

Whenever power shifted on the Chinese continent, the Korean Peninsula had to pay the price, usually with devastating invasions from China or Japan. As this book well indicates, the stability of the Korean Peninsula is one of the many vital security interests of China. Yet, the stability of China has often been the life-and-death issue of the Korean Peninsula.

Empire and Righteous Nation is not simply a welcome addition to existing literature on East Asian history or international relations; it is a genre-creating work that explores an important but under-investigated theme. Its merits and contributions to our understanding of East Asian international relations is unquestionable. Further, it is evident that this innovative work initiates lively discussions on the evolution of contemporary East Asian geopolitics by reinterpreting the past, present, and future of Korea-China relations.

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Preußen-Deutschland und China 1842–1911. Eine kommentierte Quellenedition

Edited by Cord Eberspächer, Jürgen Kloosterhuis, Zou Ailian, Hu Zhongliang, Andreas Steen, Xu Kai and Xu Jian
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In 1868, the Prussian geographer and explorer Ferdinand von Richthofen felt ‘overwhelmed and anxious standing at the gate of an immense Empire whose research by an individual was more than a daring enterprise’ (Ferdinand von Richthofen, *China: Ergebnisse eigener Reisen und darauf gegruendeter Studien*. Vol. I (Berlin, 1877), p. xxix.). This source collection and commentary on the entangled histories of Prussia-Germany and the late Qing empire is such a daring enterprise. It is the product of a collaborative research project financed by the German Research Fund (DFG) and has been conducted by the German sinologist Cord Eberspächer in collaboration with other German and Chinese colleagues. The publication is entirely in German and brings together expertise and unpublished sources from the Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin and the First Historical Archives in Beijing. It publishes many archival documents from both archives as well as the German Federal Archives [Bundesarchiv] for the first time. All Chinese documents have been translated into very readable German.

The source edition is divided into five main parts that represent, to some extent, the uneven state of research and research gaps on Sino-German relations before 1911 and the challenges of an entangled history through 150 selected archival documents. The first section on ‘proto-colonial relations’ until 1859 opens up new perspectives on Prussian interests and ambitions in China before Prussia’s entry into the treaty system as part of a treaty power in 1861. The early relations between Prussia and Germany and the Qing empire, with the concluding of the formal trade treaty in line with the Treaty of Tientsin, constitute the second section of the source and commentary presentation,

and it is by far the largest part, comprising 190 pages. Eberspächer remarks correctly that despite the huge amount of published and unpublished sources available, both Chinese and Western historians have not considered the relevant relational archival traditions which would shed more light on early relations between the two countries until the age of high imperialism. In particular, for the important Prussian delegation concluding the trade treaty in 1861 as part of the so-called Prussian Eulenburg mission to East Asia, a coherent monograph that uses both Western and Chinese archival sources is still a research desire (p. 18).

Equally, sections three and four on China's representation in Berlin (1866–1908) and the 'asymmetric trade relations' within the colonial system (1863–1906) address themes that have not received the amount of research interest that they deserve. The whole field of weapons export through German military instructors, the competition between Krupp and English weapon producers, industry relations and machinery export, and German discussions on labour and the problematic 'coolie' question for colonial and domestic labour have only gradually been embraced by historiography (pp. 36–41, 411–412). The fifth section on 'cultural transfers and export of education' focuses on the whole question of educational exchange and symbolic politics. The source edition comprises a nuanced introduction both to the joint research project and German, English-language, and Chinese historiography. Each section has a special introduction that embeds the selected sources within a rich interpretation and narrative of each of the five themes. The bibliography indicates the archival holdings, printed source editions, diaries, memoirs and letter collections, and the relevant literature. This is a very diligent and highly useful source edition, which includes a person index.

