about the psycho-cultural damage of globalization. The reification of commodification in the global city traces in microcosmic form the national journey from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft* that is articulated by Mia, the protagonist of 'Splendour,' who is an addict of commodity fetishism. Ultimately, Mia turns from the use value of objects to their rechantment as personal and aesthetic enrichment, representing thereby a poignant response to mechanical reproduction and the loss of history and memory by globalization. As Carlos Rojas puts it, "'Fin de siècle Splendour'" suggests the reconsolidation of local specificities within a postmodern, postnational context that invites us to reconsider the concept of national identity itself' (12).

In sum, *Writing Taiwan* speaks to the legacy of Taiwan literature, including its volatility, conflicting impulses and cornucopia of ideologies and literary innovations. The integrity of the volume and the individual essays reflects the achievement of ideals that are scholarly, technical, and intellectual, together with a welcome editorial decision not to sacrifice excellence for the sake of a speedy production. The challenge posed by the volume to the mechanical production of more mass-produced volumes is itself a final, fitting comment on globalization. I highly recommend this outstanding contribution to any reader who wishes to understand more about Taiwan, its cultural complexity, vibrant history and the intrinsic merit of its intellectual tradition.

*Reviewed by ROSEMARY HADDON*  
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Gi-wook Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea: Genealogy, Politics and Legacy*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2006, xiii + 307 pp., ISBN: 0-8047-5408-X (pbk.).

Gi-wook Shin's *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea* opens with a lively tableau depicting South Korean fervour over the soccer team that made its way to the 2002 World Cup semifinals. As the Stanford sociologist remarks, the passionate demonstrations of support, which caught the attention of the entire world, reveal much about Korean 'national pride, identity and confidence' (1). Indeed, from our standpoint in the early twenty-first century such outpourings of sentiment make it difficult to envision a Korea in which intense nationalistic solidarity was not present.

And yet, as Shin argues in this cogent volume, the most comprehensive study of Korean nationalism in English, the hegemonic status of ethnic nationalism in Korea was far from inevitable. As recently as one hundred years ago, other paradigms of imagined collective loyalties were available that could have taken the Korean peninsula in very different directions. Shin thus concerns himself with teasing out two related historical processes: the rise of 'nation' as a source of communal identity at the expense of non-national forms, and the concomitant development of an ethnicized concept of the nation. The bulk of the book is then taken up with exploring how this ethnic notion of identity has played itself out in such fields as 'anticolonialism, civil war, authoritarian politics and democratization, national division and unification, and globalization' (4).

Shin's introduction engages with a key theoretical debate: is 'nation' a new and 'constructed' phenomenon (à la Eric Hobsbawm and Benedict Anderson) or should it instead be seen as built on preexisting patterns of ethnicity (as per Anthony Smith)? While scholars have cited the Korean example as evidence in support of each view, a third group has disputed the stark parameters of the distinction and attempted to steer a middle course, arguing for the uniqueness of the Korean experience and refusing either to accept that the Korean nation is inherently 'natural' or to apply the Western constructivist model often used to explain the rise of European nation-states. As such scholars have rightly noted, Korea has maintained remarkably stable territorial boundaries and a coherent governmental bureaucracy for several centuries. Shin himself ultimately declines to travel far down this bumpy theoretical road, finding it 'fruitless to continue to debate whether the Korean nation is modern or primordial' (7), given the lack of evidence to connect pre-modern conceptions of political community with modern, Western conceptions of 'nation'. What must be analyzed in his estimation is that pre-modern Koreans partook of multiple identities. No guarantee existed that nation would come to trump race or class, as manifested in ideologies that entered Korea roughly a century ago, such as pan-Asianism, colonial racism, international socialism and communism.

The body of the text is divided into three large sections. In Part One ('Origins and Development'), Shin demonstrates the historically embedded and structurally contingent nature of the processes that brought ethnic nationalism to the fore. He treats with acumen the vicissitudes that Korea experienced over the twentieth century, most obviously Japanese colonialism and an internecine civil war that led to opposed polities, each claiming to be the legitimate spokesman of the Korean people. This discussion paves the way for Part Two ('Contentious Politics'), in which Shin highlights disputes over Korean national identity, both between North and South, and, in a chapter that elaborates on his contribution to Tangherlini and Pai's *Nationalism and the Construction of Korean Identity*, internally within South Korea. Korean scholars themselves have often debated whether to regard nationalism as an ideology of domination or resistance, and Shin offers a useful corrective to a common view that treats political nationalism as integrative and ethnic nationalism as divisive. As he argues, nationalism in itself is relatively neutral, but in combination with other ideologies its effects can vary widely.

Shin throughout deploys a wide array of primary and secondary sources in both English and Korean, and his analyses have numerous virtues. His section on the limits of Korean nationalist thought, couched in theoretical terms borrowed from Partha Chatterjee, is especially thought-provoking. Shin contends that while ethnic nationalism may have appeared to challenge Japanese colonial policy, it could not overcome subjugation, because of its inability to escape the colonizer's logic. In other words, both colonial apologists and Korean nationalists actively sought to cordon off Koreans as a separate race, the former in order to legitimize colonial rule for bringing civilization to inferiors, and the latter to reassert the centrality of Korean culture within the larger East Asian Confucian sphere. While this latter project may have enhanced Korean pride, it also displayed disturbing affinities with Japanese fascism. Shin offers similarly intriguing explorations into Korea's transition to modernity: if Protestantism, as Max Weber argued, provided the value system under which the West developed, did the nationalist ethic act as its functional equivalent in Korea?

