

Although Lim is judicious in her assertions and takes great pains not to overstate what is at best a speculative, albeit convincing, hypothesis based on a limited locale, one wonders to what extent the experiences of Yuanhua Town and Haining County are representative of the wider southeast China littoral, and to what extent lineage formation experienced the same impetus and followed the same patterns elsewhere. Nonetheless, in the context of this original contribution, Lim has also produced in clear, crisp English a fascinating recital of political intrigue and familial interaction that should hold the interest of undergraduates and could serve as the basis for broader discussion of China during the Ming dynasty.

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According to editor John Makeham, the series in which this conference volume appears addresses such questions as: “To what extent were new knowledge systems viewed as tools in the recovery of tradition rather than its abandonment?” (p. vii). Liang Qichao recognized the issue when he wrote in 1901 that “. . . China (Zhongguo) formerly never had any history,”² and, in 1902, that “of all the disciplines that have recently come from the West, the only one already present in China is history” (p. 3). Twenty years later, Liang tried to resolve the contradiction with another oversimplification, writing: “In ancient China, all disciplines were but sub-branches of historiography” (p. 90).

In their introductory essay, “Making History Modern: The Transformation of Chinese Historiography, 1895–1937,” editors Moloughney and Zarrow try to square the circle by arguing that “it was not necessary to *create* a historical discipline; rather, through an engagement with global developments historians could refashion inherited practice into a modern discipline” (p. 3). In reaction to Western imperialism and on the model of Meiji historiography, China’s “New History” moved from revering an ancient golden age to accepting perennial militarism, from scholar-official loyalty to the emperor to popular and professional devotion to the nation, and from moral judgments to social analysis. The results included the first History Department in 1917, specialization in Western-defined periods, a European-style research institute in 1928, a professional society and debates, women faculty, and courses on gender. New

²Liang Qichao, *Zhongguo lishi yanjiu fa* [Methods of studying Chinese history] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2009), 161.

sources transformed sub-fields: oracle bones and bronze inscriptions verified the Shang, bamboo strips documented the Han, Dunhuang texts enriched the Tang, and new archives revealed the Qing. “By the 1930s the professionalized modern disciplinary culture had come to the fore” (p. 19). It proved strong enough to survive the assaults of World War II and the Cultural Revolution.

The authors of chapters in this fine study take us deeply into the subject and further complicate the story.

Luo Zhitian argues that classical scholarship retreated “from a central position” and historical studies progressed “to the center”; but, unable to produce “wealth and strength in the modern age,” history, too, soon “went into decline” (pp. 47, 65, 70).

Liu Long-hsin shows how students taking the reformed examinations after 1902 drew on the Chinese past to explain the global present but ended by invoking world history to analyze the Chinese experience, reversing “the traditional sense of temporal direction” (p. 93).

Q. Edward Wang finds the roots of China’s historiographical revolution in Japanese empirical studies and German historiography that yielded a continuous narrative of cultural history that was translated and emulated by the Chinese and became standard in East Asia.

Wang Fan-sen explores how Western ideas of historical development as “linear, purposeful, progressive, and irreversible” (p. 135) joined with concepts only latent in China to result in “universal patterns” (*gongli*) that might ultimately enable China to become as strong as the West (p. 142).

Peter Zarrow surveys a wide range of narratives, including one by Zhao Yusen that combined Chinese and Western experiences into a single chronology of early antiquity (through Rome and Liu Song), middle antiquity (through Renaissance and Yuan), late antiquity (Reformation and Ming), modernity (Enlightenment and Qing), and contemporaneity (nation-states and Republic).

Madeleine Yue Dong compares and contrasts two founders of twentieth-century Qing history, Xiao Yishan and Meng Sen, who agreed in bringing critical methods to the history of a single polity but focused their skepticism differentially on government documents, in Xiao’s case, and wild histories (*yeshi*), in Meng’s case.

Brian Moloughney analyzes Gu Jiegang’s theory of reverse euhemerization and his hypothesis of the layered creation of ancient history. Critics charged that Gu misused the argument from silence, confused popular myth with political forgery, misread historical documents, and ignored archaeological finds. Moloughney admits that Gu lacked historical imagination, but argues that he was gracious in dealing with his critics and left a valuable liberal legacy.

Axel Schneider appraises Liu Yizheng not so much as a conservative or a nationalist but as an advocate of a cultural China in which “the heavenly order is not directly discernible, but can be perceived only via expressions in the people and their folk customs” and from which the five relationships (*wulun*) can be used as “a standard to judge other cultures” (pp. 283–84).

Hon Tze-ki examines the rise of historical geography as a “form of human self-definition”; shows how the Western nation-state system shifted from being

a hierarchy in time, in which China might aspire to catch up, to a hierarchy in space, in which China had to resist simply to survive (pp. 304–5); and concludes: “Before we blame the Chinese for narrowing their horizon [with nationalism] and adopting a victim mentality [from imperialism], we should first examine the [imperial] nation-state system, which is still going strong. . . .” (p. 327).

James Leibold surveys the development of prehistoric archaeology and finds that the majority of Chinese anthropologists reject the African locus of human origins, emphasize the indigenous development of Chinese culture, and advocate the multi-millennial fusion of multiple ethnic groups into the ever-evolving Chinese people (*Zhonghua minzu*).

Finally, Arif Dirlik traces the evolution of Chinese Marxism from its origins in social theory and revolutionary praxis (1927–30s), through its maturation in professionalization and partification (1930s–mid-1960s), to its devaluation during the Cultural Revolution and modernization. He acknowledges its excessive totalitarianism but also recalls its promise as a guide to an alternative path of development.

This rich collection is addressed to—and should be read by—anyone interested in Chinese history and historiography. It raises questions worthy of further consideration and research. It provides Chinese characters for names and terms, revealing some questionable translations. For example, *yi* 夷 is better rendered “foreigner” than “barbarian” (p. 114) and *tianzi* 天子 is “son of heaven,” not “heavenly sovereign” (p. 340). In a book seeking to analyze the complex interaction between past and present, the term *xin* 新 might sometimes be translated as “renew” or “renewed” rather than simply “new” (e.g., p. 3), and locutions such as “entirely new,” “completely new,” “utterly different,” and “unprecedented,” should be rare if not absent (pp. 9, 28, 29, 30, 65, 84, 89, 97). In a history book, and especially one on China, one should eschew such terms as “always” and “never” (pp. 2, 69, 273).

The authors sometimes put quotation marks around such key terms as “tradition” and “modernity” and acknowledge that there is no dichotomy between the two (pp. 195, 233, 234, 304). But they do not confront the modernization paradigm served by those terms or the related framework supported by the terms “empire” and “nation” (pp. 70, 103, 173, 229, 339, 375). One result is an occasional overstatement or oversimplification (pp. 8, 9, 11, 81). Another is the underestimation of the historiographical significance of historical associations such as the Qing identification with the Zhou (pp. 52, 188); the Republican interest in the Spring and Autumn (p. 188), Qin (pp. 180, 188), and Song (pp. 59–60); and the Republican (and People’s Republican) affinity with the Han (pp. 92, 189) and Ming (p. 228). If we were to analyze such resonances more carefully, we might be better able to see “the way that historical development can take the form of progress and regression, regression and readvance, and other more complex patterns” (p. 161), and to recognize that the past continues to be “a repository of usable models” (p. 194).

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