

## Reviews

Tim Beal, *Crisis in Korea—America, China, and the Risk of War*. London: Pluto Press, 2011, xii + 268pp. ISBN 978-0-7453-3162-1

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (the DPRK or North Korea) has received much publicity, often negative, during recent years. Heightened tensions with the Republic of Korea (ROK or South Korea), the death of its leader Kim Jong-il and succession of his youngest son Kim Jong-un, along with the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of founder Kim Il-sung's birth, have all contributed to this publicity. With such interest in North Korea, and the Korean Peninsula, Tim Beal's new book on Korea is a timely and provocative contribution to the study of this major international issue.

The author has divided his study into three parts. Part One examines Korea and post-1945 geopolitical transformation in the context of the struggle between imperialism and nationalism. Beal believes that Kim Jong-il was reconciled to preserving the North Korean state, whereas President Lee Myung-bak's South Korea seeks to precipitate the North's collapse, and absorb it into a reunified Korea with American assistance. Significant post-war changes impacting upon North Korea include the Soviet Union's collapse, which had a devastating impact on the North's economy. It removed "a formidable bulwark against the ongoing hostility of the United States and fluctuating attitude of South Korea and Japan" (p. 50). However, China's rising power has helped the North largely to withstand American "economic warfare" (p. 51). Contrasting with China's rise is the decline of the US, giving the impression of "strategic paralysis", its policy on Korea seemingly "captured" by President Lee (p. 74).

Beal then focuses on increased Peninsula tensions, and the 2010 sinking of the South Korean naval vessel *Cheonan*. He believes that President Lee's "hard-line" approach to the North might act as the "trigger" to a second Korean War, this approach predicated on the North's weakened state (pp. 76-77). Thus, tightening sanctions and increasing military and political pressure along with heightened tension will precipitate the North's collapse, or at least cause sufficient disarray to persuade the US that an invasion would meet limited resistance. More specifically, the South's assertion that a North Korean torpedo sunk the *Cheonan* is "fabricated" (p. 98). The most plausible explanation for the torpedo found is that it was planted by the South, probably with President Lee's involvement. Based on President Lee and perhaps US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton knowing the North did not sink the *Cheonan*, military exercises near the North can be viewed as a "deliberate escalation of tension" against North Korea and China, and perhaps preparation for war (p. 111). "However much North Korea might want peace, the powerful forces arrayed against it have other ideas" (p. 113).

Finally, the “looming crisis” with North Korea is discussed. According to Beal, the unlikelihood of the Pyongyang regime collapsing or facing a succession crisis is less important than whether South Korea and the US will utilise a reported crisis to invade. He writes that both the *Cheonan*’s sinking and Yeonpyeong Island artillery exchange started by the South are closely linked with the Northern Limit Line (NLL). This is the disputed and illegal maritime boundary maintained by the South to “increase tension with the North” (p.116). As it is unfeasible for Pyongyang to invade the South, the aims of US-ROK military exercises in the area include justifying the large South Korean military, and wearing down the North’s military. In addition to US military plans against the North, Washington DC employs sanctions aimed at changing the North’s policies, and destabilising the regime. These sanctions have “grievously damaged” the DPRK (p.184). However, the costs of invading the North should not be under-estimated, and China’s potential role is another important factor that must be recognised. Ultimately the Peninsula’s future is unclear.

Beal’s book provides an interesting critique of common arguments and assumptions, whilst at the same time raising questions that highlight the importance of studying the Peninsula. The potential costs of conflict, the need to resolve tensions peacefully, and the region’s unpredictable future are rightly recognised. However, some key arguments are flawed. Beal continually identifies and focuses on what he views is ROK-US aggression in contrast to a North which seeks peace and only wishes to preserve itself. This approach fails adequately to recognise the North’s long record of hostile actions, which help to explain the ROK-US position. Indeed Beal refers to the North’s initiation of the Korean War as a “mainstream Western interpretation” (p. 11). This is despite the overwhelming evidence that the North started the conflict. His understanding of the NLL is debatable, while evidence supporting the theory that the South planted the torpedo linked to the *Cheonan*’s sinking, and that President Lee has captured the Korea policy of a declining US, is tenuous.

Another weakness is the lack of coverage in some key areas. The Korean War and United Nations receive limited attention, there is a lack of discussion on how smaller Asia-Pacific countries like New Zealand might help address Peninsula tensions, and no final chapter brings together all the book’s conclusions. The impact of sanctions is rightly covered as they can cause serious suffering among the general population, and sanctions have contributed to the North’s plight. However, the regime’s own major contribution to the country’s difficulties, isolation and the international community’s imposition of sanctions is inadequately assessed. This contribution includes the regime’s appalling human rights record, its failure to abide by international conventions, military expenditure and nuclear weapons programme, economic mismanagement, and illegal activities. Nor are the necessities of life evenly distributed as many North Koreans face severe hardships while the regime’s elite enjoys palatial lifestyles. Some evidence is also questionable. For instance, an estimate of a 700,000-strong North Korean army is much lower than estimates from authoritative sources.

Overall, Beal’s book is a timely contribution to the study of a major international issue and raises important questions. Its provocative approach should encourage discussion and debate. However, the book contains some very debatable conclusions,

and does not adequately recognise the significant contribution of the North's authoritarian regime to Peninsula tensions and its own people's plight.

*Reviewed by PAUL BELLAMY  
Independent Scholar*

James Beattie, *Empire and Environmental Anxiety: Health, Science, Art and Conservation in South Asia and Australasia, 1800-1920*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, 320pp. ISBN 978-0-230-55320-0

Beattie's monograph greatly adds to our understanding of the origins and development of conservation policies in the British Empire. It examines how the dynamics of European settlement, migration, and empire between Australasia and India during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries transformed the environment and societies of each region. It provides the most balanced and through assessment of how global and local forces shaped conservation policies in the nineteenth to mid twentieth centuries.

At the core of the book, Beattie argues for the concept of "environmental anxiety" as the driving force in the creation of conservation programs in India and Australasia. He defines environmental anxiety as concerns generated when environments did not conform to European preconceptions about their natural productivity or when colonization set in motion a series of unintended consequences that threatened everything from European health and military power, to agricultural development and social relations (p. 1).

Beattie's concept of environmental anxiety does not simply trace how environmental changes led to human responses, and vice versa, but demonstrates how the interplay of cultural perceptions of nature actually changed the environment and how the changing environment led to complex and shifting views of nature. This innovative theoretical approach does not deny environmental agency or apply an overly environmental deterministic framework.

Beattie's theoretical and methodological approach diverges from previous engagements with the topic of conservation in the British Empire. The vast majority of scholarship on this subject focuses on what Gregory Barton calls "Empire Forestry", the rise of state forestry in the British Empire during the mid nineteenth century. Previous scholars tended to emphasize the metropole or periphery. Beattie integrates the metropole and periphery together by focusing on the interaction between localities and networks that stretched across geographic regions. Here he utilizes Tony Ballantyne's concept of "webs of empire", David Livingstone's focus on "locality", and David Lambert and Alan Lester's idea of "imperial careering". This provides Beattie with a fresh perspective on a subject that has all-too-frequently been studied either from the London or former colonial archives. Beattie uses archives from each continent (with most of the research on India naturally coming from the vast India Office archives at the British Library).

One of the book's many strengths is its engagement with and incorporation of different historiographical and theoretical perspectives. For example, Beattie

emphasizes the strong connections between conservation policies and ideas of health and aesthetics, two hitherto overlooked but extremely important subjects. Chapter Two, “Imperial Health Anxieties”, weaves the larger history of medicine and health into European settler and colonial conceptions of ‘nature’. This integrates distinct historiographies—the history of colonial medicine, settler colonial history, the history of India, and conservation history—together to form a more complete picture of how migration patterns between India and Australasia, and ideas about the varying degrees of healthfulness in different geographies of these regions, shaped the rise of conservation policies. Fears of the unhealthiness of climates, especially in India, encouraged tree planting, drainage schemes, and the creation of parks. Health and aesthetics, Beattie demonstrates, overlapped. Chapter Three, “Colonial Aesthetic Anxieties” ties these two themes together by analyzing the trans-colonial life of the artist, park designer and writer, Alfred Sharpe (1836-1908).