Shin's treatment of the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (DRPK) merits particular attention. North Korea is at times given short shrift in discussions of Korean nationalism, but Shin demonstrates how international ideologies were appropriated by its regime in the service of a nationalist agenda. He is especially strong on a point that most scholars of Korea but few media correspondents recognize: the facile application of the label 'Stalinist,' which has become almost de rigueur in journalist accounts of the DPRK, obscures far more than it explains. Shin traces the evolution of the North Korean system into 'Socialism of our style,' in which Soviet dominance and universalistic Marxism-Leninism disappeared in favour of the particularistic North Korean nationalism of *juche*. (Shin cites the pointed comment of Kim Chông-hun that North Korea's system has now become 'socialism without Socialism,' [93]). The author goes on to make the

germane argument that, ironically, belief in ethnic unity and the mutually exclusive need for either North or South to become the legitimate spokesman of the Korean nation has fanned tensions between the two over the last several decades.

Also illuminating is Shin's discussion of the differing approaches adopted by ethnic nationalists and socialist ideologues in dealing with the mistreatment of Koreans in Manchuria by Chinese authorities in the late 1920s and early 1930s. While Communists regarded the issue as a class problem with global resonance, nationalists saw it in ethnic terms and framed it as a matter of Korean survival. In fact, it is precisely because Shin's discussion here is so helpful that a weakness in his overall thesis emerges: the *Chosôn Ilbo* published editorials decrying the situation and mounted an aid campaign to which tens of thousands of Koreans contributed on behalf of their brethren. More alarmingly, some Koreans attacked locally residing Chinese in retaliation, including an incident in which some 100 Chinese were killed in Pyongyang. If, as Shin claims, the ethnicization of Korean nationalism was not inevitable and competing forces could have carried the day in the early part of the twentieth century, one questions why solidarity based around shared ethnicity held so much more power as a mobilizing force than other collective identities. While Shin convincingly demonstrates that Korean leaders and intellectuals had recourse to numerous ideologies in their attempts to reform Korea at the turn of the last century, he perhaps overemphasizes top-down nationalism at the expense of mass sentiment and discourse.

In Part 3 of the book, Shin turns towards 'Current Manifestations' and examines the relationship between globalization and nationalism in Korea and how globalization has been appropriated to serve national interests. Shin uses some 'hard' sociological number-crunching to back up his arguments here, but this data might have been best left to the appendices. After such fine qualitative analysis, it is jarring to come across phrases like 'Because all our dependent variables use ordinal scales or are dichotomous variables, I construct ordinal logit and binary logit regression models' (194-195). Nonetheless, he raises here important policy questions that imbue this book with undeniable real-world relevance: how can ethnic nationalism, which likely will remain a key organizing principle of Korean society, be used constructively?

And yet, as up-to-date as Shin's work is, it does not take account of a very recent trend in Korean society that may be the most serious challenge ethnic Korean nationalism has yet faced. In the last few years an extraordinary surge in international marriages has occurred in South Korea, with, for instance, some rural areas of Chôlla Province recording rates of close to 40 percent in 2005. Given such dramatic statistics, one wonders what will happen when the cognitive dissonance arising from Korea's assertion of its *tanil minjok* ('unitary nation') becomes too great. If nothing else, Shin's book offers a framework for understanding the dynamic

processes through which Korea's contested and contingent forms of nationalism will be transformed by this new challenge.

In conclusion, this compelling empirical study is another important contribution from Gi-wook Shin. The sophisticated, balanced and nuanced treatment he brings to bear amply displays the fruit of several years of careful research. Not only does the work merit being read widely within Asian Studies, the contrast of Korean nationalism with more widely known examples of nationalism in Western Europe and Africa will make it a valuable resource for political scientists, sociologists, cultural anthropologists, and, indeed, all who seek to understand the complex and elusive phenomenon that is nationalism.

*Reviewed by STEPHEN J. EPSTEIN*  
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Jungsup Kim, *International Politics and Security in Korea*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2007, 195 pp., ISBN: 987-1-84720-029-7 (hbk.).

The author's aim is to explore the roots of the tensions between North Korea and South Korea. His goal is not just academic explanation – the book evolved from a doctoral thesis at Oxford University – but also policy relevance. As Director of the International Policy Division of South Korea's Ministry of National Defence, Kim is searching ultimately for insights into how to reduce the possibility of an attack by North Korea across the demilitarized zone (DMZ) against South Korea.

The author begins by interrogating four popular perceptions of the causes of tensions and recurring crises in the Korean peninsula. First, he looks at the widespread view that North Korea's leadership is irrational and generically inclined to aggressiveness, along with the logical policy implication that concessions by South Korea and the United States (US) are futile or, worse, encouraging of extortion. Next he considers the left-revisionist view that it is South Korea's defence policy that is insensitive to sincere peace feelers from the North and locked by hardliners into an unnecessarily offensive posture. The policy prescription that follows is to replace hardliners by liberals in Seoul to allow détente to emerge and political negotiations to begin. The third view is that leaders on both sides of the DMZ exaggerate the threat of the other to legitimise their domestic dominance. The implicit policy prescription is greater openness and transparency to expose this manipulation of public opinion, possibly by encouraging a freely critical media and an active civil society. A fourth view blames the influence of the US for prolonging the stalemate, as neo-conservative factions vie for influence in Washington and project their bias and influence into US policies towards the Peninsula. The policy prescription is obvious: Seoul and Pyongyang (and Beijing and Tokyo)



should keep the US at arms length and devise their own policies free from its influence.