The selection of and commentary on the sources aim at illustrating the multifaceted history of entangled imperialisms by applying the approach of a *histoire croisée* (pp. 22–23). This is a timely claim but the approach is not without problems, especially when presenting mostly internal administrative and political documents. The introduction admits the fluidity and openness of the concept and claims that the selection of documents pays more attention to the 'interactions and thus entanglements between Prussia-Germany and China' (p. 23). The reader cannot help but wonder how this can be achieved by reading only government archives. The commentary and introductory sections embed the documents within a wider historiographical context and thus indicate interactions below and beyond the level of 'high politics' to reflect the chances and challenges of a *histoire croisée* in research practice. Research on German colonialism in Africa, for example, has shown that the shift to formal and more aggressive colonial politics in the late 1870s and 1880s must take seriously the role of private and associational actors in forging governmental policies. It would be interesting to explore the difference and delay in Germany's China policy, which took until the early 1890s to see such a shift, through more sources. The edition indicates this in document 71, a letter by the German envoy in Beijing, Max von Brandt, to Prince Chun (written in late 1890) outlining the challenges that China faced in the expansion of Japan, Russia, Britain, and France, and the cooperative and less 'imperialist' approach of German politics towards China (pp. 317–319). This source edition is therefore a good starting point for historians looking at China and Germany with a view to individual crossings and their contributions towards a global history in which political agency shifts beyond great powers and high politics. However, research cannot stop there.

The second point is terminology. Categories of colonialism and imperialism remain dominant in ordering the sources and informing the interpretations, but the reader wonders how far the 'incursion into China' ('Das Eindringen in China'—the title of section two) with the Prussian and Customs Union treaty of 1861 is equal to the incursion of Britain and France through the Second Opium War, and what happened to the German sailing

merchant presence serving Chinese merchants and the intra-China sea routes before 1860. The narrative presented in the introduction and sections of the edition bring out the nuances of recent scholarship, but beg the question of how far the underlying assumptions of a 'semi-feudal, semi-colonial' foreign presence that is laid out on Prussia-Germany are not also reflective of a re-emerging theme in ideological discourse and thus partly counter the excellent source findings and their interpretations in the edition. China thought Prussia-Germany a small power (or, rather, a small state, 'xiao guo', p. 27), and even after the Xinhai Revolution in 1912, Sun Yatsen considered Germany as the only 'truthful friend of China' (p. 14). Until the early 1890s, Prussia-Germany played up this perception when stressing its 'special' friendly relations with China as cultural capital against other foreign powers (pp. 13–14, 30).

The third problem is the selection of archives and sources. Given the nature of central archives, the edition is based on government and administrative reports. But the claim of exploring *histoire croisée* and entangled histories means that research should look at the encounters and interactions below and beyond government actors. While the editors of the edition are well aware of this and address the problem in the introduction (pp. 22–23), a history of interactions and encounters within the context of imperialism in the widest sense needs to provide perspective on the world beyond the state or state-related actors and beyond a focus on bilateral encounters from a top-level viewpoint. Research has already taken into account (as the introductions do only in passing) the importance of inter-imperial connections, the claims and practices of Western collaborative policies in China, and the details of German cooperation between both governmental and non-governmental actors on the ground. It is interesting that, for example in Ningbo, the Prussian envoy and consul general fought for their own consular agency against Chinese suggestions that they accept a shared representation with France or Britain in the late 1860s. However, Germany was very happy to ask the US State Department to handle their consular affairs in the 1880s, as the consular files for Ningbo in the German Foreign Office archives (PAAA) indicate (see, for example, PAAA RAV 205_2, no. 921, fol. 45–6 and no. 922, fol. 15). Equally, the rich tradition of Chinese official and semi-official travel reports (published since the early 1980s in a multi-volume edition) and their reflections on encounters with Germany, and the movement for encyclopedias of 'new knowledge' have contributed to the field of encounters and interactions beyond a bilateral perspective. More sources like these would supplement the use of this edition when writing the entangled histories of Sino-German relations before 1911.

Overall, the source edition is a very important, highly relevant, and exemplary contribution to relations between China and Prussia-Germany between the 1830s and the end of the Qing dynasty in 1911. It complements in a fitting way the editions from the multi-volume editorial project on Sino-German relations led by Mechthild Leutner since 1997 ('Quellen zur Geschichte der deutsch-chinesischen Beziehungen 1897 bis 1995') which started with a source edition with commentary on German formal colonialism in China. However, the limitations lie in the aim to reflect the more recent trends in *histoire croisée* due to the nature of the selected and presented archival material. Historians will need to bear in mind that the edition is completely in German. Then they will be in a good position to expand from this excellent base to evaluate different sources and interpret the influence of individuals, networks, and social capital beyond diplomatic correspondences. In summary, this is a source edition that sets a standard for a source-based and reflective study of inter-imperial relations between China and Prussia-Germany in the nineteenth century.