The book reinforces and advances the argument that we can only understand the rise of forestry in the British Empire by stressing the interaction between locality and empire. Beattie uses the concept of environmental anxiety to break new ground and to qualify the arguments of Richard Grove, Gregory Barton, Ravi Rajan, and Richard Drayton. The three chapters on forestry should be required reading for all environmental historians of the British Empire and forestry more generally. These chapters advance a number of important arguments. Beattie qualifies the work of Rajan by showing how German-trained foresters strongly influenced dimensions of Indian forestry policies (although here, the influence was still more limited than Rajan argued), but played a more limited role in Australia and New Zealand, where local settler colonial politics made the application of authoritarian and autocratic German models more difficult. He demonstrates for the first time how and why the idea that forests influenced climate declined in popularity earlier (in the early twentieth century) in Australia and New Zealand than in India, where the belief about the climatic influence of forests remained popular well into the 1920s.

Few criticisms can be directed at the argument or scope of the book. Beattie tightly controls his narrative and succeeds at showing the interconnectedness of people, ideas, and places. Beattie carefully details how the material reality of environmental processes and human-nature interactions shaped but did not determine environmental anxieties (and vice versa). This approach demonstrates how history happened without trying to overly simplify it: historical developments are highly complex and often contingent upon multiple causes and contexts. Beattie admirably ties together the complexities of actual history into a cohesive, cogent argument and narrative. Whereas other scholars have relied upon relatively simple causal explanations (e.g. extraction, German forestry management, etc.) to explain the rise of conservation policies in the British Empire, Beattie shows us that the origins of conservation can only be understood within the broader contexts of health, art, and science. This is an important book that will help to recast our understanding of conservation in the British Empire.

*Reviewed by* BRETT M. BENNETT  
*University of Western Sydney*

Evelyn Blackwood, *Falling into the Lesbian World: Desire and Difference in Indonesia*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2010, xi + 252pp. ISBN 978-0-8248-3442-5 (alk. paper); 978-0-8248-3487-6 (pbk.: alk. paper)

This is an impressive book which straddles ethnography, gender and queer theory, and Indonesia and the world. The ethnographic core is Blackwood's research, carried out over a number of years, into a community of 'lesbi' women in Padang, a regional city in Indonesia. The individuals, all 'female-bodied', whom Blackwood studied, identified almost entirely as either 'tomboi' or 'femme' (their terminology). Far from being defensive about such strongly gendered frames of reference, they projected them onto other lesbian worlds which they encountered either in Padang or further afield, for instance in Jakarta, the principal centre of lesbian activism in Indonesia.

Blackwood's determination to understand these individuals in their own terms, and to consider the implications of their lives for queer and gender theory, drives the book and gives it its power. Consistently with the first goal, she does not claim that her interviewees are necessarily representative of other such individuals in West Sumatra or Indonesia (p. 2). From the observations she makes about other studies of Southeast Asian masculine females however, for instance Saskia Wieringa's work on Jakarta women and Megan Sinnott's work on Thai women, there would seem to be many parallels.

In Chapter One Blackwood systematically lays out the building blocks of this exercise—the language itself—the meanings and resonances of lesbian, lesbi, transgender, tomboi, femme, girlfriend; the setting and character of Padang; and the decision to focus on subjectivity rather than identity, for reasons which become clear through the rest of the book.

In Chapter Two Blackwood examines the binary gender ideology of New Order Indonesia (the Suharto era, 1966-1998). Blackwood's informants grew up in that era and her last major research trip was in 2004, so the focus is appropriate.

Chapter Three focuses on the way gender roles are 'learnt' (another term which engenders thorough discussion) in childhood and adolescence. The idea of learning of necessity eschews any biological/genetic argument about gender formation. Blackwood indeed concludes that "the process of gender acquisition suggests no inherently determined progression towards a particular gender" (p. 78). This finding is strikingly at odds with the way that tombois themselves (by the evidence of Blackwood's own informants) see the world but exploring that contradiction further would take the inquiry into areas for which the ethnography is not suited, and which would make little practical difference to the questions Blackwood is exploring.

Chapter Four looks at the actual process of 'doing gender' as adults—most of this discussion reinforces the sense that tombois do think of themselves as, and for the most part act as, men. Foreshadowing the later chapters, Blackwood concludes (of tombois in particular) "they make no attempt to complicate these gendered understandings . . . [but] in other social contexts within which [they] move, the multiple and apparently contradictory subject positions they occupy become more apparent" (p. 118).

This mutability is developed in Chapters Five and Six, respectively on “desire and difference” and “ambiguities in public space”.

Chapter Five explores the blurred edges of gender identification, noting for example that some tombois, when young, dated teenage boys, whilst for femmes, their sexuality i.e. there being with a female-bodied partner, is seen as situational rather than enduring (though with exceptions, for instance Noni, p. 148, who does not like men’s bodies). The chapter also explores marriage and records the ways by which tombois acceded *in principle* to the notion that they might marry (i.e. to a male-bodied man) while evading it in practice. It also records, contrarily, tomboi encouragement to their girlfriends to marry, because of the importance of the marriage to their families.

Chapter Six charts domains where tombois accept female identification, focusing successively on family, community and public spaces. Tombois will sometimes accede to family wishes to that they visibly present as women, for instance by wearing women’s clothes, though Blackwood observes that this may happen in part because it gives them greater freedom with women than ordinary men could ever have (p. 165). Other discussions follow: on variations in practice in community and public space (including the use of public toilets); on tomboi camp; on female masculinity. The various threads are woven together in a discussion of the merits of avoiding too prescriptive an analysis in favour of awareness of the varieties of ‘female masculinity’ (p. 174).

The final chapter places the Padang study in a national and global context, charting the frictions that arise, as foreshadowed in chapter one, where the highly gendered subjectivities of the Padang individuals bump up against international and metropolitan notions of lesbian identity. Blackwood notes, for example, the way that ‘transgender’ is used by Jakarta activists to accommodate tombois—and waria (who could be described as male-bodied women)—but is largely shrugged off by the individuals who are so identified.

For Blackwood, theory has to fit tombois; tombois should not be squeezed into—or out of—theory. She restates at this point her scepticism about progressive modernizing narratives—“global processes are not unidirectional, moving towards ‘modern’ understandings, but are constituted at multiple points of reception to produce particular meanings” (p. 206).

Somewhat (but not entirely) cross cutting that however is Blackwood’s reluctance to accept that the binary tomboi/girlfriend alignment that is standard in Padang is the ‘end of the story’. “The intervention I make into gender theory—at the everyday practice of gender where performance meets norm”, Blackwood states, “is to assert that gender’s *force* (author’s stress) and its undoing lie in its normativity...the ability to navigate multiple subject positions comes in part from recognition at some level of the arbitrariness of those norms” (p. 208).

Blackwood’s work sits firmly in a tradition which seeks to understand a society or community in its own terms rather than impose outsider categories on it. What makes her study unusual and particularly impressive is that she has grappled with this in a particularly fraught area—that of queer studies, where it could be almost be argued

that she is inadvertently reinvigorating traditional assumptions about the relationship between sex and gender. It is a tribute to Blackwood's ethnography and scholarship that the study avoids that trap, while making her individuals, whose own world views are so highly gendered, living, breathing and ultimately highly sympathetic individuals.

In sum, the book is a terrific accomplishment, worth persevering through the sometimes opaque academic language, for its rich insights.

*Reviewed by MALCOLM McKINNON*  
*Wellington*

Sheng Kuan Chung, ed., *Teaching Asian Art: Content, Context, and Pedagogy*. Reston, VA: National Art Education Association, 2012, x + 246pp. ISBN 978-1-890160-52-4

This volume gathers together a range of resources around two main themes. How can we explain the character, substance and diversity of the visual arts of East and South East Asia? And what kinds of teaching and learning experience find closest sympathy with the contexts, rationales and practices of these arts? Its thirty-five short essays are arranged around four themes: "Contextual Explorations", "Aesthetic Forms and Meanings", "Spiritual and Religious Practices", and "Crossing Boundaries".