Kim judges these four explanations as plausible but ultimately unsatisfactory. By itself, each is oversimplified, stereotyped, and static; together they omit several factors Kim believes are crucial to explanation. Having thus cleared the conceptual ground, Kim erects a new framework. He retains elements of the traditional four explanations but adapts and recombines them to construct a more dynamic, interactive, and comprehensive taxonomy. This taxonomy informs the rest of the book.

Kim's new framework encompasses first of all the concept of the security dilemma. This means that the defensive preparations of the South appear to be offensive to the North and stimulate further defensive preparations that in turn look to be offensive to the South which undertakes further defence steps, and so the process continues in a vicious circle. Compounding the dilemma is a psychological bias borne of the history of conflict that induces hostile misperception and the exaggeration of threat on both sides. A second element of this framework is termed 'antagonistic interdependence'. According to this view, the leaders of each side find it tempting to invoke the inter-Korea struggle, so both have a stake in its continuation. Furthermore, the North's combative *juche* ideology, and the belligerence of the South's military and intelligence agency heads, undermine moderate political leaders' attempts to transcend the 'antagonistic interdependence' syndrome. The third element is the influence of external actors, not only the United States but also China, Japan, and Russia (the Soviet Union prior to 1990) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Not only does each actor exert overt influences in pursuit of its own interests, but also Pyongyang and Seoul devise policies in anticipation of, and sometimes in deliberate defiance of, the expected policies from abroad. The law of anticipated reactions acts to shape policies in the two Koreas. Further uncertainty is produced when Pyongyang, and sometimes Seoul, attempts to play one outsider against another.

The body of the book is an examination of the history of inter-Korean tensions, crises, and clashes structured by the threefold taxonomy of the security dilemma, domestic politics, and international influences. Close attention is paid to the post-Cold War period, which the author divides into four periods: 1988-1991; 1992-1993; 1993-1994, and 1994-1997. As the readers will recognise, the first three periods comprise the lead-up to the Framework Agreement of 1994, and the fourth period covers its aftermath. Some of the events of the past decade, such as the advent of the Six Party Talks, are mentioned but not examined in detail.

Kim concludes that the security dilemma and the domestic politics of the South were the main contributors to on-going tensions and recurrent crises. Surprisingly, he finds that domestic politics in the North were not significant. And Kim attributes to international actors, particularly the United States and China, a moderating rather than an exacerbating influence. These counter-intuitive assessments deserve to be debated further.

In the final pages Kim offers a speculative conclusion that turns out to be prescient in light of Pyongyang's agreement in early 2007 to cease uranium enrichment. In 2004 Kim wrote:

Nevertheless, a diplomatic breakthrough is still possible. Despite North Korea's apparent unpredictable and risk-prone behaviour, this study has shown that North Korea is, in fact, calculating and rational in dealing with its security issues.... Political and economic benefits need to be acquired in order to sustain the regime: otherwise, playing the nuclear card can only hasten the collapse of the regime. (171)

While North Korea has now (mid-2007) acceded to the IAEA regime in return for food and economic assistance, Kim reminded the reader that a myriad of other issues remain. These include North Korea's harsh political regime and disastrous economic policies, its threatening conventional military posture and occasional provocations, the tenuous status of the armistice with the South, and abnormal relations with Japan and the United States. Analysing these and other issues of the first decade of the 2000s in light of Kim's threefold taxonomy could be a useful project for subsequent scholars and analysts. If Kim's taxonomy is adopted and validated by others, Kim will have made a significant contribution to the scholarship of inter-Korean relations.

A critic of theoretical and methodological bent will be less sanguine, pointing out that a taxonomy falls short of a paradigm and a paradigm falls short of a theory, and that Kim's linkage of events to his taxonomy is based on Kim's judgement as contrasted to a transparent, quantitative and replicable formal methodology. Area specialists will be more forgiving, noting that Kim's scheme is plausible, his historical-analytic method credible, and his theme is persuasive even if none is validated scientifically.

It is also not clear that Kim has advanced the policy agenda, since the observations, assessments, and insights of his book are anchored to the 1990s and not contextualised in current (2007) inter-Korean political relations. Presumably Kim in his official role is producing relevant policy advice and we should suspend judgement while waiting for him to make it public so we may evaluate it.

*Reviewed by STEPHEN HOADLEY  
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Wil O. Dijk, *Seventeenth-century Burma and the Dutch East India Company 1634-1680*, Singapore: Singapore University Press & NIAS Press, 2006, xviii+348 pp. + CD Rom, ISBN: 9971-69-304-6 (pbk.).

Many years ago, as Wil Dijk relates, the late Professor George Hall suggested that Dutch archives might contain ‘more than enough’ material for writing a history of the Dutch ‘factories’ (trading posts) in Burma in the seventeenth century. Her hard and devoted work – evidenced not only in the book itself but in the appendices included as a CD attached to the inside back cover – has shown that he was right. But she offers more than a history of the Dutch factories. The book makes a major contribution to our knowledge of Dutch trade more generally. And it adds to our knowledge of Burma itself.

