# Southeast Review of Asian Studies

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Editors’ Note & Announcement of a “Special Issue” on Taiwanese Art

LI-LING HSIAO & DAVID A. ROSS  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

When we assumed the editorship of the Southeast Review of Asian Studies, Mark Ravina, former president of the Southeast Conference, joked that if our marriage could survive editing a journal featuring a dozen different languages and a half dozen different character sets, it could survive anything. That was a year ago. We’re still married, and if anything the shared trauma of our close-encounter with The Chicago Manual of Style has brought us closer together. It’s true that our pillow talk has taken a strange turn and now revolves around issues like the relative merits of SimSun and MS PMincho, but it never lags. Were our daughter listening through the wall, she would hear us often mention the name of Steve Gump, as in “How do you think Gump did that?”

It was a busy but productive year. The happy thing about editing, as opposed to writing, is that progress is concrete and measurable. The writer may think he’s found the mot juste when in fact he’s only succeeded in making himself pretentious. The editor, on the other hand, progresses undeniably. You can dispute matters of style and interpretation, but you can’t discount the victory of catching a typo or remembering to italicize the ampersand (one of Steve’s more elegant innovations — behold: &). Each day brought a gratifying sense of one foot put in front of the other.

The present volume indicates the active, varied intellectual life of the Southeast Conference of the Association for Asian Studies (SEC/AAS), an organization with a long and proud history and plenty of vigor going forward. Some twenty scholars from the U.S. and Asia contributed to this issue, sharing their expertise in archeology, art, dance, economics, film, history, literature, political science, and religion. During our year of work on this issue, we developed new interests and rediscovered old interests, and we hope that you will do the same.

Like all first endeavors, ours leaves room for improvement. We would like to encourage more discussion of certain nations (Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, etc.) that are underrepresented in this volume. We would also like to urge more attention to the Asian influence on Western culture, as reflected, for example, in the paintings of Édouard Vuillard and the architecture of Greene & Greene and the poetry of J.H. Prynne — the avenues of
possible investigation are endless. This kind of exploration serves the normal intellectual purposes, but also serves as a salutary reminder, amid unease about “cultural imperialism” and anxieties about globalization, that the nations benefit from eavesdropping on each other’s genius. Finally, we would like to encourage a certain freedom from academic convention, to which end we have loosened the definition of the “scholarly note” to include original works of art, interviews, poems, translations, and personal memoirs, and renamed the note section “Essays & Ideas.” The academic article has the advantage of rigor but the disadvantage of a tendency toward jargon and formula. We hope to strike a better balance between the professional voice and the personal voice, starting with our next issue.

In both large and small ways, we benefited from the help of others. Steve Gump, the former editor, left us a purring engine that we had merely to avoid gumming up. His innovations were numerous and his attention to detail was microscopic. We regularly solicited Steve’s advice, and he invariably responded with long and detailed disquisitions, often within the hour. We only hope that we have lived up to his example and preserved his legacy intact. Tom Pynn, our associate editor, midwifed a diverse selection of scholarly notes and book reviews. We thank him heartily for his expertise and for his patience with a process that was sometimes a bit discombobulated. The members of the Editorial Advisory Board, listed on the inside front cover of this volume, provided help and advice, and the members of the SEC governing board provided crucial institutional and financial support. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill provided additional financial support. Jan Bardsley, chair of the Department of Asian Studies, was particularly instrumental in securing UNC’s patronage. Our fellow North Carolinian Ken Berger yet again justified the word “master” in the title “web master,” and we owe him our thanks for making this issue of SERAS available on the worldwide web. Please see the fruits of his labor at http://www.uky.edu/Centers/Asia/SECAAS/Seras/2010/2010TOC.html.

Twenty-five colleagues reviewed submissions this year. Peer-reviewing is a thankless task, but we would like to make it a little less so by mentioning those who helped. They are John Caldwell (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill); Qing Chang (Washington University in St. Louis); Cal Clark (Auburn University); Mark Driscoll (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill); Hal French (University of South Carolina); Steve Geiz (University of Tampa); Jie Guo (University of South Carolina); Jinn-yu Hsu (National Taiwan University); Sarah Jorgensen (University of Tennessee at Chattanooga); Jieli Li (Ohio University); Hsiao-ting Lin (Stanford University); Wei-cheng Lin (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill); Ronnie Littlejohn (Belmont University); Daniel A. Métraux (Mary Baldwin College); Rana Mitter (Oxford University); Masako Osada (a freelance journalist in Johannesburg); Richard Rice (University of Tennessee at Chattanooga); James Robson (Harvard Uni-
versity); Mike Smitka (Washington and Lee University); Steve Tsang (Oxford University); Michelle Wang (Georgetown University); Tan Ye (University of South Carolina); Xiaohong Yu (Harvard University); and Jing Zhang (New College of Florida). We thank all of these specialists for contributing their time and expertise to SERAS.

We encourage you to consult the “Instructions for Authors” (pp. viii–xii) and to begin work on material for next year’s volume. SERAS is eager to receive submissions touching on all aspects of Asian society and culture, past and present. No subject should be considered too eccentric or obscure, as long as it falls generally within the purview of the humanities and social sciences and within the geographical bounds marked by India to the southwest, China to the west, and Mongolia to the north.

Our next issue, we are excited to announce, will be a special issue devoted—though by no means exclusively—to the fine art of Taiwan. We welcome your comments and suggestions and most of all your contributions. We await your queries and creativity at seraseditors@hotmail.com.
I welcome you to the thirty-second issue of the Southeast Review of Asian Studies. This is a pivotal year for the journal as we mark important milestones both in the development of the journal itself and in the history of its parent organization, the Southeast Conference of the Association for Asian Studies, which will celebrate its fiftieth anniversary this year.

There is first a change in editorial leadership. This year SERAS has the great good fortune to welcome the brilliantly capable team of Li-ling Hsiao and David Ross, both of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. They take over from Steve Gump, whose vision, meticulousness, and seemingly indefatigable dedication since 2006 transformed the journal into what it is today. We knew that Steve and the editorial board he assembled would be an extremely tough act to follow, but Professors Hsiao and Ross have already shown themselves to be of much the same mettle, and we all are very grateful for the unique set of talents they bring to the journal.

I also thank Professor Daniel Métraux for his long and devoted presence in SEC/AAS, culminating (but by no means ending) in his term last year as president of the organization. Professor Métraux’s high standards of scholarship and intellectual rigor have always been inspiring to those of us in Japanese studies; his experience, steady guidance, and graciousness as SEC/AAS president have given even more reason for admiration and appreciation.

Also, I would like to thank Shiping Hua, director of the University of Louisville’s Center for Asian Democracy, for his tremendous hard work hosting the impressive 2010 conference. The 2011 conference will be held at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with the theme “Transnational Asia: Art, History, Popular Culture, and Political Economics.” My thanks to Dr. Wei-cheng Lin and Dr. Jan Bardsley for all of their efforts.

