

Birth of the Geopolitical Age is abundantly illustrated with reproductions of plates describing agricultural experiments and town planning projects, among others. It is a pity, however, that there is no bibliography summarizing the rich critical apparatus.

The often-provocative conclusions on the metamorphosis of empires and the new elements of imperial language invite a new interpretation of Chinese ambitions and will no doubt be debated. However, the question remains open as to whether formations as heterogeneous as transnational corporations, the European Union and the *Belt Road Initiative* can be defined as new empires. How will power and law combine in this new configuration of international relations? How can we think about these new imperial policies, which in China's case involve combining surveillance methods linked to an impressive arsenal of high technologies with traditional forms of incarceration and re-education? The merit of *Birth of the Geopolitical Age* is that it raises these crucial issues clearly and forcefully.

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From Missionary Education to Confucius Institutes: Historical Reflections on Sino-American Cultural Exchange

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This book has a number of unique features in that it deals with Sino-American educational interaction over a period of more than a century. While readers will be familiar with iconic figures such as Tao Xingzhi and Hu Shi, students of John Dewey, in this book we meet lesser-known figures who played highly significant roles – Ma Yinchu, Dexter Walcott, Wu Yifang and three women scholars in Home Economics she mentored, Wu Leichuan and Paul Lam Chi-Fung. The four periods covered begin with the transition from the late Qing to the early Republic, the Nanjing decade, the Maoist/Cold War period, and finally China's opening up and the establishment of Confucius Institutes in the US in recent decades.

As a scholar of comparative education, I have always felt that context matters deeply in comparative reflection, also that diachronic comparison can be as interesting as the more common comparison across nations and regions at a given time. What is particularly notable in terms of China and America is how this kind of historical review can give hope, with certain dramatic turning points over the century making possible new and unanticipated developments.

First, let me say that the 14 authors and editors constitute a remarkable group, mainly from the fields of history, anthropology, political science and law, who bring new insights drawing upon documentary and archival sources that are little known. In some cases, interviews were done as well, opening up many new perspectives. As a Canadian who has spent a lifetime doing parallel research on Canada–China educational relations I have found this a fascinating read and will simply try to identify highlights in each section, in the hope of stimulating readers to embrace a topic that could not be more important in these difficult geo-political times.

Part one, dealing with the late Qing and early Republican period, starts with a study of the World Chinese Students' Journal and Federation in Shanghai, where Chinese who had studied in America

were expressing views from their American experience that were more moderate and balanced than the lessons from Japan that directly influenced educational policy. The chapters that follow, on Ma Yinchu and Dexter Walcott, an early American philosophy teacher at Tsinghua from Hamline University in Minnesota, give more details on the kinds of measured influences of American academia in this time of dramatic change. I had always been fascinated by Ma's courage as President of Peking University in the 1950s in speaking out against Mao's population policy and paying for it by nearly 30 years of exile, only to return as honorary president in 1979. This chapter made clear how the roots of that academic courage and integrity were nurtured.

Part two, dealing with the Nanjing decade, the Japanese invasion and subsequent civil war, has chapters that delve deeply into the interface between Confucian and Christian values, with a moving chapter on Wu Leichuan at Yenching University and his extensive explorations into this theme, even while his leadership role as chancellor was overshadowed by John Leighton Stuart. This provides a foundation for understanding the lasting legacy of the Christian universities, which persisted in the normal universities and other public universities of the Communist regime and stimulated considerable new thinking when Deng Xiaoping opened up China to the world. Parallel to this was the dynamic influence of Wu Yifang, one of the first women presidents of a Chinese university and three women scholars in the field of Home Economics whom she mentored and whose influence in the American postwar context is documented in chapter five.

Part three focuses on the Cold War period, with chapters that give insights from both the Nationalist and Communist perspectives. The China Institute that had been established in the 1920s is discussed in chapter seven. It supported Chinese students in America during China's revolutionary war and Communist transformation and the chapter gives insight into the individuals and forces that have persisted until now with US support for Taiwan's independent democratic development. Chapter eight then goes on to look at the impact of China–America relations on students in the mainland during the early Communist years, and how the Korean War was viewed on Chinese campuses. Once again, the complexities and nuances of past Sino-American interaction played out in ways that were sometimes surprising. Chapter nine turns to Hong Kong and the leadership of Lam Chi-Fung in establishing Baptist College, in circumstances where an American funded project faced disadvantages in face of the elitism of the British higher education system of the time.

All the way through this volume one feels that Sino-American interaction has never been one way only, given the richness of China's educational and cultural heritage and the ways in which it was asserted even in the most difficult times. Part four on the Confucius Institutes (CIs) in the US thus brings the volume to a conclusion that highlights the cultural counter force coming from China's rising global status. The three chapters present different dimensions of the experiences of the CIs in the US, which constituted nearly one fifth of the global number in 2017 but had dropped from 103 in 2017 to 47 in 2021. Chapter ten documents this rise and fall, while giving interesting details on the range of activities carried out by CIs in different states and the political and congressional reactions to their presence on American university campuses. Chapter 11 turns to a legal analysis of the contracts between Chinese and American universities that shaped their establishment, showing how the protection of academic freedom is possible within these parameters. Chapter 12 is a masterful anthropological analysis of the discourse around human rights and academic freedom and the ways it can be understood in diverse contexts.

The changing contexts of the four periods covered in this book show fruitful forms of mutual learning in the initiatives of a wide range of individuals and institutions that give us hope for greater openness in future and the kind of balance between strengths on both sides that could nurture our younger generation as cosmopolitan citizens.