The trade of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in Burma is put into the context of its trade elsewhere. When the supply of Spanish silver with which the VOC had entered Asian trade was sharply reduced by Spanish embargoes, it turned to intra-Asian trade (towards the end of the book the author, or the copy editor, has allowed that to appear as ‘inter-Asian’ trade, a nonsense phrase). That trade was focused on Indian textiles, traffic which dated back many centuries before the advent of the Europeans. Burma offered a substantial market for them, and the Dutch factors took full advantage of it, both for the Company and for themselves, despite the competition of the Portuguese, the English and the Danes, and above all from Indian traders.

It was not, however, competition that led to the closure of the factories, nor indeed the often discouraging conditions under which the trade was carried on. What turned the balance against them was the VOC’s shift away from intra-Asian trade. Increasingly, from 1670, it focused on Java and Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and on a direct trade with Europe. As Dijk notes, ‘the Company’s departure from Burma in 1680 might well be considered an early indication of the radical shift in the VOC’s priorities’ (200).

The VOC never established itself in China and in the 1660s was driven from Taiwan. There was some hope that another long-standing trade would offer it an alternative, the trade between Burma and Yunnan via Bhamo. The authorities at Batavia even dreamed of sending spices into the Celestial Empire via Ava rather than Canton. But the VOC could not secure royal permission to trade beyond Ava.

Three scholars – Michael Aung-Thwin, W.J. Koenig and Vic Lieberman, Dijk’s supervisor – have offered us persuasive analyses of the Burman polity through the centuries. Her book does not add to them, but it does tell us something about the Burman people themselves, in particular about their relative prosperity. Compared with that in Coromandel – where, as now, labour migrated to the cities and kept the price down – the labour force in Burma was expensive: the Dutch responded by putting gangs of Indian slaves to work. But they also had a market: ‘the labouring classes in general ... had the means to purchase an occasional piece of India cloth’ (138). Indian textiles were not for the élite alone.

The book is full of information, interestingly expounded, with the occasional gentle correction of previous scholars. The records are indeed rich. The VOC in fact used a great deal of paper, and even after it set up its own mill in Batavia its offices often ran short. They did not fill the paper for the sake of historians. But we must be glad they did, and grateful, too, when a historian makes such good use of them.

*Reviewed by NICHOLAS TARLING*  
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Ruth Fredman Cernea, *Almost Englishmen: Baghdadi Jews in British Burma*, Lanham; Boulder: Lexington Books; Rowman & Littlefield, 2007, xxv + 175 pp., ISBN 13-978-0739116470 (pbk.).

Well-written with hardly a trace of politically-correct jargon or formulaic social-science talk, indeed at times quite literary in its style, this book by an American anthropologist traces out the tragic history of the Iraqi-Jewish community in Burma from its foundations in the early nineteenth century to its demise at the end of the twentieth. The arrival of Baghdadi merchants in the first flush of British settlement led to high hopes of both commercial and social success in this distant colony, and the more Jewish merchants arrived the more they felt at ease, brought and raised families, and created the social institutions of a flourishing rabbinic society, with the required rabbis, teachers, and other synagogue and community officials. The Rangoon community formed one part of an extensive world-wide network of Sephardic Jewry, with a special emphasis and pride in their millennial history in Babylonia.

Gradually from the 1830s the newly constituted Burmese families transferred their social and political allegiances to the British Empire, though maintaining both their general Jewish heritage and their specific Iraqi identities, moving to a point by the close of the Victorian Era when they could see themselves, as the title to this book proclaims, as almost Englishmen. But, sadly, try as they might to dress, eat and perform the part of proper gentlemen and ladies in the style of the Raj, the old European prejudices against Jews and Easterners dogged them. English snobbery is hardly comic in the light of the life-and-death efforts of families to regain safety and dignity in their lives, though at times the glimpse of middle-class merchant families dressing up in tuxedos and evening gowns for formal meals in the torrid heat of a Burmese summer can be quite humorous. Nevertheless, bigotry against Jews as the non-European *other* was all along an ominous sign of things to come.

Externally the forces of history were against them. As today, too, despite efforts to deny its reality, anti-Semitism reared its ugly head, and was goaded on by the power of Burmese nationalism, Japanese imperialism, third-world anti-colonialism, and general anti-Zionism, until, finally, with the

close-down of Myanmar (alias Burma) under the military regime all but the last Burmese Jews have departed for America, Israel or Australia, barely a handful of stalwarts remaining to watch the once imposing and beautiful synagogue in Rangoon. Yet the narrative of the escape before the invading Japanese armies provides the most gripping part of the whole story, and to a great degree is based on first-hand accounts quoted *in extenso* by Cernea; yet her own prose enhances the robustness of this war-time tale.

Internally, too, geographical distance, commercial success and the onset of modern secular culture proved too much for the tiny and isolated Jewish community to withstand: new generations forgot their Iraqi pride and looked to Western Europe or North America – and then Israel – for models of behaviour and belief. There was, however, little assimilation, other than a few mixed-marriages, ambiguously sticking it out to the bitter end. Ironically, as the author points out, whereas many descendants overseas have lost touch with their Jewish roots altogether, it is from among these remnants of the mixed-marriage children that interest in Judaism and life in Israel has been rekindled.