Finally, I wish to thank Professors Charlotte Beahan, Susan Walcott, Kenneth Berger, and Harry Kuoshu for their tireless work on behalf of the SEC/AAS.
Instructions for Authors

About the Journal

The Southeast Review of Asian Studies (SERAS) is a peer-reviewed scholarly journal. The Southeast Conference of the Association for Asian Studies (SEC/AAS) has published SERAS and its predecessor, the Annals of the Southeast Conference, annually since 1979. We welcome articles, shorter essays, book reviews, and other forms of scholarship that relate to East Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, including anthropology, art history, cinema studies, economics, education, ethnomusicology, history, language and linguistics, literature, philosophy, political science, religious studies, and sociology. All authors should strive to address the interests of our broad, multidisciplinary readership by presenting work that goes beyond narrow research specialties.

As the publication of a regional conference, SERAS promotes and supports research on Asia by authors with institutional affiliations in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia. Submissions from authors outside this region are also welcome, but contributors are encouraged to become members of the SEC/AAS and to present their research at the SEC/AAS annual meeting. For membership and conference information, see http://www.uky.edu/Centers/Asia/SECAAS.

You may draft your submissions as articles to be peer-reviewed, or as briefer “essays and ideas” to be reviewed by the editors. We also welcome reviews of scholarly monographs, edited volumes, literary works, or other works issued within the previous two years. English-language reviews of non-English-language works are welcome, as are reviews of works written, edited, or translated by members of the SEC/AAS. Please let us know if you have recently published a relevant work; we would be happy to find a qualified reviewer. Alternative forms of scholarship will certainly be considered; please consult with the editors.

Submission deadlines are March 1 for articles and May 1 for essays & ideas and for book reviews. Please consult and follow the specific preparation and submission guidelines below (also accessible at http://www.uky.edu/Centers/Asia/SECAAS/seras.html).
Manuscript Preparation

Manuscripts submitted to SERAS should be previously unpublished and should not be under review for publication elsewhere. Articles in SERAS represent neither the views of the Southeast Conference of the Association for Asian Studies nor those of members of the SERAS editorial board. The editors are responsible for the final selection of content and reserve the right to reject any material deemed inappropriate for publication. Individual authors are solely responsible for content of their own material.

Prepare manuscripts in 12-point type with 1-inch margins, double spacing throughout (including notes and references). If possible, format your manuscripts for letter-size (8½ × 11-inch) paper. Please adhere to the word limits indicated for each type of submission. Include notes in the word count, but exclude the abstract, references, tables, and figure captions (if applicable).

With the exception of book reviews, provide your manuscript with a short, descriptive, and – ideally – interest-piquing title. Include descriptive headings and subheadings to help readers follow the organization of the piece. (The headings “Introduction” and “Conclusion,” although “descriptive,” are not particularly helpful. Please use headings reflective of the actual content, not the rhetorical structure, of your presentation.)

Notes should be as few as possible and should appear at the end of the text. Use parenthetical in-text citation and author–date formatting for references as per The Chicago Manual of Style, 15th edition, pp. 620–4. A full list of works cited within the manuscript (headed “References”) should follow the text. Asian-language references should include Romanized forms and translations; see examples below and elsewhere in this volume for models. Ensure that the list is complete and includes only items cited within the manuscript itself.

On the title page of your manuscript submission, please include the word count of your submission as well as your name, affiliation, e-mail address, and complete mailing address. This page will be removed before sending the document (electronically) for double-blind reviewing.

We will acknowledge submissions by e-mail within one week of receipt. Authors of articles that have been accepted for publication will receive written responses from reviewers and will have approximately one month to revise their manuscripts accordingly. Authors will be expected to submit a brief biographical statement for use in the “Contributors” section. In late summer, final versions of accepted articles will be edited for accuracy and style, and page proofs will be sent electronically to authors for review prior to publication. SERAS is printed in early autumn. We will mail copies to contributors before the end of the year and distribute copies to all attendees of the SEC/AAS annual meeting the following January.
Asian Languages

Note that Asian scripts are supported by SERAS. Please include them in your texts to clarify names, terms, places, phrases, and expressions. On first reference, give Romanization followed by characters followed by English translation in parentheses:

_Huanghe Juelian_ 黄河绝恋 (_Grief over the Yellow River_)

Alternately, give English translation followed by Romanization and characters in parentheses:

_Grief over the Yellow River_ (Huanghe Juelian 黄河绝恋)

If you have opted to use Romanization on second reference and throughout, utilize the former template; if you have opted to use English on second reference and throughout, utilize the latter. We recommend using Romanization throughout when there is no standard and well-known English translation; we recommend using English throughout when there is (e.g., _The Analects, Raise the Red Lantern_).

Italize all Romanizations with the exception of proper names and direct quotations from source texts. When quoting, place both the Romanized language and English translation in quotation marks. Examples:

Indian poetry must be heard aloud, as for example in a _musha’ira_ (مُشاعر) (a recital in which multiple poets participate).

Akbar flies into a rage and insults Anarkali, calling her “naachti titli” (نائچئی تثلی) (“dancing butterfly”).

In reference lists, give Romanizations followed by characters followed by English translation in brackets, as follows:


The above rules apply equally to Japanese, Korean, etc.

For Chinese, use full-form or simplified characters as appropriate to the context and in accordance with the practice of the relevant text. The names of Tang poets, for example, should be rendered in full-form characters; the names of contemporary Chinese political leaders should be rendered in simplified characters. Chinese characters, whether full-form or simplified, should be rendered in SimSun font; Japanese characters in MS Mincho;
Korean characters in Batang. Chinese words should be Romanized according to the Hanyu Pinyin system; Japanese words according to the Hepburn system; Korean words according to the Revised system. For other languages, please consult with the editors.

Many SERAS contributors are non-native speakers of English, and we are committed to helping them polish their language. We cannot accept articles, however, that require the editor to become an effective co-author.

## Spacing, Punctuation & Usage

All indentations should be ¼ inch. Sentences should be separated by a single space. For parenthetical insertions, use en dashes with spaces on either side:

> An aborted mountain accidentally becomes an experiment in pure form and rhythm, anticipating – very closely – a painting like Jackson Pollock's *Yellow Islands* (1952).

For terminal asides, use em dashes with spaces on either side:

> Whether or not the dancers’ movements are actually hindered, the dress gives the impression that they are hindered and leaves the viewer cringing in expectation of split seams and bared bottoms — the balletic equivalent of Janet Jackson’s infamous “wardrobe malfunction.”

For number and date ranges, use en dashes without spaces on either side: 128–30, 128–9, 1011–2. For ellipses, use the “rigorous method” described in *The Chicago Manual of Style*, pp. 462–3. Dates should be rendered this way: July 31, 1992. On first reference to figures central to the discussion, give birth and death dates in parentheses, as follows:

> No modern Chinese painter was more rigorously traditional than Huang Binhong 黃賓虹 (1865–1955) but his art is perplexing nonetheless.

## Tables, Figures & Images

Tables, figures, and images must include titles or captions. These should not be embedded in the manuscript file but should be sent as separate attachments. Contributors are responsible for obtaining permission to reproduce any materials, including photographs and illustrations, for which they do not hold copyright and for ensuring that the appropriate acknowledgments are included in the manuscript.
Guidelines for Articles

In addition to following the general manuscript guidelines, preface your article submission (word count range of 5,000–7,500 words) with a 100–150-word abstract that conveys the central focus of the piece. The submission deadline for articles is March 1. Please direct all article-related inquiries to the editors (seraseditors@hotmail.com).