The eight chapters of the first section set the scene for the diverse subjects that follow. They include essays on Chinese, Japanese and Korean aesthetics, Japanese *chanoyu*, Chinese literati and *sumi-e* ink painting, Pawanese indigenous arts of Taiwan, and Philippine woodcarving traditions. All locate art practices and aesthetic experiences within the social and cultural contexts of their respective settings. Richard Bullen and Mara Miller explain the intimate interface between arts and everyday life as something of a pan-Asian trope. Andrew Svedlow, Susan Lee and Yukio Lippit examine principles of engagements with visual arts media. Yuh-Yao Wan and Brenda Fajardo offer socio-anthropological perspectives on indigenous art forms. The essays by Bullen, Miller and Frank Vigneron especially offer close insights into the theoretical foundations and social and cultural phenomena of aesthetic experience, and into the fine relation between rule and creativity that underpin this volume's central theme of teaching and learning in the fields of Asian arts. Their arguments establish both rationales for and pathways into appreciations of East Asian arts.

The eleven essays of the second section describe art forms or disciplines. These range from Chinese Yixing and Tibetan ceramics (Susan Raymond; Lynn Jermal) through Japanese *ikebana* (Erin Tapley), Korean *sotdae* 'bird posts' (Jaehan Bae) and Dan Hung architectural decoration (Jiyeon Lee), wood sculpture and Đông Hồ woodblock prints of Viet Nam (Trian Nguyen), Lao and other South East Asian curriculum constructs and pedagogies (Lynette Henderson), East Asian calligraphy (Lisa Abia-Smith, Sharon Kaplan and Charles Lachman) and Korean *minhwa* folk painting (Ryan Shin), to the puppetry and shadow theatres of Malaysia and Taiwan (Crystal Hui-Shu Yang). Building on the foundations of the first section, each of these introductory studies situates its media practice within its own cultural context, and



offers accessible examples of strategies for teaching about its processes and forms. Some offer comprehensive pathways: Lynette Henderson's essay on curriculum design and practice in Laos and South East Asia includes a scaffolded curriculum guide for teaching about these arts that draws closely on pedagogic practices of their own traditions, but can transfer readily into the North American learning settings of this volume's primary audience.

The nine chapters of the third section complement those of the first. Building on the pervasive presence of spiritual and religious practice in East Asian lives these essays supplement the earlier pieces on art and life and arts practices and engagements. Each explores the ways art works can contribute to spiritual experience, and, conversely, the ways spiritual and religious practices condition the nature of the art works themselves. These essays explore the principles underpinning arts engagements through spiritual foundations for arts practice like the Dao notion of *chi/qi* 'life energy' (Sheng Kuan Chung), themes of contemplative reflection in the arts (Koji Matsunobu), calligraphic ideograms as aesthetic media (Susan Nakao), Tibetan mandalas and Bhutanese *thangka* paintings (Mark Graham; Margaret Lindsey; Kathleen Keys), Chinese *mingqi* burial objects (Anissa Siu-Han Fung), Thai Buddhist art (Melody Rod-ari) and the decorative *lai thai* ornamental patterns of Thailand (Ampai Tiranasar). Again, as in the second section, several offer accessible insights into the pedagogic principles that inform and sustain these diverse, and sometimes esoteric, practices within their own settings. These in turn suggest practices transferable beyond their own contexts into North American and Australasian milieus.

Under the aegis of the theme of boundary crossing, the final seven essays explore the potentials of cross-cultural arts learning. They weave constructs through which intercultural arts knowledge can enrich both practices in the arts and richer appreciations of arts and their worlds. Focusing on trans-cultural accessibilities, these essays draw intriguing links between past and present, spiritual and secular, cultural commentary and aesthetic education. They embrace studies of Sichuan cliff sculptures (Guey-Meei Yang and Tom Suchan), Japanese *manga* (Carrie Markello and Tim Markello), the contemporary Chinese art of Cai Guo-Qiang (Yuehchen Wang—safety-conscious teachers will be relieved to find his gunpowder works are given only passing mention), Korean digital and sound arts (Borim Song), and a 'cross-Asian' study of puppetry (Shei-Chau Wang and Jui-Ching Wang). Two chapters in particular, one from Yu-Ting Chen and Daniel J. Walsh on Taiwanese aesthetic education and the other from Elizabeth M. Delacruz on the interface between East Asian and North American cultural experiences offer different but complementary perspectives on teaching and learning in different and trans-cultural settings.

The core theme of all of these essays is that of teaching Asian arts. Having established the context or practices of their particular art form or location, most of the authors then suggest strategies for teaching and learning about them within their own and other cultural settings. In many these are presented as 'activities' or 'exercises' building directly on the text and its pictorial examples. The range of engagements embraced here is extensive. It includes interactive learning experiences in creative writing and poetry, contemplation and reflection, discussions and debates, illustration, *kare sansui sand*



gardens, *sumi-e* painting, scroll painting and calligraphy, art historical and analytical explanation, clay work, comics, theatre, including animation and puppetry, collage and—familiar to New Zealand secondary school teachers—maintaining reflective journals or ‘workbooks’. A couple invite students to engage in on-line research and creative play in digital media. These are active and interactive learning experiences. Though many of these activities are self-contained single ‘one off’ experiences, and directly related to the arts learning of their own theme, some others, like Anissa Siu Hang’s essay on *mingqi*, promote constructivist inquiry learning pathways that can engage students in the kinds of social and collaborative group learning that can enrich shared understandings and appreciations of art well beyond the scope of their individual purvey. Complementing these latter, and the final section’s theme on inter-cultural arts engagements, a number also suggest opportunities for extending learning by developing the interface between visual arts and music, literature, theatre and folk lore. The best of these essays will encourage contextual reconstructions of the art engagements and their social and cultural settings that can offer rare and privileged insights into diverse worlds. They promote cross-cultural appreciations as positive learning engagements in, and beyond, the arts, for individual students, classes, and wider educational communities.

The target audiences for this volume are teachers in North American K12 and College cultural studies and visual art education settings. In many cases the learning activities are arranged according to age-appropriate grade bands within the K12 spectrum. New Zealand teachers will find a straightforward correspondence between these and levels 1 to 8 of *The New Zealand Curriculum*, (Wellington: Learning Media, 2007). They will also find the content especially relevant for informing the ‘Understanding Arts in Context’ and ‘Interpreting and Communicating’ cognitive strands they are now familiar with. What may be more challenging for them will be developing from those that employ single-exercise models to the more extended inquiry pathways, and at senior level especially individually negotiated student learning pathways, promoted in the New Zealand Curriculum. In-depth learning explorations like these may be informed by these texts, but would require further teacher (and student) research to develop more fulsome informative foundations of knowledge of cultural context, aesthetic sensibilities and arts practices. Those inductive scaffolded sequences provided here by Susan Lee and Lynette Henderson are readily transferable to the other themes explored here however, and consistent with familiar pedagogies. They offer logically structured pathways into re-visitation and extended, in-depth learning experiences.

Inevitably perhaps, some teachers find the unfamiliar territory of cross-cultural and art learning challenging. For some teachers language in particular—both the languages of each culture and the art-specific language of making, understanding and appreciating—may seem formidable barriers to engaging in these kinds of learning. Throughout this volume however, the essays seamlessly meld culturally and artistically specific language into their narratives to provide accessible introductions to cultural worlds that will be unfamiliar to many teachers and students. The concision of each essay, and their supporting diagrams and illustrations, enhance this accessibility and transferability in ways that can empower teachers and learners alike. Though all of the

illustrations are monochrome, colour (and also sound and performance) examples of any can be readily located on-line within classroom settings to enhance learning further. Indeed, student research with resources of this kind can itself contribute to profitable learning around these themes.