Cernea's account is more history than sociology, more personal and involved than statistical and paradigmatic. She cites private letters and journals, as well as conversations with descendants and survivors of the Burmese community. The appendices also provide documentary lists of the Jews who sought refuge from the Japanese invasion, those who wished to emigrate to India or Israel, and those who now lie in the remaining (one hopes, although without real trust in the goodwill of the generals who want to destroy the physical remnants of this once thriving though small community) cemetery. Though Cernea explains in a delicate way necessary background in Sephardic Jewish customs and faith for the outsider, she seems to write — and this is a good thing, for general readers as well as the people it directly concerns — for the lost community, in honour of them, and with the nostalgia and respect due to them. If there is any quibble to make it is that many of the photographs reproduced in the book are so reduced it is hardly possible to see what they are meant to illustrate.

*Reviewed by NORMAN SIMMS*  
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Durba Ghosh and Dane Kennedy, eds., *Decentering Empire: Britain, India and the Transcolonial World*, New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2006, xi + 406 pp., ISBN: 81-250-2982-6 (hbk.).

This is a thought-provoking book exploring 'the boundaries conventionally drawn between imperial metropole and colonial periphery' (1). Its chapters are taken from a 2003 conference held at the University of California, 'How Empire Mattered: Imperial Structures and Globalisation in the Era of British Imperialism', a title which neatly summarises the central aims of the book.

Each of its chapters demonstrates the complexity of the colonial encounter, reinforcing in particular the limitations of imperial scholarship which posits the relationship between Britain and its colonies as somehow operating within a 'closed, bilateral circuit' (1). Instead, its authors argue that British imperialism unleashed a series of processes and exchanges involving commodities and ideas that extended well beyond the territories of the British Empire. As the editors note, colonial authorities were never entirely in control of the processes and exchanges that rapidly took on their own dynamism among the different colonies and between Britain and its colonies.

In charting these alternative paths to modernity and the expression of often contested forms of governmentality, the volume combines two contrasting approaches to imperialism. One approach informed by postcolonialism and the so-called 'cultural turn' sees scholars investigate the discursive aspects of colonialism. Another, more traditional in its methodological approach perhaps, principally examines the material exchanges between Britain and its colonies. Interweaving these cultural and material approaches to colonialism is a particular strength of the book. The perspective taken within the chapters and across the book as a whole is another. A number of authors take a geographically comparative approach, drawing together regions hitherto inadequately compared, such as parts of colonial Australia, North America and Tahiti (Anne Keary on missionary discourse) or India and Ireland (such as Durba Ghosh on hunger strikes). Overall, the book highlights the sheer variety of relationships and debates brought into practice by colonialism – moral censorship, medical education, photography, terrorism, imperial finance, irrigation control, and so on. A further strength is the focus on the differential and particularised expressions of state power that often cut across national boundaries. *Decentering Empire* is thus an excellent example of a great flowering of scholarship on empire that is threatening to unsettle notions of nation through comparative studies and trans-colonial perspectives.

I now move on to a discussion of the book's chapters. The first of these, by respected scholar John F. Richards, provides a fascinating overview of the problems, policies and economics of the East India Company (EIC), pointing out in particular the constant headache caused by the onerous effects war imposed on the coffers of the EIC. The EIC was, as the author notes, essentially one big tributary state whose investment in public works was simply negligible.

In the third chapter, Rachel Sturman presents an engaging case-study of the problems and complexities inherent in British attempts to define marriage practices in western India in the late nineteenth century. She demonstrates that British attempts to regulate Hindu marriage practices based on Brahminical marital conventions foundered because its lawmakers struggled to define these relationships within strict parameters of control. Instead the British found themselves embroiled in wider debates about the limits of state intervention in society, definitions of secular and religious matters, and boundaries between public and private spheres of life.

A fascinating study of hydraulic engineering by David Gilmartin reveals connections between India, Egypt and America, evidenced through the career of irrigation engineer William Willcocks. Gilmartin demonstrates that for Willcocks and for most other engineers trained at the College of Civil Engineering at Roorkee (from 1854, the Thomason College of Civil Engineering), irrigation works were not simply means of landscape engineering but also tools of colonial control. Engineers fervently believed that the object of their profession was to extract 'water's duty', a mathematical obsession which, if successfully realised, would in the process aid in the spread of European 'civilisation'.

Vahid Fozdar focuses on the tensions inherent between another particularly pernicious plank on which colonialism relied – racism – and the fraternal inclusiveness of freemasonry. He reveals that western-educated Indians were attracted to freemasonry because of its emphasis on equality while the movement in turn fostered imperial pride and loyalty. However, as Indian freemasons discovered, equality did not equate to the assumption of Indians to positions of high office in the Raj. Unsurprisingly when faced with such limitations of occupation, freemasonry extended well beyond imperial boundaries, allowing its brothers to view themselves as citizens of the world.

The chapter by Douglas M. Haynes examines the impact of the British Empire on another kind of imperial institution: medical professionalisation. Haynes argues that the move towards medical professionalisation in Britain cannot be understood without looking at the relationship between colonial requirements for medics and means of their licensing. As Haynes shows, within a short time, tensions developed between colonial and metropolitan bodies over where the authority to regulate medical professionalisation was vested. Haynes offers a well needed study that usefully brings together the largely distinct historiographies of colonial medicine and British medicine.

Keeping with the medical theme, Dane Kennedy explores the recognition of the 'socially constructed disease' (157) of tropical neurasthenia. Based around American colonial experience in the Philippines, its classification was increasingly applied in the inter-war years by the British. As a disease of civilisation, tropical neurasthenia was thought to affect primarily white male Europeans in tropical countries and manifested a combination of psychological and physical factors. These included loneliness, tensions between the demand for hard-work and efficiency in colonial tropical bureaucracy and its dilution by the enervating effect of the tropics, alcoholism, sexual deviancy, and so on. Kennedy argues that its diagnosis as a disease and hence something preventable by medicine, rather than a social problem of empire, was designed to assuage any doubts that might be raised about the very ethos of the colonial project itself.