Guidelines for Essays & Ideas (formerly Scholarly Notes)

This section features shorter academic essays, original works of art, interviews, poems, translations, journalistic pieces, and personal memoirs. The tone may be either academic or personal. Submissions should be fewer than 5,000 words, and significantly shorter submissions are most welcome. The deadline for essays and ideas is May 1. Please follow the general manuscript guidelines, and direct all inquiries to the editors (seraseditors@hotmail.com), sooner rather than later.

Guidelines for Book Reviews

SERAS accepts reviews of books published within the past two years. Reviews submitted by May 1, 2011, for example, should address works published no earlier than 2009. Reviews of single works should be approximately 750–1,500 words; reviews of multiple complementary works should be no longer than 3,000 words. Preface all reviews with full citations, including numbers of pages, for the book (or books) under review. Examples for a monograph and an edited volume:


Citations of the work being reviewed should be made parenthetically and should include only the page number. All direct quotations from the reviewed work should be followed by citations. Citation of other works should follow the guidelines enumerated under “Manuscript Preparation.” The submission deadline for book reviews is May 1.
Contributors

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Steven E. Gump (sgump@illinois.edu), a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Educational Organization and Leadership at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, has a background in Asian studies, religious studies, and business administration. He is currently studying faculty work life at comprehensive colleges and universities. Originally from Richmond, Kentucky, he served as editor of the Southeast Review of Asian Studies from 2007 to 2009.

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Linda M. Johnston (ljohnst9@kennesaw.edu) is director of the Center for Conflict Management and associate professor of Conflict Management at Kennesaw State University in Kennesaw, Georgia. Her research interests include racial and ethnic conflict, bullying, sports-related violence, health-related conflict, narrative and discourse theory, and world-view theory. She has done conflict resolution work in Ukraine, Republic of Georgia, Barbados, Nigeria, Egypt, and the United States. Dr. Johnston is the president of the International Peace Research Association Foundation.

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**Yuxin Ma** (yuxin.ma@louisville.edu) received a doctorate in East Asian History from the University of Minnesota in 2003. She was an assistant professor at Armstrong Atlantic State University from 2003 to 2006 and has been an assistant professor at the University of Louisville since 2006. Her first book *Women Journalists and Feminism in China, 1898–1937* (Cambria Press) was published in 2010. Her articles have appeared in *Women’s History Review, Gender Issues, Twentieth Century China, Studies on Asia, Japan Studies Review, Virginia Review of Asian Studies*, and *Journals of the Georgia Association of Historians*.

**Daniel A. Métraux** (dmetraux@mbc.edu) is professor of Asian studies at Mary Baldwin College and adjunct professor of graduate history and culture at Union Institute & University. He served as president of the Southeast Conference of the Association for Asian Studies in 2009. Dr. Métraux has written several books and many articles on Japanese and East Asian history and politics with a focus on Japan’s Soka Gakkai Buddhist movement. His latest book is *The Asian Writings of Jack London*.

**Tom Pynn** (tpynn@kennesaw.edu) is assistant professor in philosophy and coordinator of the Peace Studies Program at Kennesaw State University in Kennesaw, Georgia. His interests in Asian studies include Daoism, Buddhist ontology and ethics, and Yoga philosophy. Recently, he has examined Daoism and Asian philosophical contributions to Peace Studies.

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Yipeng Shen (yipeng.shen@trincoll.edu) was born in Jiangsu, China. He received a B.A. from Nanjing University and an M.A. from National University of Singapore. He received his Ph.D. in 2010 from the Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures at the University of Oregon and currently serves as assistant professor of language and culture studies and international studies at Trinity College in Hartford, CT. His dissertation is entitled “In the Heat of Sentiments: Nationalism, Postsocialism, and Popular Culture in China, 1988–2007.”

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Chiaki Takagi (c_takagi@uncg.edu) is a lecturer in the Department of German, Russian, Japanese, and Chinese Studies at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, as well as director of Japanese Studies. She received an M.A. in African-American literature from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical University and a Ph.D. in English with a concentration in postcolonial theory from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Her research focuses on comparative analysis of the works of Haruki Murakami. She recently published another Murakami-related article in the Virginia Review of Asian Studies.

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Reflections of the Last Editor of the
*Annals* of the Southeast Conference

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I succeeded Hal French to become the third editor of the *Annals*, coming to the position by a convoluted path. It began with a discussion with Frank Joseph Shulman, the eminent bibliographer, at the 1984 meeting of the SEC/AAS. Frank had long advised me in my career in Asian studies, perhaps because we shared some similarities in our backgrounds: both lacking Ph.D.s in organizations (our chosen AAS regional conferences) top heavy with them and being professional librarians largely in the company of teaching faculty.

In this instance he suggested that I establish an archive for the SEC based at my employing institution, Duke University. Intrigued by the idea, I won the support of the executive committee of the SEC and then of the Manuscripts Department of Perkins Library at Duke, where I worked half-time as a cataloger and half-time in the Reference Department.

So I became the first and, as it turned out, the only archivist of the SEC, which remains the only regional conference with an archive. The SEC was unsure where I should reside in the structure of the organization. In the end, I was placed under the *Annals* and its editor Hal French.

Then came the second piece of the puzzle. As Hal mentioned in his reflective piece in last year’s *SERAS*, I edited a couple of volumes dealing with archival and manuscript resources in North Carolina and Georgia based on three panels I had chaired at annual meetings. In the process I was named occasional papers editor, and became a designated member of the *Annals* editorial board. After a few years experience in those roles, Hal asked me to succeed him as editor. I probably sealed the deal with a demonstration of self-sacrifice on behalf of our publishing empire. At the end of the 1986 meeting in Raleigh, NC, I discovered that the McKimmon Center staff had discarded dozens of copies of our publications. I had to climb into a dumpster, and I was able to get many copies out in good shape — just minutes before the arrival of a rainstorm!
During my five-year term from 1989 to 1994, I maintained the *Annals* as it had been introduced by my predecessors: articles chosen among those present at the preceding meeting; abstracts of papers presented; a list of officers and other attendees; proceedings of the annual business meeting; and the meeting program as it actually occurred (as best we could determine). This was a time of technological change, and we gradually implemented a policy that manuscripts should be submitted on floppy disks (!), but as I had no administrative or secretarial support, I had to convert many papers using a single-sheet feed scanner and an optical character recognition (OCR) program.

SERAS’s administrative structure evolved during my years as editor. It included, at different times, a manuscript editor and an abstracts editor; consistency was maintained, however, by designated consulting editors. Among the most important editorial contributors were Molly Spitzer Frost, John Seabury Thomson, Dottie Borei, Richard Rice, Lawrence Kessler, and Daniel Métraux (the last two later became editors of the journal). There were many scholars, including those active in our organization and those not so much, who shared their expertise by reviewing submitted manuscripts. Finally, there were the invaluable contributions of our business manager, my friend and colleague at Duke, Avinash Maheshwary. Not only did he handle finances and subscriptions, but also his extensive years of experience and contacts in publishing meant that the final production was always in competent hands.