Though the broad scope of this collection means each of these essays is necessarily introductory, this also invests a breadth of relevance and accessibility—primary/elementary and secondary teachers especially will be able to choose amongst a wide range of links and approaches from the range it embraces. More importantly perhaps, this volume follows on, and informs, recent thinking in approaches to art history and art theory in Asian settings (Vishakha N. Desai, ed., *Asian Art History in the Twenty-First Century*, Williamstown, MA: Sterling and Francine Clark Research Institute, 2007) and recognition of both the importance of trans-cultural understandings in the aesthetic fields (Graeme Chalmers, *Illustrating Pluralism: Art, Education and Cultural Diversity*, Los Angeles: Getty Education Institute for the Arts, 1996), and the effectiveness of inter-cultural hybridities for informing students own art practices and appreciations. For teachers new to these themes, its essays provide an accessible segue into these areas; for arts and social sciences specialists, they provide insights into contexts, themes and subjects, motifs and designs, and functions and practices of art to inform richer and more satisfying appreciations for teachers and learners alike.

*Reviewed by* DAVID BELL  
*University of Otago College of Education*

Rafe de Crespigny, *Imperial Warlord—A Biography of Cao Cao 155-220 AD*. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010, xii + 553pp. ISBN 9789004185227 (hbk.)

Rafe de Crespigny's meticulous biography of Cao Cao provides a full, detailed, carefully sourced and dispassionate account of the most powerful and controversial Chinese statesman—or imperial warlord, to use de Crespigny's term—of the extraordinary period of conflict that marked the collapse of the Later Han dynasty and the emergence of the Three Kingdoms of Wei, Wu and Shu Han.

As a biography it is something of a hybrid. It is not the kind of biography that places its subject's life fully in its social and political context, as for instance—to cite a very different case—John Lewis Gaddis' new award-winning biography of George F. Kennan seeks to do. But then again, it is not a biography that confines itself solely to recounting circumstances and events relating to the subject's own life. Instead it lies somewhere between the two; for when de Crespigny chooses to he complements his lengthy chronological narrative with highly informative insights into such matters as the conduct of war, literary court life, the rituals of authority, and the condition of elite Han society. At the same time he leaves other aspects of the Later Han relatively unconsidered, offering much less on, say, the lives of ordinary people, or the issue of the ostensibly tribal peoples both within the realm and beyond its frontiers.

The book consists of an introduction with a summary chronology of Cao Cao's life, followed by eleven chapters that deal with different periods in his career, concentrating

mainly on the later years. It concludes with a bibliography of primary and secondary sources. This is full and informative, though ideally it could have been fleshed out with a brief bibliographical essay outlining the quality and content of important sources such as *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 [History of the Later Han Dynasty], *Xu Han shu* 續漢書 [Sequel to the History of the Han Dynasty], *San guo zhi* 三國志 [Annals of the Three Kingdoms] and *Cao Man zhuan* 曹瞞傳 [Biography of Cao Man—a book that seems to be missing from the bibliography]. As it is various insightful comments on these and other important primary and secondary sources can now be found in the main body of the text.

In Chapter One de Crespigny provides a brief overview of the tumultuous conditions in China during the final, divided decades of the Later Han dynasty, and then describes Cao Cao's life till his early thirties, ably depicting the atmosphere of civil conflict, court intrigue and declining imperial authority in which this privileged son of a court official was reared. The author works his way judiciously through conflicting, sometimes tendentious or unreliable accounts of Cao Cao's conduct and personality to paint a picture of a man of many parts. He is portrayed as a person of dexterity, quick-wittedness and intelligence—he probably wrote a great part of his best-known military texts, including his commentary on *Sunzi bingfa* 孫子兵法 [Sunzi's Art of War], when he was still in his early twenties—as well as a womaniser and sometimes unscrupulous bon viveur. But he is also portrayed as a public figure of serious intent as well as draconian strictness and even cruelty, especially towards those who were seen to impugn his dignity. As such, it could be added, he was to some extent a creature of his place and time.

Chapters Two and Three trace Cao's upward path, first as the scourge of the insurgent Yellow Turbans in the north-eastern province of Yan, and later as the even more brutal scourge of rebels in Xu province in the east. Chapter Three concludes with a comprehensive account of Cao Cao's victory over rivals in the campaign of Guandu, to the east of Loyang. In de Crespigny's view Cao Cao's strategy in the Guandu battlefield was “a model of that proposed by his ancient mentor Sunzi”, and his victory made him “the most powerful figure of northern China” (pp. 152, 153).

In Chapter Four de Crespigny pauses to give a general description of the conduct of civil war in Later Han China, with considered accounts of such issues as the development of hereditary troops, the weapons and tactics of both infantry and cavalry, the likely numbers actually involved in fighting, and the treatment and survival rate of battle casualties as well as prisoners, hostages and bystanders including women and children. Occasional asides refer to comparable experiences in the Roman Empire and elsewhere, and more explicit comparative considerations of this kind would have added further to one of the most informative and evocative chapters of the book.

A much later section of the book serves as a kind of addendum to chapter our by assessing Cao Cao's comments on, and possible use of, Sunzi bingfa. De Crespigny observes that we learn rather little about Cao Cao's views on war from his famous commentary on Sunzi's work. For one thing, Cao's lapidary comments on the text are too terse to be revealing. For another, in his comments Cao only twice makes reference to his own experiences in war, both references being of doubtful veracity. Given these

constraints de Crespigny decides to take another approach, and “to consider the manner in which Cao Cao[’s]...operations...relate to the doctrines of Sunzi” (p. 327). This turns out to be a fruitful exercise, for de Crespigny identifies various ways in which Cao’s military strategy and tactics seem to reflect the ideas of Sunzi, particularly with regard to military discipline, forward planning, the use of exceptional (*qi* 奇) stratagems and deception, and the selective use of what Sunzi calls death ground (*si di* 死地), that is, ground where an army has no choice but to fight for its life.

Chapters Five, Six and Seven resume the narrative of Cao Cao’s military campaigns, including the famous battle of Red Cliffs in 208, made familiar to millions of moviegoers—as de Crespigny notes (p. 503)—by John Woo’s two-part epic “Red Cliff”, screened some 1800 years later in 2008-09. De Crespigny’s account of the battle itself is brief (p. 273). He does not get much drawn into the debates that persisted for centuries afterwards about the principal cause of Cao Cao’s defeat, other than to accept that one factor was the enemy’s action in setting fire in a high wind to Cao Cao’s fleet, while others included the unusual naval character of the engagement. He does, however, endorse the widely held view that the battle of Red Cliff was Cao Cao’s greatest failure, one that prevented him from reuniting China and that led in due course to the centuries-long division between the north and the south of the country.

Chapters Eight, Nine and Ten consider Cao Cao’s dominant though occasionally contested position in Later Han politics—the Han emperor having by this time become a cipher—during the last two decades or so of his life. In Chapter Eight de Crespigny pauses again to consider another important facet of Cao Cao, namely his role as poet, patron of poets, and father of Cao Zhi, one of China’s most distinguished poets. In doing so he gives us a helpful conspectus on Cao Cao’s talents as a poet, and also on late Han literature and the emergence of *gu shi* 古詩 (old-style poems) as a new art form, albeit by relying somewhat more than usual on secondary sources, notably Jean-Pierre Diény’s 2000 study *Les poèmes de Cao Cao* [The Poems of Cao Cao]. De Crespigny also reproduces Cao’s 2011 proclamation or Apologia, which he describes—quoting Wolfgang Bauer—as “one of the earliest forms of autobiography in China” (p. 356).

Given the propensity of Chinese historians, novelists, playwrights and others to shape and reshape Cao Cao’s image, the final chapter of the biography is particularly valuable, since it summarises Cao’s “changing reputation” (p. 463) in the eighteen hundred years since his time. This is a subject that could easily be a book in itself. A clear and detailed summary is provided of the prejudices of official historians, several of them inclined to relegate Cao Cao to subordinate status in the interests of treating Liu Bei’s Shu Han kingdom, rather than the Cao family’s Wei kingdom, as the legitimate dynastic successor to the Han. A good account is also given of Cao Cao’s representation in unofficial writings, including novels and short stories, demonstrating how over the centuries some of Cao’s supposed character traits—selfish ambition and cruelty, as the popular novel *San guo yanyi* 三國演義 [Romance of the Three Kingdoms] would have them (p. 495)—were treated with questionable regard for historical accuracy.