From Haynes and Kennedy's emphasis on medicine, Anne Keary's chapter explores the tensions inherent in missionary scripture-based accounts of creation and both their interpretation by indigenous people and indigenous people's own cosmologies. The differing interpretations of scripture by

indigenous groups in Australia, North America and Tahiti demonstrate the significance accorded to place, culture and politics in determining the reception of Protestant missions.

In one of the most fascinating chapters of the book, Deana Heath compares moral censorship in Australia and India to reveal that, contrary to expectations, Australia's censorship laws were in fact far more stringent than those operating in India. Moral censorship in Australia was assumed by the state and presented as an important plank of national identity whereas in India the colonial state shied away from such regulation. Heath argues that this was because the British realised that their views on moral censorship would not have been supported by the Indian population, who most likely would have viewed such measures as yet 'another oppressive act carried on by an illegitimate government' (240). Heath's chapter is important for two further reasons. First, she demonstrates the erroneous assumption by which 'colonial ideology ... continues to be equated with colonial practice' (229). Secondly, she shows that valid comparisons can be made between India and Australia, thereby challenging 'their conventional categorisation as colonies of settlement versus conquest' (11).

The next two chapters investigate two contrasting forms of colonial resistance, respectively hunger strikes (Kevin Grant) and terrorism (Durba Ghosh). Grant demonstrates how a practice initially employed by Russian dissidents spread rapidly throughout the world, to be embraced by groups as diverse as Edwardian suffragettes to Indian and Irish nationalists. Each group, however, related hunger to its own cultural and political understanding, using this approach to offer a powerful form of protest against Britain's benevolent paternalism. Grant also shows that British attempts to devise a universal policy dealing with this form of protest struck problems as it encountered the different situations in which it was present. Ghosh's chapter charts another form of protest adopted by many Bengalis in the 1920s and 1930s: the Bengali revolutionary terrorist movement. As Ghosh shows, it was an upsurge which confused the British as it was primarily directed by those western-educated Bengalis who had proved so crucial to British rule in this period in their role as administrators of empire. Attending to its organisation, Ghosh reveals that this terrorist group depended on a global network of support, being influenced by similar movements in Ireland for instance. With an increasing clamp down on their activities in the 1920s and 1930s, the movement counted on British networks and established itself overseas, in Burma.

Three thought provoking chapters round out the book. Lisa N. Trivedi examines the visual culture of protest in a mostly illiterate society by exploring the political use to which the homespun cloth of khadi was put by Indian nationalists. Unlike the use of print culture to foster a shared sense of identity and nationalism as Benedict Anderson has argued, Trivedi demonstrates that for India's largely illiterate people the flying of khadi charkha flags in public spaces provided a visually readable protest against British rule. Public spaces and administrative areas associated with British



rule were targeted by protestors.

In another fascinating chapter on visual culture, Sandria Freitag explores the independent trajectory of Indian photography in Jaipur and Mysore. She demonstrates that the ways photographers responded to consumer demand created allegiances of identity and visual spaces of civil society beyond the confines of imperialism. Whether attempting to portray the uniqueness of Jaipur in colonial times and earlier or its more recent redefinition as a centre of crafts, Freitag shows that photography contributed in significant ways to the making and breaking of local identity, and the formation of the public sphere. This is reinforced by her study of Mysore's close allegiance between visuality and its middle-class identity with the past.

Respected Indianologist and world historian, C.A. Bayly, fittingly rounds off the collection. Bayly chronologically extends Thomas A. Metcalf's ideas expressed in *Ideology of the Raj* (Cambridge University Press, 1994) about the decline in legitimacy of British rule in India and Burma (Myanmar) from 1914 – where the focus of that author's work stops – into the 1930s and '40s. Bayly uses Metcalf's argument concerning the deep ideological tensions between British values and Indian experiences, to help explain the remarkably rapid decline of British authority in this period. Bayly identifies a gamut of factors that contributed to exploding the British liberal myth of racial hierarchies (particularly the notion of martial races) and its later olive branch of economic development. These factors included the interplay of shell-shocked and retreating British troops; the migration of lower-middle-class British to India creating job competition; declining race segregation in institutions; successful communist economic alternatives; North American and Australian behaviour and criticism of the Indian government; Japanese military success.

*Decentring Empire* is a welcome addition to the growing corpus of work on comparative and trans-national histories, and should appeal to a broad readership interested in imperialism. It is also useful in opening up future directions of research, most notably in teasing out the subtle inter-connections and divergences between, within and beyond the British Empire especially in relation to globalisation.

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Debjani Ganguly, *Caste, Colonialism and Counter-Modernity: Notes on a Postcolonial Hermeneutics of Caste*, London; New York: Routledge, 2005, xiv + 287 pp., ISBN: 0-415-342945 (hbk.).

This book is an important attempt at theorizing caste in the context of the recent debates on colonial modernity. It proposes to make a shift in the understanding of caste from the 'ideological' to 'phenomenological', where caste is considered to be an alternative way of living, of which 'pain and

oppression are a part' (x) – implying that there is also something more than that. Caste is considered to be a trope which is used by a colonized subject society to assert their cultural sovereignty and to interrogate or even resist colonial modernity. In so doing it points out the limitations of the existing socio-anthropological interpretations of caste – categorized here as Orientalist, nationalist, Marxist and post-Orientalist – and provides an alternative reading of the *dalit* ('untouchable') 'life-worlds' where the modern and the non-modern are intertwined without any apparent sign of conflict.