My successor, Larry Kessler, instituted several major changes to the journal, including the name change to the *Southeast Review of Asian Studies*. He also shifted from the 8½ by 11–inch format to a more standard 6 by 9–inch. Larry will discuss his editorship in a later article, I am sure, but I mention these developments to mark the beginning of the evolution from a publication primarily of interest to members of the organization to a truly national scholarly journal. The sixth and seventh editors, Daniel Métraux and Steve Gump, included many features not related to the previous annual meeting of the conference. While I personally mourn the loss of an identity that reflected the personal ties to a small and very collegial regional conference, I am in awe of their successful creation of a respected journal held by more than 120 libraries.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude for the opportunities afforded this casual Asianist. Though I lacked something of the pedigree of most of the conference’s membership, I was accorded the honor of serving as editor of the *Annals*. In addition, I was honored to serve as president of the organization, as its only archivist, and as its only and continuing web master. More than that, it has been an honor and distinct pleasure to work with so many fine scholars and friends.
Anti-Asian Agitation in South Africa in the 1930s: Reactions to the “Japanese Treaty” and “Honorary White” Status

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The concern of white South Africans about growing Asian economic and political power peaked during the Great Depression when a dramatic rise in Japanese imports and fear of Japanese immigration led some whites to evoke the specter of a Yellow Peril. South African whites were torn between their desire to attract Japanese buyers of wool and their desire to limit Japanese imports that competed with their new industrial goods. This tension led to a spirited debate in newspapers during the early 1930s, which reveals growing concern about Japanese economic and political expansion in the decade before World War II.

During the Great Depression, many white South Africans expressed great concern about the “threat” of growing Japanese influence in the Union of South Africa. This fear was sparked when word leaked that the Union had concluded a “Gentleman’s Agreement” with Japan in October 1930, and alarm increased with the rapid growth of Japanese exports to the Union over the next few years (Bradshaw 1992, 242; Osada 2003, 198; Sono 1993, 317). While some South African leaders regarded the granting of special status to a few Japanese as necessary to facilitate Japan’s purchase of South African wool, many whites argued that Japanese would begin purchasing land and settling in the Union and that Japan’s exports would hurt nascent South African industries. The specter of a “Yellow Peril” was even used to support the idea that South African whites needed to unite in the face of this threat (Chilvers 1933).

Studies of the Yellow Peril “threat” (Rupert 1911; Thompson 1976; Hirakara 1985; Clegg 1994; Mehnert 1995; Naka 1997; Daniels 1999) have focused on Germany (Gollwitzer 1962), the United States (Hoppenstand 1983; Mugridge 1995, 46–59; Sharp 2007, 107–20; Wu 1982, 3), Great Britain
R. Bradshaw & J. Ransdell


This article examines the debate about growing Japanese influence in South Africa in the early 1930s, particularly as it appeared in the often controversial Rand Daily Mail (Gibson 2007). The anti-Asian agitation that emerged in South Africa during the Great Depression had both local and international consequences. Locally, it was used by advocates of British-Boer “harmony” to promote the establishment of a unity government that increasingly favored tighter controls on “yellow” and “black” peoples. On an international level, it was part of the rise of anti-Asian sentiment and the restriction of Japanese exports to its vital “new markets” such as South Africa in the early 1930s, which contributed to the decision by Japan’s leaders to refocus their efforts on securing a “Co-Prosperity Sphere” in Asia (Dietrich 1938; Bradshaw 1992).

The Growth of Anti-Asian Agitation in South Africa

A few Asians from the East Indies (now Indonesia) were brought to South Africa by the Dutch East India Company (DEIC) soon after it established a fort at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652. Some Dutch settlers at the Cape expressed distrust of these often Muslim “Malays,” but it was not until the late nineteenth century, when indentured servants from British India were contracted to work in the sugar plantations of Natal along the southern coast of South Africa, that whites in this British colony began to express fears about the increasing number of Asians in South Africa. Many Indians who completed their period of indentured service opted to remain in South Africa and often became merchants. By 1896, Natal’s population of Indians (51,000) exceeded the number of whites (50,000), which gave rise to white fears of an “Asian peril.” Whites began to pass discriminatory legislation against Indians, who responded by forming an Indian Natal Congress to fight for their rights. By World War I, campaigns by South African Indians against various forms of discrimination had increased the concern of many whites about the presence of Asians in the Union (Worden et al. 1998, 128; Henning 1993; Bhana 1997; Copley 1987, 19, 24; Saqaf 2009).

By this time, South Africans had also become increasingly concerned about growing Japanese influence in South Africa. World War I provided Japan with the opportunity to increase the value of its exports to South Africa.
by almost 4,000 percent. In 1914 the value of these exports more than doubled, reaching one million yen. Over the next few years Japanese exports rose to over 18 million yen per annum before dropping to a little over 8 million yen in 1919 (Bradshaw 1992). After World War I, Japan’s share of trade with the Union declined, but by 1926 the falling cost of cotton thread and favorable exchange rates gave Japanese goods a new opportunity in South Africa (Morikawa 1988, 7). The Japanese Consul at Cape Town submitted a report in 1927 on South Africa that was further intended to encourage Japanese commerce and industry in South Africa (Kitagawa 2003). During the 1920s, Japanese exports to the Union of silk products, cotton textiles, clothing, and other goods grew to such an extent that South African protectionists began to express concern.

A Nationalist-Labor Pact government led by General Barry Hertzog, who served as prime minister of South Africa from 1924–1939, enacted a tariff reform in 1925 that was designed to stimulate the development of South African industry. The steady growth of Japanese imports threatened to undermine the ability of South African industries to attain their full potential. Japanese imports included a considerable quantity of clothing, a category of consumer good that South African industry was attempting to provide (Bradshaw 1992). Because of the limited size of the South African market and a relative lack of capital and technical ability (Houghton 1973, 119), many of South Africa’s new factories were engaged in the manufacture of clothing from semi-finished products, and these consumer goods competed with Japanese products.

While Japanese exports to South Africa were increasing, anti-Asian and segregationist legislation was on the rise in the Union. The 1913 Immigration Act, which was aimed at halting Indian immigration into South Africa, prohibited Japanese from residing or doing business in South Africa. In late 1916, the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce sent Nunokawa Magoichi 布川孫 to investigate commercial conditions in South Africa. Nunokawa attempted to negotiate an agreement with the Union government that would have exempted the Japanese from the 1913 Act, but his efforts failed. In 1918, the Japanese opened an office for a representative in Cape Town and continued to work to end discrimination against Japanese citizens in South Africa (Kitagawa 2003, 28–29).

During the 1920s, Prime Minister Hertzog pushed for greater segregation. In the elections of June 1929, he focused on the threat of a Swart Gevaar or “Black Peril” (Worden 2000, 87). Whites’ growing fears of Black as well as Asian “perils” made it difficult for Japanese representatives in South Africa to make any progress in their efforts to exempt their countrymen from legislation. In October 1930, the Great Depression hit South Africa and soon led to a rapid decline in South Africa’s wool exports. The Union thus felt a need to attract buyers for this important export (MOFA, E.4.3.2.2–2; Bradshaw
1992; Kitagawa 2003, 26–37). Between 1925 and 1932, the average price of wool fell from 8.2 to 1.7 cents per kg. (Houghton 1973, 53), to which wool growers responded by increasing their output, which only helped to drive prices down. Between 1928–9 and 1932–3 the value of wool exports from the Union fell by over 70 percent (O’Meara 1983, 37). Therefore Hertzog’s cabinet decided to lift restrictions on Japanese residence and movement within the Cape and Natal in hopes of attracting Japanese buyers to wool auctions in those provinces.