Considering his biography as a whole (pp. 1, 504), de Crespigny demurs from any hard-and-fast assessments of Cao Cao’s personality and record. He does however

point out that for all his shortcomings Cao was a man of rare military, administrative and artistic achievement, active during a highly significant period of Chinese history. From the biographer's point of view, he was also happily someone about whom a remarkable amount of information is available from a variety of sources, despite the fact that he lived so long ago.

To this we could add that few people who lived so long ago have benefited from such a remarkably well researched and well informed biography. On one last point we may, however, choose to differ from de Crespigny, and that is with respect to his view that for "most men and women [though not for Cao Cao], little remains after death but the memory and record of their deeds and their work: facts may be discussed but the book is largely closed" (p. 463). This is surely not the whole picture. We have been reminded in recent years by biographies of political leaders as diverse as Marcus Aurelius (by Frank McLynn), Bismarck (by Jonathan Steinberg) and Stalin (by Robert Service) that controversies about the lives of extraordinary historical figures never abate, while judgments of their actions are rarely agreed on. In this respect Cao Cao is both a man of rare qualities and one of a kind.

*Reviewed by PETER HARRIS*

*Senior Fellow, Centre for Strategic Studies, Victoria University of Wellington*

Jim Glassman, *Bounding the Mekong: The Asian Development Bank, China, and Thailand*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2010, xv + 207pp. ISBN 978-0-8248-3444-9 (hbk.)

*Bounding the Mekong* is an irritating and frustrating book. Glassman wastes a lot of space, and makes the reader work hard to benefit from the knowledge which he can bring to the subject.

Glassman does a lot of telling us what he is not going to do. Within a few pages, we learn "My purpose is not to give a comprehensive picture of the activities of either the Lao state's hydropower development or Burmese migrant workers in Thailand" (p. 137), "The story [of the Lao evolution between Chinese, Siamese and Vietnamese empires and French colonialism] is not one I can recount here" (p. 138), "My objective here, however, is not to enter this political minefield [of Burma's internal conflict]" (p. 148), and this is not untypical. It is usually obvious what Glassman is not intending to do, and the space would have been better used for achieving his positive intentions.

Given the reference to the Asian Development Bank in the title, Glassman might have given some space to describing its character and functions. Instead, he wastes space revealing that he never progressed in economic understanding beyond an introductory principles course, and not a well-taught one at that. Anybody with a modest acquaintance with the work of the ADB in the presidency of Kuroda, and with Kawai as the chief economist of the Asian Development Bank Institute would not be satisfied with a caricature of "neoliberalism" as a description of the analysis which underlies ADB decisions. But then in a serious study of development in Asia, we

might have expected an understanding that Asian governments were likely to facilitate change rather than protect existing interests. That is the standard Asian reading of the “Asian Miracle”, which is very different from the journalistic belief that economic development is facilitated by a “Washington consensus” which includes minimal government intervention, a belief which is in any case far removed from the frontier of economic thinking at any time.

Glassman seeks to evade the force of criticism such as this by declaring that he offers a “class-based analysis”. I no longer have to make contact with students seeking to establish their identities distinct from their teachers, and have only distant memories of engaging in that endeavor. Furthermore, I think more easily of a senior Soviet leader in the 1980s responding to a query about his analysis of Soviet economic diplomacy that of course it had little Marxist content – you had to go to a rich country like Japan to find Marxists. Glassman’s analysis is “class based” only in some of the terminology he uses, in his descriptions of the different interests of “capitalists” and workers or peasants, and in an assumption that states can be manipulated by “capitalists”. Acquaintance with the arguments of Ricardo or better, Schumpeter, would have prevented him from thinking that conflict of interest is unknown to standard economic analysis. More important, he seems to think that nothing should be done unless it creates no losers. The starting point of any policy analysis following identification of an issue, is establishing the range of feasible alternatives, but that plays no part in Glassman’s analysis. Furthermore, somewhat surprisingly given his initial studies in philosophy and environmental history, he has no sense of time. In any discussion of economic (or social) development, a crucial point is likely to be what cost should be borne now in order to achieve a future pay-off, especially as those who bear the cost are unlikely to be those who receive the future benefit—not so much because of class conflict as because of generational change.

Nevertheless, Glassman eventually provides some interesting discussion of the Asian context. He is a geographer at the University of British Columbia who has spent a good deal of time in the Mekong Region. His descriptions of business interests in Yunnan in China, and in South-east Asian economies, are interesting and useful. So are some of his incidental observations such as that some of the nation states of the Mekong region are recent creations and that we should think of the history of the region not in terms of conventional competing nation states but rather of entities evolving on the edge of empires with varying degrees of autonomy.

It is a pity that the valuable contributions are buried in a morass of misguided search for non-conformist respectability.

*Reviewed by G. R. HAWKE  
Emeritus Professor, Victoria University of Wellington*

Richard M. Jaffe, *Neither Monk nor Layman: Clerical Marriage in Modern Japanese Buddhism*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011, 1<sup>st</sup> Paperback edition (Princeton University Press, 2001, cloth), xxviii + 288pp. ISBN 978-0-691-07495-5 (hbk.), ISBN 978-0-8248-3527-9 (pbk.)

Richard Jaffe's book meticulously researches the issue of clerical marriage—and other related issues as well—in modern Japanese Buddhism, focusing on Meiji Japan (1868-1912), providing also a discussion of the complex historical background of this issue and some information on developments in the current situation. One of the big strengths of this work is the consistent and punctilious examination of the historical records and accounts that enriches our perception of the intricacy of the object. The book contains ten chapters, two prefaces (one for each edition), a list of ministries and government institutions, a glossary with Chinese characters, and an index.

Chapter One introduces the main topics of the book and outlines its structure. Chapter Two deals with the historically flagrant and recurrent break, in Japan, of the Ten Precepts (Pali: *dasa-sila* or *samanerasikkha*), adopted in most Buddhist ordination ceremonies. The author refers particularly to the first, third and fifth precepts, which respectively refers to abstinence from harming or taking life (and by extension, no meat eating), from any sexual contact, and from the use of intoxicants (for example, alcohol). Going beyond these Buddhist precepts, the Japanese government has tried to apply its own standard of clerical discipline since at least the promulgation of the Yōrō Code (757). Despite the harshness of punishment for violators, there were always abundant cases of religious precept and government law-breaking monks. Chapter Three discusses the Pure Land School known as *Jōdo Shin* (or *Ikkō*) Buddhism in the light of the concept of *nikujiki saitai*, literally “meat eating and having a wife”. Eventually *nikujiki saitai* came to be understood simply as the “clerical marriage problem”. Despite using a heavy hand to control all Buddhist denominations and criminalizing clerical misbehavior, particularly the lodging of women in temples, Tokugawa shoguns turned a blind eye to Shin clergy for they became close allies to each other. At that time, facing attacks and critiques from all other denominations, Shin apologetics produced a vast literature to justify the practice of *nikujiki saitai* as a “skillful means rooted in compassion” as did their founder Shinran (1173-1263). The following chapter discusses how “the state ended its intervention in certain aspects of religious life”—especially by forcing the separation of Buddhism and Shinto, and promulgating secularizing laws applied to Buddhist—and, at the same time, promoted the “community cult of emperor-centered State Shinto”. Some of such governmental initiatives were: decriminalization of clerical marriage and meat eating, incorporation of clerics into the household registration (*koseki*) system and adoption of surname. After a period of persecution to Buddhism, clerics were encouraged to join government effort to promulgate to the populace a National Teaching (*Kokkyō*), which basically included state ideology and teachings surrounding emperor cult, nationalism, and virtues of loyalty and filial piety. The rationale behind was the need to unify the country under a universal system that included common symbols such as a national language, national anthem and flag, an official national history, shared moral values, and others.



In Chapter Five comes the central theme of the book which is the passage of the *nikujiki saitai* law in 1872. If the “clerical marriage problem” had been debated over the past centuries, the new law caused a profound division within the Buddhist community, with conservative voices battling a modern trend supported by the government and even avant-garde Buddhists. Some leaders like Sōtō cleric Ootori Sessō were very active in promoting the law which they saw as an opportunity for the clergy to rectify their behavior and concentrate on Buddhist study, practice and teaching. For them, Buddhist clerics should be involved in the government campaign of national union and rejection of Christianity. In the same vein, the Tendai cleric Ugawa Shōchō “called for compulsory marriage and meat eating for all Buddhist clerics; examination of all clerics and the return to lay life of those deemed unfit; limitation of the number of temples; elimination of all separate Buddhist denominations; and unification of dress, liturgy, rules, and doctrine for all Buddhists” (p. 110). On the other hand, Buddhist leaders from different schools created a pan-sectarian association for the revitalization of their religion, the *Shoshū Dōtoku Kaimei*, and were able to send numerous petitions requesting the government to withdraw the law.