Debjani Ganguly offers a critique of the social science interpretation of caste which usually relegates it to the realm of the pre-modern – the residue that survives the supposedly universal influence of modernity and the project of nation-building. It is therefore considered as retrograde, representing a time past and something that retards progress. It is also invariably associated with the asymmetries of power and thus viewed only as a crude instrument of oppression. Such an interpretation predictably emerges as the analytical methods of the social sciences are deeply embedded in a discourse of social justice and morality. Ganguly does not just reject the sociological and anthropological readings of caste in order to offer an alternative reading. She proposes to highlight their limitations in the light of the recent postmodern and postcolonial critiques of modernity to explore if it is possible to conceptualise caste in 'ways that exceed socio-anthropological reading' (5). She does not see caste within the familiar framework of conceptual binaries of modern/non-modern, secular/sacred or rational/superstitious, favoured by the left-liberal academia for whom modernity is normative, but rather as a discourse where the 'sacred becomes activated and dialogic vis-à-vis modernity' (13).

In order to show the heterogeneity of the dalit life-worlds and to go beyond the question of social justice, Ganguly offers first of all a nuanced reading of the writings of B.R. Ambedkar, whom she considers to be the 'founder of "dalit discursivity"' (131). Through this reading she discovers 'two Ambedkars', one a modern intellectual, who preferred a social scientific analysis of caste, who invested in the modern state and who wrote the constitution of the Indian nation-state, and the other who constantly engaged with mythographies and religion (Buddhism) to envision a new past for the dalit. But there was no conflict between the two selves, as 'Ambedkar never really settled in favour of one over the other' (151). In his *The Buddha and His Dhamma* Ganguly notices Ambedkar's hermeneutic shift from social science to mythography, as Ambedkar sees the emancipation of the dalit in the spiritual realm of conversion, and not just in the social or political planes and in this he does not see for the dalit present the necessity for a complete break with the past. This can also be seen in the post-Ambedkar developments of Buddhism among the dalit who worship Buddha and Ambedkar in their familiar *bhakti* mode, where they are not concerned with the notion of emancipation in a modern sense, but seek to connect with the divine. As Ganguly argues, the 'dalit ways of belonging to this world cannot

be encapsulated in the monolithic framework of revolution which demands a total break with the past' (175).

Ganguly also offers a different reading of the Marathi dalit literature in which she does not merely see the protest mentalities of the dalit activists, which is so often celebrated in studies on dalit literature. She sees in it dalit's 'comport with caste and untouchability in their everyday lives', which she does not think is 'resigned acceptance' of the hegemony of caste, but rather evidence of their silent ways of coping with an oppressive and unjust world (177). Such practices which connect the dalit with their past, exist contemporaneously with their modernist present where an ideology of transformation and a desire to seek a complete disjunction with an oppressive past are continually trumpeted by dalit political groups like the Dalit Panthers. This situation only points to the heterogeneity of dalit life-worlds. And this heterogeneity is further evinced in stories of dalit individuals – like Chandra in Ranajit Guha's writing or Velutha in Arundhati Roy's novel – living and making sense of their lives despite an oppressive world they inhabit. Such stories, which Ganguly analyses by invoking the category of the 'aesthetic', were concerned mainly with the domain of the subjective and give us another glimpse of dalit everyday existence; this experiential aspect of caste we cannot get from the sociological analyses.

Ganguly's book makes an important point about the heterogeneity inherent in the experiences of caste. It cannot be conveniently pigeonholed into the familiar modern/non-modern binary – it is much more complex than that. Even in dalit responses to caste, we witness not just protest and resistance, inspired by a transformatory ideology. There is also a mentality of accommodation, where the dalit invent ways to live with the structures of oppression or carve out spaces where they can assert their autonomy. But this everyday experience of living with it does not make the caste system any less oppressive or painful for the dalit. The problem of understanding caste is that it is materially and culturally so deeply embedded in the discourses of power that it is difficult to discursively separate it from the issue of social justice. Ganguly quotes Bhudeb Mukhopadhyay, a nineteenth century Bengali Brahmin intellectual, who refused to dine with his European friend because of commensality restrictions entailed by his caste status, a status proclaimed proudly to assert his cultural sovereignty. For a Brahmin his caste was certainly a badge of honour which he would use to resist an intrusive colonial modernity. It can also be argued, however, that his resistance to modernity was also a defence of a tradition that buttressed an uneven relation of power that only spelled subordination for the dalit. That the latter had learned to live their lives despite the disabilities imposed on them did not make the system any less burdensome for them. Another Bengali, Brahmin pundit Jogendra Nath Bhattacharya, therefore observed in the late nineteenth century that caste was a chain, but its colour varied according to the observer's position in the hierarchy: it would look like a golden chain to the higher castes, but an iron chain for the lower orders. It was and is a chain nonetheless. Ganguly in her book does not of course deny

that, and acknowledges the need for social science analyses of the material basis of the power relations of caste. But she points out the other analytical possibility where caste can also be seen as a discourse through which a hegemonic modernity was being ingenuously resisted.