On September 2, 1930, the Union Ministry of Agriculture decided to permit Japanese wool purchasers to enter South Africa. On October 16, 1930, the acting Japanese consul in Cape Town, Yamasaki Sakashige and the Union’s acting external affairs secretary, W.G.H. Farrell, exchanged notes, reaching agreement that Pretoria would, upon the recommendation of the Japanese consul, grant a temporary permit valid for one year to Japanese tourists, students, wholesale merchants, and purchasers of South African goods to enter and reside in the Union. The agreement stated that “no Japanese subject whose admission is recommended by the Consul for Japan in terms of this understanding will be served on arrival at a Union port with a notice declaring him to be a prohibited immigrant” (Osada 2002, 39). This “exchange of notes” was done quietly in order to avoid parliamentary discussion and ratification, but word of this agreement soon leaked and the sparks soon began to fly.

**Growing Fear of a “Yellow Peril”**

Criticism of the “Gentleman’s Agreement” began in March 1931 when General Jan Smuts voiced his strong opposition in the Union of South Africa’s Parliament, and it continued throughout the summer. Smuts expressed anger that there had been no discussion of the matter in Parliament and added: “I don’t think that of the various international agreements which the Government has concluded during the last few years there is a single one of more far reaching scope and importance than this so-called gentleman’s agreement with the Japanese Government.” Smuts went on to question the compatibility of this agreement with the Immigration Act of 1913, which prohibited immigration into the Union of any person unable to read and write in a European language to the satisfaction of an immigration officer and was obviously aimed at excluding Asians. Interior minister Dr. D.R. Malan replied that the agreement “was a matter of the administration of the existing law” which had “nothing to do with the Act” (Hansard March 2, 1931; Osada 2002, 39–40). Smuts insisted that entry of Asian people and products posed a serious threat to the Union’s economy and that the agreement placed South Africa “at the beginning of a new and very grave departure, the result of which may be more harmful than any of us can see today.” Malan, who became
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prime minister after World War II and is famous for promoting a policy of apartheid, argued that “any refusal of the opportunities of markets for South Africa whether in Japan, China or India is nothing else than a short-sighted policy” (*Hansard* March 2, 1931; Osada 2002, 40).

A memorandum dated April 16, 1931, and signed by members of all political parties, cited numerous economic, social and political reasons for restricting the category of Japanese who would be allowed to enter the Union under this agreement. Critics feared, above all, that Japanese stores would soon proliferate throughout the country. In response to a question raised in this regard during debates in the Assembly on July 5, 1931, Malan ridiculed the idea that the Union would be overrun by Japanese retail traders, factory employees, and farm hands, but he also disagreed with the suggestion of the treaty’s critics that only Japanese wholesale buyers should be allowed admittance into the country (*Hansard* July 5, 1931).

A few days later, a letter from Arthur G. Barlow in the *Rand Daily Mail*, a leading Johannesburg newspaper, charged that by the terms of the treaty:

> A Japanese wholesale firm may establish itself anywhere in South Africa (except the Orange Free State, where by statute, no Asiatics are permitted to live) and carry on business selling any class of goods, and utilising a hundred percent Japanese staff. As there is no law to prohibit a merchant who has a wholesale license from selling direct to the public, the Agreement means that these wholesale traders can do a retail business. (*RDM*, July 11, 1931)

Barlow noted that by 1921, the last time the census had been taken, that there were already ninety-eight Japanese residents in the Union. At present, he warned, “one of the biggest merchant princes of Japan is visiting us with an eye to establishing wholesale houses in this country.” The Japanese, he added, were busy “spying out the land” (*RDM*, July 11, 1931).

Smuts voiced another objection to the treaty, arguing that if other Asian nations “like China” were to ask for privileges of a similar nature the Union would be obliged to grant them. He argued that “it would be quite impossible to keep out Asiatic immigrants once [the Union] had very large trade relations with the East” (Chilvers 1933, 228–9). Even Mrs. Smuts spoke out against the treaty in public. At a South African Party gathering, she condemned the treaty and argued that:

> We are already having a good deal of trouble with the Indians in this country, and now the Government proposes to introduce a yellow race into South Africa, the strongest and most powerful yellow race in the world. Once they are in we shall never succeed in getting rid of them. (*Rhodesia Herald* March 5, 1931)

The remarkable rise in imports of Japanese shoes was particularly noted. During the first quarter of 1930, South Africa had imported 75,672 pairs of Japanese shoes, the value of which were estimated at about 6,000 pounds
By the final quarter of 1930, these imports were valued at a little over 50,000 pounds (US$241,895) with the number of Japanese shoes having risen to more than 840,000 pairs. Imports of artificial silk and cotton goods were also undergoing a “colossal increase” (*RDM*, July 8, 1931).

There were attempts in the press to demonstrate exactly how the “dumping” of goods from Japan would hurt local trade. After praising South Africa’s “flourishing and excellent boot and shoe industry,” a critic noted that Japanese shoes, or “plimsolls,” were “selling like hotcakes” for about 1s.6d. to 2s. (about US$.50) a pair. The “poorer of the coloured folk” in Cape Town, he noted, were buying them for as little as 3s. (about US$.75) a pair. These “plimsolls” were threatening the sale of the locally made *velskoen*, which sold for 5s.6d. (about US$1.35) a pair. Afrikaners had formerly been in the habit of describing Japanese goods as “schlenter,” or of low quality, but they now admitted that they were “top-hole stuff.” It was thus recommended that the Union impose a 2s. minimum tariff on some types of footwear, especially plimsolls (*RDM*, July 13, 1931).

The same critic warned that the Japanese were taking samples of South African goods to Japan and studying how to make cheaper ones. Thousands of khaki military shirts were being sold, sometimes for as little as 20s. (US$4.84) per dozen, an amount the South African manufacturers complained would only cover the costs of their material. One Japanese pencil was selling for only 1s. 11d. (about US$.45) per gross at Durban and was a deceitful imitation of a much better English pencil that wholesaled for 27s. (US$6.53) per gross. It would not be long before the Japanese started to sell “these pencils for use in the Civil Service!” Pocket-books and various types of stationary were selling for so little that South Africans had a “duty to keep the goods out.” As for labor, it was pointed out that many working girls might lose their jobs. Some of the girls who would be affected, it was stressed, were the daughters of laborers suffering from miner’s phthisis (*RDM*, July 15, 1931).