Chapters Six and Seven show the resistance of leading Buddhists to the law and their combined strategies of sticking to the Buddhist precepts while producing numerous petitions and an extensive literature as an attempt to convince government officials to remove the *nikujiki saitai* law. Despite the growing number of married clerics, top Buddhist leaders promoted stricter regulations against the law within their respective denomination and promoted a distinction among “pure” (celibate) monks and “impure” (married) monks. Responding to this opposition, the government reinterpreted the law leaving to each denomination the job of setting its own standards of clerical department.

Chapter Eight presents a radical departure from the previous stubbornness of traditional leadership with the case of Nichiren cleric and ultranationalist Tanaka Chigaku (1861-1939). Tanaka renounced the monastic life and founded the Nichirenist movement which exerted a great influence in many new religions in Japan. He proposed the end of the lay-clerical distinction and the substitution of the feudal parishioner-temple “with a Nichiren lay Buddhist organization that would provide the religious support for eventual world unification under Japanese imperial rule” (p. 166). For him, Buddhism should change from a religion devoted to funeral and memorial services to a lay and domestic religion, involved with all the essential activities of daily life. Accordingly he wrote some tracts on conjugal relationship and innovated by creating a Buddhist wedding ceremony and others.

Chapters Nine and Ten point firstly to a shift in the nature of the debate: “whereas during the early Meiji the problem of clerical marriage was viewed primarily as a matter of precept violation and purging the clergy of corrupt elements, by mid-Meiji the focus had shifted to issues of clerical reformation and modernization” (p. 191). As the nation advanced its ambitious modernizing project, new elements were added to the debate over clerical marriage: Western notions of biology and sexuality, statistical analysis, eugenic ideas, Christian critique of the Japanese women position in society, and suchlike. Pressed by these new elements, the ever growing number of married clerics and above all by the abandonment of orphans and widows of married abbots, many denominations adopted “temple family protection laws”, even though the monastic ideal was usually kept.

*Neither Monk nor Layman* tells us much more than “clerical marriage in modern Japanese Buddhism”. For those interested in the comparative process of modernization, especially in a non-Western society, the book provides interesting data on radical changes in religion (particularly Buddhism) caused by concrete historical shifts intertwined “with modernist discourses of science, sexuality, individual rights, and nationalism” (p. 7). Contrary to what has been discussed in the academic literature on modernization of Buddhism, the author also shows Buddhist clergy actively questioning state policy and offering many options, be it through restoration of past practices and precepts, or through dialogue with the novelties coming from the West in the form of science, Christian and socialist ideas, and the like. In a word, they actively participated in the debate for or against the changes, resisted the internal and external pressure to “modernize” and, in the end, were able to influence government regulations. The big picture presented by Jaffe is the dynamic and painful transition to modernity in which Meiji officials tried different and many ways of separating the State from religious institutions as one aspect of the emergency of a modern State-Nation.

As one gets through Richard Jaffe’s book, an impressive amount of data unfolds an array of controversy and public debate, formal petitions to the government, protests, involvement of the newly-created media, conflicting interpretations of the current situation vis-à-vis the doctrinal tradition, a steady process of secularization and privatization of religion. Another interesting issue raised and discussed at length is the view of women within Buddhist doctrine and the plight of the “temple wives and children”, particularly after the passing of the abbot-husband-father, a topic that received little, if any, attention by all denominations until the 1880s. For all this, Richard Jaffe’s book fills a lacuna in the Japanese Buddhism and religion in general.

*Reviewed by RONAN ALVES PEREIRA*  
*University of Brasilia*

Barry C. Keenan, *Neo-Confucian Self-Cultivation*. Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2011, xxxii + 132pp. ISBN 978-0-824-83496-8 (hbk.); 978-0-824-83548-4 (pbk.)

Neo-Confucian philosophy is a critically important aspect of Chinese intellectual history. The complexity and subtlety of its ideas, however, can be difficult to grasp. With *Neo-Confucian Self-Cultivation*, Barry C. Keenan has provided both a clear and concise overview of the subject, and made an admirable contribution to the existing body of scholarly literature. The author divides his discussion into three sections: Song dynasty Neo-Confucianism, the *Great Learning*, and developments between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries. His presentation is well-rounded and highly accessible. It is an excellent introduction for students and scholars, and would make a superb addition to course curricula.

In the first chapter, Keenan provides an overview of early Confucianism before proceeding to indicate the main Song-period Neo Confucian thinkers: Zhou Dunyi, Cheng Hao, Cheng Yi, Zhang Zai, Shao Yong, and Zhu Xi. He then explains how the Four Books (the *Great Learning*, the *Analects*, the *Mencius*, and the *Doctrine of the Mean*) were added to the Five Classics to form the Neo-Confucian canon. The author

next analyses important metaphysical aspects of Neo-Confucianism, including the notion that material force, or *qi*, embodies moral principles, and that cultivation will enable us to realise these.

In the second chapter, Keenan discusses the Neo-Confucian educational process. In the late Song, such education took place in Cheng-Zhu academies, where students would attend lectures and private tutorials, take exams, and keep journals. The chapter proceeds to list the texts that students would read at various stages in their education. By the age of 5, children would memorise the *Three Character Classic*, move on to the *Hundred Family Names*, and then to the *Thousand Character Classic* (which was replaced by *The Primer on Human Nature and Principle* in the Yuan). From the age of eight, they read Zhu Xi's *Elementary Learning*, then memorised the Five Classics and Four Books. Between fifteen and twenty-two, they continued to consider previously studied texts, as well as additional works that included *Reflections on Things at Hand* and *Chu Songs*. Keenan concludes the chapter with a discussion of Zhu Xi's ideal feminine roles, which consisted of household duties.

By the eleventh century, the *Great Learning* had become the basis of Neo-Confucian cultivation. The author explains how in the first step, analysis of the natural world, as well as interpersonal interactions, would furnish knowledge regarding principles. In the second step, knowledge and integration of these principles was pursued with "reverence" (p. 43). The third step required honesty concerning the motivations for actions. The fourth aimed at mindfully attending to tasks, thus ensuring that humaneness could prevail. In the fifth step, one continued to uphold these values while ensuring that one was sincere in carrying them out continually.

In chapter four, Keenan elucidates on the final three steps. The sixth step concerned the family, where one learned proper modes of social behaviour. The seventh step concerned society at large. Zhu Xi himself advocated the coming together of families in a "compact" to uphold ritual and act virtuously (p. 67). This provided a means for social order to be established without recourse to the external imposition of standards. The eighth step expanded on this aim, to "bring peace to all" (p. 70) through the humanity of the ruler.

In the fifth chapter, Keenan describes the changes that Neo-Confucianism underwent between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, when Wang Yangming reacted against the Cheng-Zhu orthodoxy to propose that it was "innate knowledge," rather than the study of principle that made one good (p. 76). Wang saw the most important step in practice as being the return to one's original nature.

Keenan also explains how the rise of philological study led to the discovery of forged sections in the *Classic of Documents*. Meanwhile, the concept of "humaneness" was itself reexamined (p. 81). Finding support in Zheng Xuan's commentary on the *Analects* from the Han dynasty, humaneness came to be seen as something that could be learned in social contexts. In addition, the Qing saw a renewed emphasis on ritual. Two emerging positions on ritual—those of Dai Zhen (that through ritual we could realise our original goodness) and Ling Tingkan (that ritual could correct bad aspects of our nature)—led to a debate about the quality of our true nature which mirrored the differences between Mencius and Xunzi.