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Sanjoy Bhattacharya, Mark Harrison and Michael Worboys, *Fractured States: Smallpox, Public Health and Vaccination Policy in British India 1800–1947*, New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2005, x + 264 pp., ISBN: 81-250-2866-8 (hbk).

Smallpox was a highly contagious disease, fatal in approximately half of those people infected in South Asia and maiming many of its survivors. Transcending racial and cultural barriers, it evoked widespread fear and produced a variety of official and civilian responses. Throughout the period 1800–1947, smallpox occupied an important place on the colonial agenda and, not unsurprisingly, it has subsequently received considerable attention in the vigorous and increasingly extensive historical scholarship on health and medicine, particularly in India. *Fractured States*, however, is the most detailed study to date. It draws on extensive research of the vast archive that exists to provide a major reinterpretation of official efforts to control smallpox in British India from the nineteenth century through to independence in 1947.

At the heart of attempts to implement any policy was the situation that the British Raj was in practice not as powerful as it would have liked. In a geographically large and culturally diverse sub-continent there were too few Europeans to implement policies through the myriad levels from central government to remote village. Deep fractures existed in the structures of state and senior European officials had to rely on indigenous bureaucrats and civilian allies. Class, caste, communal and individual interests further influenced matters – indeed more than race. As a result, at all levels between and within the many groups involved disagreements occurred, uncertainties existed and messages were multiple, mixed and often conflicting.

The book is divided into three chapters. Chapter one examines the ‘Troubled Origins’ of smallpox vaccination in nineteenth century British India. It highlights the wide variety of official and non-official viewpoints and the uneven development of vaccination policy at various levels of the colonial administration. This contrasts with the more usual ‘simplistic’ view of smallpox control measures in which vaccination schemes are presented as having been designed by senior British colonial administrators who were then able to impose them across the sub-continent in their original entirety. While

the book's argument about greater complexity and the need for a more nuanced understanding is today more familiar, its examination of the technical aspects regarding smallpox control and the role these play is particularly valuable. It can be easy to attribute problems to administrative or religious issues and overlook the lack of a working vaccine and the painful operating techniques. In practice all these aspects mattered. The authors suggest that the introduction of new vaccine technologies in the nineteenth century – especially the move away from humanised lymph and the dangers associated with its use – represented a much greater advance in the history of smallpox control measures in India than the changes to local administrative and vaccination structures brought in through moves towards political devolution in the 1890s. Colonial officials faced considerable challenges in introducing these technological developments into the field and these had to be addressed before vaccination could be established as the predominant preventive measure against smallpox that it was to become in the twentieth century.

Chapter two focuses on twentieth century debates among administrators at different levels of the colonial administration to explore ongoing multiple viewpoints and complexities. The first half of the century witnessed an uneven expansion in the scope of vaccination, but all too often – even when policy was agreed – implementation was difficult and any agreement remained on paper. Vaccination activities in rural areas lagged behind those in urban districts. The chapter examines the two contradictory trends that characterised public health matters in British India between 1900 and 1947 – the gathering pace of political devolution at the provincial and local level and the efforts of central and provincial governments to retain some control over the management of local affairs. Public health (amongst other things) became a provincial government responsibility and the two trends influenced the subsequent organisation of a changing public health administration. The resultant complicated workings of central, provincial and local administration produced both coexistence and competition that underlay a difficult and uneven expansion of public health and vaccination services – services that were not necessarily under-funded and weak. Inter-departmental and intra-departmental tensions proved far more damaging than civilian resistance to the spread of vaccination in British India. Serious outbreaks of smallpox in 1945 and 1947 created further tensions, but during the increasingly difficult political situation that brought about the establishment of a separate India and Pakistan, efforts to reorganise provincial vaccination programmes came to a virtual halt.

Administrative tensions within the various state structures in this period also adversely affected other key elements of vaccination work such as the epidemiological and vaccine research that is the focus of chapter three. Chapter three discusses how the gradual and piecemeal expansion of

vaccination would not have been possible without the development of a variety of vaccines, new methods of vaccine production and the growing incorporation of less invasive and safer operating techniques. By 1900 a wide variety of vaccines were in use. Nevertheless, a range of official and civilian opinions existed on why smallpox occurred and how it spread; how it could be contained; the most useful variety of vaccine to be deployed; and how critical analyses of particular sets of smallpox control strategies should be framed in view of bureaucratic opposition. Such diversity affected the way specific scientific institutions developed, the manner in which laboratories linked up with field personnel, and the array of civilian responses to the introduction of vaccination. A key issue – and one that would continue to be important in the later eradication campaign – was the production and distribution of sufficient quantities of effective and safe vaccine that would enable the expansion of vaccination to occur throughout the sub-continent.

Three decades later smallpox was eradicated from India, an achievement that many of those involved in the campaign both inside and outside the country thought would be impossible. This is the subject of Sanjoy Bhattacharya's book *Expunging Variola: The Control and Eradication of Smallpox in India 1947–1977* (Orient Longman, 2006). Bhattacharya is the principal author of *Fractured States* and the ideas and issues discussed in *Fractured States* have provided the starting point for this next volume, since many of the structures of British India carried over into independent India and issues such as caste, religion and region continued to underpin life in the new state. Each book is an important study in its own right, but together they make a very valuable contribution not only to historians interested in smallpox in South Asia but also to a wider audience interested in the planning and implementing of health policies today. Smallpox remains the only such disease to be eradicated and in the 1950s half of the world's cases were in India — we therefore need to understand the considerable complexities of that enormous achievement.

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