The acting consul for Japan in Cape Town at this time, Mr. Hongo 本郷, made efforts to counter this rising tide of anti-Asian agitation. He vigorously denied the rumors that the Japanese were setting up warehouses all over the Union. In fact, he asserted, not a single Japanese warehouse had been established during the first nine months since the signing of the agreement. As for the question of commercial competition, Hongo placed the blame on the South African businessmen themselves, who, he claimed, competed unnecessarily among themselves. South Africans, he suggested, should take advantage of the fact that the Japanese were so Westernized and so numerous, by which he meant that Japan was an underdeveloped market for South African goods (*RDM*, July 15, 1931). On another occasion the Japanese consul let it be known that as a result of his having shown samples of South African wool to potential buyers in Japan, a number of Japanese buyers were planning to
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purchase increased quantities of certain wools during the next season (RDM, July 8, 1931).

Critics of the treaty were even reminded that during World War I the Japanese fleet had protected South Africa shores. Now there were those who were insulting the Japanese “gratuitously” and preventing their immigration into the Union but were still willing to accept “deposits from them” (RDM, July 25, 1931).

Nevertheless, criticism persisted. In July 1931, at a public meeting in Johannesburg in the Transvaal Province, a prominent lawyer and member of Parliament, Colonel C. F. Stallard, a strong opponent of Asian immigration, claimed that there “had seldom been a matter which had struck deeper at the roots of the prosperity of South Africa.” The Union of South Africa was opposed to an influx of Asians “who could not be assimilated...and live in accordance with civilized standards” (RDM, July 14, 1931).

Members of Prime Minister Hertzog’s cabinet appeared unwavering in their support of the treaty but were frustrated by the attempt of its critics to link the question of the treaty with that of increased Japanese imports. On July 16, the labor minister, Colonel Cresswell, and Dr. Malan went to inspect certain industries at Germiston, a manufacturing center east of Johannesburg. They were immediately confronted with complaints of competition from Japanese goods. A representative of Germiston Clothing Manufacturers pointed out that khaki shirts from Japan were being sold at Durban at 33s.6d. (about US$8) per dozen while his own firm’s shirts were selling for 40s. (about US$10) per dozen locally. Creswell defended the treaty by insisting that the agreement had nothing to do with the importation of Japanese goods. He also commented that the very people who had formerly been so intent that the government should not raise tariffs were now, for motives that appeared self-serving, raising “a howl” about the treaty with Japan. Further complaints were then raised regarding “yellow standards of living,” which, it was claimed, were at the root of the problem. Dr. Malan was compelled to explain, once again, that the Japanese treaty was in no way related to the problem of Japanese imports (RDM, July 17, 1931).

Nevertheless, the treaty was apparently linked in the minds of the public with the growth of Japanese imports, and the government found itself having to explain the disadvantages of raising tariffs. Cabinet members argued that the low prices of Japanese goods ultimately benefited the South African consumer. The poor, they pointed out, were now able to afford shoes for the first time. In any case, if a “wage tariff” were to be imposed on the Japanese goods, it was argued, would it not have to be imposed on goods from Germany and Great Britain as well? That would lead to serious diplomatic problems, something to be avoided at all costs (RDM, July 17, 1931). When questioned during Parliamentary debate about the “serious effects to South African industries created by the importations of Japanese rubber-soled shoes,” the minis-
ter of mines and industries replied that the government did not intend to increase the protective duty of 30 percent that was already in force (Hansard XVII June 2, 1931, 4707).

General Kemp, the minister of agriculture, defended the treaty on the grounds that prices for South African consumers would be cheaper. He also stressed the prospect that the treaty would lead to the capture by the Union of new markets in the East as well as encourage the Japanese to buy more wool (RDM, July 8, 1931).

Clearly, hope that the Japanese would purchase more wool lay behind the controversial treaty. And yet, before the year was out, Hertzog’s government would decide not to follow Britain in abandoning the gold standard, a decision that had the effect of reducing Japanese demand for South African wool. Thus what the cabinet had hoped to achieve by the conclusion of the Japanese Treaty was undone by its reluctance to allow the South African pound to fall in value.

The Gold Standard Crisis in South Africa & Japan

The initial uproar over the Japanese Treaty and the rise in imports from Japan died down during the latter half of 1931. After July there was an occasional article offering more details on the price of Japanese shoes or on the quantity per month sold by a certain Indian retailer (RDM, 29 July 1931), but little more. The underlying anger remained latent, however, and it was only a matter of time before anti-Japanese sentiments surfaced again. When changes in the relative value of both Japan’s and South Africa’s currencies made Japanese goods even cheaper and South African goods more expensive, the stage was set for a new outbreak of anti-Japanese demonstrations.

In September 1931 the British abandoned the gold standard. For the next fifteen months, Hertzog and his ministers refused to allow the Union to follow suit in spite of growing domestic pressure. Despite the fact that finance minister Class Havenga and most cabinet members were capitalist farmers (O’Meara 1983, 40) who arguably had a direct interest in supporting the devaluation of the South African pound in order to promote agricultural exports, there was a strong desire on their part to demonstrate to the world the status of the Union as an independent-minded, self-governing state. Although Hertzog initially had the support of even the mine owners, his stubborn refusal to abandon gold after its negative impact had become widely apparent had the effect of turning almost all capitalist interest groups (Davies et al. 1977, 16) against Hertzog on this crucial matter.

remaining on the gold standard had a devastating impact on foreign demand for export-dependent agricultural products such as wool in particular. Australia, which produced three times as much wool as the Union and was Japan’s primary supplier, abandoned the gold standard in February 1931. A
year later the cost of the Union’s wool had risen to almost twice that of Australia’s in terms of British pounds (100 pound sterling bought 125 Australian pounds but only 70–75 South African pounds: see Davenport 1977, 213).

The Japanese, for their part, returned to the gold standard in January 1930. Finance Minister Inoue Junnosuke’s motives for lifting the embargo on gold exports at that time included both his desire to force Japanese firms to become more competitive in the international arena, and his concern that devaluation of the yen would have a negative impact on Japan’s national prestige (Nakamura 1989, 464). As was the case in South Africa, the Japanese government insisted on remaining on the gold standard even after the negative impact of the decision had become all too apparent. As in South Africa, the agricultural sector was the hardest hit, but both farms and firms were soon suffering through the worst depression in Japanese history. By 1931 export prices had fallen to 40 percent of their 1929 levels and industries were forced to form cartels in order to restrict output and control prices (Nakamura 1989, 464).

When Britain abandoned the gold standard in September 1931, the Japanese government found itself in a difficult position. Since it was apparent that it would be impossible to maintain the gold standard, Japanese speculators began to sell yen and buy dollars, provoking a crisis that led to the collapse of the government in December 1931. The finance minister of the new government, Takahashi Korekiyo 高橋是清, ordered the abandonment of the gold standard on December 13, 1931, and then allowed the yen to fall to its natural level. By mid-1932, the value of the yen had dropped to half its former level and exports began to rise sharply (Nakamura 1989, 464). When it finally settled, the yen had undergone a devaluation of more than 40 percent, which made Japanese goods even cheaper in South Africa and made wool from the Union much more expensive for Japanese buyers.

The Union was under pressure to protect its industries from the competition of cheaper imports flowing in from all nations whose currencies had dropped in value against the South African pound, and it reacted by imposing duties of up to 12.5 percent on almost all imports. In 1932, South Africa passed an anti-currency depreciation tariff that gave the government the right to impose a special tariff on goods from countries whose prices were thought to be unreasonably low because of their depreciated currencies. Finally, facing acute financial and political crisis, finance minister Havenga announced the abandonment of the gold standard on December 28, 1932 (Beck 2003, 109).