Keenan devotes the final chapter of the book to examining developments in the nineteenth century. It was then that scholars maintained an emphasis on both Han dynasty texts and philological methodologies, along with the moral emphasis of Song and Ming Neo-Confucianism. In the final part of this chapter, he describes how the nineteenth-century approach was used to interpret key passages from Confucian texts. He also outlines prominent methods of practice from this period. They included the development of reciprocity, “quiet-sitting” (p. 103), textual study, and the keeping of journals. The author concludes the volume with a brief section in which he reiterates some of its main themes, and considers the relevance of the Neo-Confucian project—to cultivate morality in social contexts—for the present day.

Keenan’s well-planned presentation will stoke the interest of newcomers to the subject. For those whose engagement with Neo-Confucian thought has been more long-standing, it comprises a resource they can turn to when in need of clarification and contextualisation. The author has produced an outstanding introduction to a vast and vitally important topic that is of concern to students and scholars of Chinese thought. However, Keenan also points out the uniqueness of Neo-Confucian philosophy, suggesting that it be considered a form of “relationship ethics” (p.112). *Neo-Confucian Self-Cultivation*, therefore, deserves an audience beyond Sinological circles, among philosophers, scholars of religion, and political scientists. On a variety of departmental bookshelves, it will serve to enlighten, to lucidate, and to generate discussion.

Reviewed by SCOTT PACEY

*Golda Meir Postdoctoral Fellow, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

Yong Wook Lee, *The Japanese Challenge to the American Neoliberal World Order: Identity, Meaning, and Foreign Policy*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008, xvii + 284pp. ISBN 978-0-8047-5812-3

Providing meaningful insights into the sometimes baffling nature of Japanese foreign policy, Yong Wook Lee uses several carefully considered theoretical frameworks to analyze Japan’s attempts to exclude the United States from membership of the proposed “Asian Monetary Fund” (AMF) in the late 1990s, and reveals several overlapping, and frequently quite conflicted, areas of interest within the Japanese foreign policy decision-making apparatus. Lee suggests that, on the surface, this rather confrontational proposal (which was effectively dropped after exhaustive pressure from the US and private business) served as Japan’s most striking and inflammatory foreign policy development since the Pacific War, because of its obvious antagonism towards the US and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). However, it is Lee’s approach to understanding the conditions that made this challenge possible, as well as the genesis of Japan’s intermittent opposition to free trade and economic liberalism, which makes this book a valuable piece of scholarship, especially in the realm of Japanese studies, but also political science as a whole.

Lee’s book also poses some interesting questions (and offers convincing conclusions) about Japan’s economic identity, and at the same time reveals the extent of

the disjuncture which existed between key decision makers within Japan's foreign policy bodies including the Ministry of Finance (MOF), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), and the Japan Development Bank (JDB) to name a few. Interestingly, Lee describes (and with useful examples) Japanese businesses as being either apathetic toward the proposed AMF, or quite vocal in their opposition. Indeed, the anxiety expressed by key Japanese entrepreneurs who were benefiting from long established free market principles encouraged by the IMF, and the sometimes dogmatic stance of key MOF officials and decision makers attempting to present Japan's path of development as being distinct, as well as ideal for export and imitation elsewhere in Asia (i.e. Thailand in the aftermath of the Asian Financial Crisis), is presented as being a typical, albeit convoluted, Japanese approach to affirming a national identity in spite of quite serious costs to Japan's relationship with the US at the time, and a perfect example of the disjuncture between policy and action sometimes occurring in that country.

Lee also analyzes the disjuncture between Japanese constructions of economic identity and actual practice, alongside explanations and theories regarding the conditions which enabled this 'Japanese Challenge' to manifest in the first place. His theoretical approach to analyzing various forms of Japanese economic identity, particularly Japan's Developmentalist approach, and the interaction and influence of this identity on the state and its various components, is relevant because issues of identity clearly played a role in Japan's proposal to block the US from membership in the proposed AMF. The author quotes various Japanese scholars and economists who are also skeptical of the idea that Japan possesses a unique and extendable economic strategy rooted in state-assisted development, and compares their assessments to those of the key decision makers and their supporters responsible for Japan's insistence that the US be excluded from participation in the proposed fund (despite meaningful cooperation with the IMF to eventually bail-out the Thai economy in 1997). Issues such as Japan possibly playing host to an inferiority complex toward the US is raised briefly, and justified to some extent, but the author here doggedly pursues meaningful examples to illustrate the point that there is a certain irrational quality in some of the MOF's interactions with the World Bank and the IMF which does not sit well with their relationship with the US, but served to reaffirm the economic identity of Japan.

In this book, capitalism is directly linked to Japan's foreign policy choices, and the book claims to be the first of its kind in linking this to Japanese conceptions of economic identity and its influence on decision making. The Japanese Challenge is analyzed within the much wider context of the history of the world economy, and to some extent questions the validity of Japan's claims to having a unique strategy for economic development, but Lee's key interest appears to be historic and social constructions which led to such a bold proposition being made by the MOF (Lee refers to Japan's insistence on the publication of "The East Asian Miracle" at the World Bank in 1993, which can also be understood as an earlier challenge to the US's frequent insistence on the universality and legitimacy of free trade, and which lends to this book a good sense of historic proportion). Lee's writing presents the development of Japan's economic identity in a focused and rational way, especially with regard to his discussion of identity and intention as he constructs a framework "in order to illuminate how identity causally leads to social action in the name of national interests" and to this effect is

successful in bringing the Japanese position into focus for more precise analysis through the lenses of Marxism, Economic Liberalism, and Developmentalism (and all within a strictly Japanese context). It is the constant adherence to the Japanese context which is appealing about Lee's book, and the application of his framework technique to other Asian economic identities is a compelling prospect. This is an outstanding first book.

Reviewed by CHARLES JOHN ROWE  
University of Otago

Jason McGrath, *Post Socialist Modernity: Chinese Cinema, Literature, and Criticism in the Market Age*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008, 320pp. ISBN 978-0-8047-5874-1

Jason McGrath's excellent book offers a well-informed and engagingly presented in-depth study on the difficult topic of 'postsocialist modernity.' More specifically, McGrath examines how cultural texts "have reflected and reflected on 'the going to market' of Chinese culture and society" (p. 1). Relying on a careful examination of case studies from areas as different as cinema, literature and critical writings, the book succeeds in giving the reader a thorough analysis of Chinese culture's complex (i.e., fragmented, contradictory, incomplete) articulation of postsocialist modernity.

McGrath's study of Chinese postsocialist modernity in the context of globalization relies on a broad intellectual engagement with both Chinese and non-Chinese originated discourses. Furthermore, and this is the additional strength of this book, the author not only investigates, problematizes and ultimately challenges the notion of "post" but also critically re-examines capitalist modernity and market society. In doing so, his study takes the Chinese case beyond its recognized specificity and develops the far-reaching notion of "globalized barbarism". While the last chapter (Chapter Seven) regrettably does not entirely engages with such theorization but only delineates some of the main features of this new barbarism, capitalist modernization's barbarous nature is well documented in the previous chapters' specific case studies.

The introductory chapter focuses on the implications of marketization in Chinese culture and relates them to a number of interconnected, complex and unstable formations and conceptualizations such as modernity, postmodernity, socialism, capitalism and globalization. The clarity and relative conciseness of this chapter can already be considered major achievements. McGrath also offer his own perspective on postsocialism and the role that culture plays in creating its fragmented narrative. It is in this chapter that the author introduces and justifies his methodology as an examination of "key moments in post-socialist cinema, literature, and criticism" (p. 24) through which, he argues, we can expose the multiple, often contradictory, meanings of the marketization of culture. Chapter Two frames the Chinese "ideologies of popular culture" by fruitfully comparing the 1990s humanist spirit debate with the May Fourth tradition. By developing an exploration of the Chinese intellectual consciousness, the chapter also contextualizes the literary and cinematic texts that are more specifically addressed in the following four sections—Chapter Three, Four, Five and Six.