**Renewed Outbursts of Anti-Asian Agitation**

Although not directed specifically at Japanese imports, the Union’s discriminatory measures did decrease the value of imports from Japan in 1932. Im-
ports from Japan fell from about 19.2 million yen in 1931 to 16.4 million yen in 1932. But in 1933 the value of imports from Japan rose higher than ever before, to over 26.7 million yen (about US$6.85). This dramatic increase started a new wave of anti-Japanese protest: politicians called for action, newspapers were filled with articles advocating measures, and various chambers of commerce debated the question. There were constant press reports of new “bombardments” of Japanese imports, and eventually a boycott was initiated. News headlines regarding Japan were striking. One article, headlined “Japan Pours Goods In — 2,000 Tons in Three Days,” focused on the arrival of “cheap paint,” each tin container of which, it was claimed, was sold at Durban “at a figure below the local manufacturing cost of an empty tin” (RDM, August 9, 1933). A Durban industrialist remarked that even a hundred percent dumping duty would be almost completely ineffective. There was hope that the “menace of Japanese trade” would be taken up at a forthcoming convention of South African industrialists at Johannesburg and that the government would thereafter be strongly encouraged to take firm measures to combat the competition. There was concern, however, that numerous Japanese goods entered the Union under false trademarks and that this would hamper the enforcement of the “drastic” measures that were being called for. “Japanese Goods Camouflaged” was the headline of one article, which went on to provide various details. Customs officials were said to be guilty of allowing importers to remove the marks from certain goods and thus circumvent the provisions of the Customs Management Act of 1913. Japanese bicycles, for example, were misleadingly marked as having been “designed by British designers” and “made of the best British material obtainable.” Sometimes such goods were destroyed on the spot, but more often customs officials simply insisted that the offending marks be removed. Customs officials found themselves in an awkward position since the outright destruction of large quantities of such items would harm South African merchants as well (RDM, July 16 and July 26, 1933).

By September 1933 news of the South African antagonism toward the influx of cheap Japanese goods began to reach Japan. An article in the Osaka Mainichi (with the headline “South Africa, Losing in Trade Fight With Japan, Flings Mud at Her Rival”) argued that while it was true Japan exported considerably more to South Africa than it imported, the Union benefited from the dock fees and port charges paid to the local Railways and Harbours Department. These “invisible exports” from the Union to Japan, added to the various stevedoring charges, bunker coal, and ship storage fees, amounted to approximately 15,450 pounds (US$64,000) in the first half of 1933. Each Japanese ship was calculated to pay fees of about 1,000 pounds (US$4,800). When estimated costs at Durban were added (“net profit instead of sale value”), the offsetting value became significant. Since the total value of South Africa’s exports to Japan was 100,435 pounds (US$485,894) in 1931 and 158,858
pounds in 1932, the value of these “invisible exports” to Japan helped make up part of South Africa’s growing trade deficit with Japan. Such were the arguments put forth by the Osaka Steamship Company’s (O.S.K.) chief representative in Africa, Mr. Tajima 田島町, in response to South African claims that its trade with Japan was unbalanced in the latter’s favor (OM&TNN, September 9, 1933).

Such arguments were hardly likely to calm the fears of South African whites. In September 1933 speakers at the Union’s Chamber of Commerce voiced their hostility to the rise in Japanese imports. One speaker reminded his audience that the government had not taken strong measures against the importation of Japanese footwear until some “seven million pairs of rubber and canvas shoes were actually in the country, and the lower end of the industry was threatened with extinction” (RDM, September 19, 1933). He did not, he claimed, want to be an alarmist, but he insisted that strong measures needed to be taken immediately.

By the fall of 1933, however, extreme anti-Japanese measures seemed to be in abeyance in most of South Africa except Natal (RDM, September 18, 1933). Many of the Japanese ships landed their goods at Durban, and a number of key industries were located in Natal. The South African Rubber Manufacturing Company, for instance, had a factory at Howick in the Natal with 108 “European” and 290 “mixed” employees (RDM, September 18, 1933).

Due to deliberate measures taken by Hertzog’s government and its decision to abandon the gold standard, the price of gold began to rise in September 1933 (RDM, September 19, 1933), and wool prices were up 33 percent from the year before (RDM, September 15, 1933). By the fall of 1933 the end of the depression seemed in sight. There was still concern, however, that South African products had to compete with Japanese products in foreign markets. Coal from Japan, which was mined in Manchuria, was sold in Singapore and elsewhere at a cheaper price than South African coal. A Johannesburg newspaper estimated that South African coal would have to be produced for 4s. (about US$.83) per ton “at the pit’s mouth” in order to be competitive with Japanese coal. After leaving the pit, the argument continued, the coal would have to be sent to the coast and shipped to Singapore and yet still sold for 16s. (about US$3.32) per ton or less, and “even then the Japanese are in a position to undersell” South African coal (RDM, September 6, 1933).

Japanese and South African beers were also in competition. South African Breweries (the “biggest brewing organization in Africa”) had active agents in Southwest and East Africa, but Japanese beer was beginning to compete with the Union’s beer in these locations by 1933 (RDM, September 18, 1933). By 1934, Japan was exporting fifty tons of Union- and Sakura-brand beers to Mombasa and a year later, 352 tons, or 123,360 bottles, nearly a six-fold increase in one year (OM&TNN, July 28, 1935).
South African whites were also concerned about Japan's "export" of people. From the early twentieth century onward, large numbers of Japanese emigrants had stopped briefly in South African ports on their way to settle in Brazil. South African whites were aware of the Japanese government's desire to find overseas outlets for what it termed Japan's "excess population." There were thus strong reactions among white South Africa to any suggestion that Japanese interests might obtain land or concessions anywhere in Africa, whether in neighboring Swaziland or in far-off Ethiopia. Japanese encroachments in Africa were seen by South African whites as threats to white supremacy on the continent.

In July 1931, in the midst of the controversy over the "Japanese Treaty," reports appeared in the South African press that an extensive ranch in Swaziland might be purchased by Japanese investors. According to an 1885 Law, no Asians could own land in the Union, and this prohibition had worked its way into the Swaziland law books by 1907 (Chilvers 1933). There were fears that the Japanese, who were accused of using agents in Cape Town, might get around this legislation by registering the coveted land in the names of European collaborators (RDM, July 7, 1931). Such fears soon subsided (RDM, July 8 and September 11, 1931), but in September 1931 white South Africans again grew concerned upon learning of Japan's invasion of Manchuria. This provoked fear that Japan was determined to expand its influence throughout the world. "It is practically certain that the Japanese military and naval authorities possess a ready-made plan to people the empty spaces here and in Australia," it was reported. All that stood between South Africa and the Japanese, according to some, was the British navy (RDM, September 19, 1931). The Rand Daily Mail's headlines on September 24 claimed that "3 whites" had been killed by Japanese forces in Mudken and that Japan's absorption of China was her first step to "World Domination."