Chapter Three (“Adaptations and Ruptures: Literature in the New Culture Industry”) begins with an overview of emerging literary “schools” in the first half of the 1990s. The change in the state of literature (or, according to the humanist critics, the “crisis” of literature) was reflected in the proliferation of unstable and often quite hybrid trends in which labels such as, “new realism”, “new-state-of-affairs literature”, “post-new-era literature”, “new urbanite fiction”, etc. all lack the cohesiveness generally found in literary movements, but in fact referred to quite diverse, individualized and mutually contradictory expressive styles and literary concerns. Via an analysis of Chi Li’s fiction, from her new realist phase to her best-selling novel *Coming and Going*, McGrath traces the shifts (and the surrounding criticism) from experimental (or “pure”) literary figure to commercially successful (or popular culture) brand name. Conversely, Zhu Wen and Han Dong’s modernist ruptures are analyzed as evidence of an alternative literary development—a combination of nihilist and idealist perspectives—that neither constitutes a radical innovation nor evolves into “popular mass culture” (as has been the case for Chi Li). McGrath convincingly argues that, while Zhu also moves out of “pure” literature in his later turn to film script writing and film directing, his new career does not develop in the realm of commercial fiction or TV series, but instead is tied to both transnational art-cinema market and domestic studio system. Both authors demonstrate how literature has been transformed since the culture industry has been increasingly separated from state socialism.

The next three chapters, focuses on three different aspects of post-socialism in relation to cinema: the infidelity theme as an allegory for the ambivalence on Chinese modernity, the independent film production in the transnational art house context, and the role of entertainment in a globalized market. Chapter Four select a number of films (i.e., *Cell phone*, dir. Feng Xiaogang, 2004, *Women from the Lake of Scented Souls*, dir. Xie Fei, 1992, *The Day that the Sun Turned Cold*, dir. Yim Hou, 1994) all dealing with a narrative of duplicity and adultery (set in either rural or urban environments) and, in particular, develops a close reading of one specific film, Ermo as examples of what McGrath describes as “post-socialist film of infidelity”. The trope of the rich/successful man and his mistress(es) is used to represent “the individual anxieties aroused by private desires as well as collective anxieties over the very privatization and commodification of desire and fantasy” (p. 96). This chapter possibly offers the most original text analysis in the book as the “infidelity” genre is defined not only in terms of its symbolic content but also formal choices. Not only McGrath brings together a group of films that had previously received very little scholarly attention, but also confidently shows the lines of continuity between the late 1980s and the early 2000, beyond the divisions between art and commercial films or experimental and mainstream productions.

Chapter Five (on Jia Zhangke—the chapter was previously included in Zhen Zhang’s edited volume *The Urban Generation*) and Chapter Six (on Feng Xiaogang) both continue the exploration of the impact of post-socialism on Chinese screens. Since the publication of this book, much has been written on both the topic of “independence” (most notably Pickowick and Zhang’s edited collection *From Underground to Independence*) and on Jia and his revalidation of realism in the context of urban cinema and independent cinema. Yet this chapter still remains an excellent discussion of how auteur-ship is both preserved within and negotiated against global market’s constraints. Similarly Chapter Six’s discussion on Feng Xiaogang and his New Year’s films offers a



concise and yet insightful analysis of a phenomenon that Rui Zhang has later expanded in her *The Cinema of Feng Xiaogang* and, most recently in Ying Zhu and Stanley Rosen's *Art, Politics, and Commerce in Chinese Cinema*.

The concluding chapter offers an original reading of "the ideology of future" and its most problematic contradictions. In the name of "future", many are left behind (i.e., the characters that populate the works of fiction and the films McGrath he has analyzed in the previous chapters) are either located in a state of abjection or in a space of resistance that cannot escape cultural commodification. Two more texts are added to support his final discussion: the novel *Shouhuo* (by Yan Lianke) that satirizes the state of abjection of the Shouhuo villagers and the film *Xiang jimao yiyang fei* (Chicken Poets, dir. Meng Jinghui, 2002) that exposes the paradoxical conscience of the marketized poet. Jia Zhangke's *The World* is used as the concluding metaphor for the struggles of the postsocialist condition as a global phenomenon. The inexorable barbarism that is depicted in *The World* represents the most pessimistic reflection on postsocialist modernity because its "'reality' [...] lies not in a 'real' life condition that simply belies the illusions of capitalism, nor in the utopian consumer imaginary of the contemporary mainstream media discourse in China- but rather precisely in the gulf between the two [...]" (p. 223) McGrath acutely examines how the protagonists of *The World* struggle, on one hand in an attempt to develop human solidarity within the globalized labour force that has absorbed them and, on the other hand, to try to make sense of the media spectacle and commodification that surround them.

*Postsocialist Modernity* succeeds in its declared goals and develops a comprehensive overview of a dramatic, incomplete, paradoxical, and ambiguous cultural and social shift away from socialism, towards capitalism. The book can be usefully used as a background text for tertiary level courses on Chinese contemporary literature or cinema.

Reviewed by PAOLA VOICI  
University of Otago

Tom Turner, *Asian Gardens: History, Beliefs and Design*. London and New York: Routledge, 2011, xii +336pp. ISBN13: 978-0-415-49687-2 (hbk.)

I've always valued Tom Turner's books. They are both readable and authoritative and his trademark simplified layout plans really help you understand how a particular form of garden works. However I think this is his best book yet because it includes an astute commentary on modern Asian garden design and asks some quite fundamental and thought provoking questions. It also gives some background on garden design in countries and regions that are usually overlooked such as eastern Russia and South East Asia.

This book is really a sister publication to Turner's previous book: *Garden Design: Philosophy and Design 2000 BC to 2000 AD* (Spon Press, 2005). This earlier book covered European gardens in the regions north and west of the Fertile Crescent that have been substantially shaped by philosophy. Asian Gardens moves in the opposite geographic direction around the fringes of the Asian landmass, where the gardens have traditionally been influenced by belief.

Starting with early Mesopotamian gardens (cc 3100 -2400 BCE), Babylonian gardens (cc. 2000-1600 BCE) and Persian gardens (cc. 550-330 BCE), the book sweeps through Asia with the spread of Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam and the forms of garden that these religions inspired. Each of these is well covered with chapters on Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist, Daoist-Buddhist and Shinto Buddhist gardens.

Early Asian texts written about garden design, ranging from the Rig Veda hymns (c. 1500 BCE), the Kama Sutra (c. 400), Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* and the *Sakuteki* (c. 1070 CE) placed design firmly in a religious context. The objective of many designed gardens was to create places that evoked religious and aesthetic sentiments and a 'sense of awe'. Early in the book Turner provides a thought provoking analysis of the relationship between man, nature and gods and the examples of their physical consequences expressed in different forms of garden.

Not all forms of traditional garden were based on religious codes. Turner includes a brief mention of: 'Courtyard gardens' around houses for domestic use, enclosed 'productive horticultural gardens' often within walled towns to help withstand siege and 'royal hunting parks'. Few of those were carefully designed and very few have survived.

Turner doesn't think Asia's adoption of modernism in landscape design has been particularly successful, particularly in the bigger public spaces. From my travels around China and Japan I'd generally agree with him. New public areas are often hard, they lack a human scale and they don't appear to have been designed for public enjoyment. Turner also points out that many outdoor spaces are not suited to their local climates and geography. For example, they lack shade from the sun or shelter from monsoon rains. In western Asia in particular, oil wealth has been converted into water wealth with gardens and lawns that are not sustainable.

As rational modernism has advanced through Asia, Turner believes the unique influence of religious belief has retreated so that regional design has been lost. He argues that if art and design are to be guided everywhere by analytical thought, instead of beliefs, they will end up looking the same. However, he sees an opportunity for the evolution of regional garden designs based on both reason and belief while acknowledging the local climate, vegetation and the availability of fresh water.

Modernism appears to have been most successfully utilized in Japan where it has merged with the abstract design of the Zen Buddhist monastic retreat. In fact, a lot of European architecture and garden design has been influenced by that aesthetic. That is one reason why the future direction of Asian garden design is important for those of us interested in new directions in garden design. History has shown us that new forms of garden emerge from dynamic economies and, for the next century at least, that centre of energy is probably going to be East Asia. New forms of garden design are probably emerging right now if we only knew where to look. While this book is mainly about Asian garden development over the last five thousand years, it might just give us the clue to the future. As Turner says, "The further back you look, the further forward you are likely to see".

*Reviewed by PETER SERGEL  
Director, Hamilton Gardens*