South African whites were aware that there was a certain degree of sympathy for Japan among non-white South Africans. Some evidence of this exists. John Henry Baynes of Johannesburg, describing himself as a European with a "Cape Colored wife" and "leader of the African Proletariat Party," wrote a letter to the Japanese foreign ministry in April 1931 in which he condemned white South African hostility to the Japanese Commercial Treaty and praised the efforts of the Japanese to defend the rights of their colored brothers (MOFA, A 660 1-1-4; Bradshaw 1992). Such sentiments among "colored" South Africans contributed to white fear of a Yellow Peril.

In 1933, Hedley Arthur Chilvers, a South African, published The Yellow Man Looks On (Chilvers 1933). A former member of the Cape House of Assembly and of the Transvaal and Union Parliaments, Chilvers was on the staff of the Rand Daily Mail after 1905 and served for a period as mining editor for that paper (Rosenthal 1961, 98). Chilvers' book argued that there was a need for Anglo-Dutch reconciliation and even for black-white cooperation in
the Union in response to the Japanese threat. In his introduction to Chilver’s book, Abe Bailey wrote: “If the white races in Southern Africa can only agree to work together, as, fortunately they have been trying to do under the 1933 Hertzog Coalition Government...they will continue to enjoy the protection of the British navy.”

The book appears to have been intended in part to provide support for the coalition or United Party government formed by Hertzog and Smuts in 1933. Just as the “Black Peril” provided a slogan for Hertzog’s electoral campaign in 1929, the specter of a “Yellow Peril” provided some justification for Hertzog’s controversial decision to join forces with Smuts in 1933.

The book’s publication in late 1933 coincided with the first reports that the Japanese government was engaged in negotiations with the Ethiopian government for a large cotton-growing concession and other commercial concession in that country (Rosenthal 1944, 9–10) These rumors were taken seriously enough to provoke debate in South Africa’s parliament (Hansard XXII March 7, 1934) and to be the subject of diplomatic and military intelligence correspondence (PRO Batterbee 1934). After March 1934 there also emerged rumors of Japanese activities in Angola (PRO O’Meara to Secretary 1934) and Mozambique. The question of Japan’s close ties with Ethiopia would soon become a matter of worldwide concern as the Italo-Ethiopian conflict developed. In the midst of its formidable escalation of trade, Japan’s political influence in Africa became a matter of grave concern to all the European colonial powers. Japan’s growing political power and imperialism only fed the flames of white South African fears of the Yellow Peril.

Japanese publications indicate the degree to which Anglo-Japanese relations were severely strained by the mid-1930s. In a book entitled Japan Must Fight Britain, for example, Lieutenant-Commander Ishimaru Tōta of the Japanese navy discussed the strategic importance of the Cape, arguing that “it would be far wiser for Britain to concentrate on protecting the Cape route” instead of the Mediterranean route and that “Great Barriers have grown up between England and her children, [including] South Africa . . .” (Rosenthal 1944, 12; Ishimaru 1936). Some Japanese militarists were clearly aware of the strategic importance of the Union of South Africa and were eager to exploit the tensions between Britain and certain discontented populations in her colonies. This contributed to the decline and eventual rupture of Anglo-Japanese relations during the 1930s (Kitagawa and Okakura 1992; Bradshaw 1992; Towle 2006; Towle and Kosuge 2007).

Japan’s Attempt to Increase Imports of South African Wool

The rapid increase in Japanese exports to the Union would have been more acceptable to white South African if Japanese purchases of raw wool from the Union had also increased dramatically, but this was not the case. Early in
1932, a South African authority on wool bemoaned the fact that the Union had lost an invaluable wool market in Japan by remaining on the gold standard. An opportunity had presented itself when Japan looked briefly toward South Africa as a source of wool during a trade dispute with Australia, he explained, but that chance had been lost because of adverse exchange rates (RDM, January 18, 1932).

During 1933, the prospect that the Japanese might become important wool buyers seemed to improve (RDM, October 10, 1933). Japanese had high hopes of acquiring a South African market for their exports and their purchases of South African wool were gradually increasing even though this wool demanded more in foreign exchange than Australian wool (Hubbard 1935, 27). In September 1933, the Rand Daily Mail reported that wool was fetching the best prices in three years and sometimes noted the presence of Japanese buyers at the fleece auctions (RDM, September 15 and 18, 1933).

When he was interviewed by Die Burger on September 15, Mr. Mogaki 弘道, the Japanese consular officer in Capetown, claimed that the Japanese government as well as textile manufacturers were planning shortly to increase their purchases of wool from 11,000 bales (1932) to a projected 100,000 bales (RDM, September 16, 1933). That same month in Japan, wool dealers and handlers met and asked Kawanishi Sebei 川西清兵, president of the Japanese Association of the Wool Industries (Yōmō Kōgyō Kai 羊毛工業会), to lower freight rates for wool from South Africa and from South America. Those rates, according to estimates, were an estimated 20 percent higher than those for Australian wool (OM&TNN, October 1, 1933).

Signs that the Japanese were becoming serious about buying South African wool grew so evident that the Australians grew worried at the prospect of losing the Japanese market to South Africa. The Australian Wool Growers’ Council even pushed its government to conclude a customs agreement with Japan in order to retain Japanese buyers (RDM, September 10, 1931).

Mr. Shudō 首藤, a Japanese Foreign Office official, visited South Africa early in 1934, seeking resolution of the growing trade dispute between the two countries. Shudō found anti-Japanese sentiment in South Africa to be very strong. Moreover, he and his colleagues were treated discourteously at times during their stay in the Union, once being excluded as “Asiatics” from a cinema, among other humiliating discriminations (PRO Sansom 1934).

Shortly after his return to Tokyo, Shudō outlined to George B. Sansom, the commercial counselor at the British Embassy, the steps that the Japanese government had to undertake to improve the situation. Shudō explained that although Japan had promised at the time of the “Gentleman’s Agreement” (1930) to attempt to increase its purchase of South African raw wool in particular, it had failed to purchase more than 10,000 bales per annum during any year since then. The time had come, Shudō reported to his government,
to adopt more vigorous measures to promote imports from South Africa, even if that meant a heavy sacrifice (PRO Sansom 1934). The Japanese government took Shudo’s advice. It arranged with the Association of Woolen Industries and others immediately to increase Japanese imports of wool from South Africa. The increased cost – a total of 144,000 yen – was to be split between the Association of Woolen Industries and the exporters of goods to South Africa. O.S.K. Shipping Line charged an increase of 5–10 percent on all Japanese exports it carried to South Africa. As there was no direct line to South Africa from Japan other than the O.S.K., there seemed to be little chance of exporters using alternative lines (PRO Sansom 1934).

Both Sansom and the British Consul-General White at Osaka considered this arrangement evidence of how willing the Japanese were to defuse commercial friction with trading partners. White was also struck by the “rather remarkable manner in which the diverse commercial elements are so easily brought to an agreement for the common good” (PRO Sansom 1934). The Japanese government’s attempts to increase imports of wool were partially successful. Japan improved its rank among exporters to South Africa. By 1935, Japan was fourth, behind Great Britain, the United States, and Germany. Japan rose to second place, after Germany, in 1936–7 (Roberts 1990, 11), but as a Japanese study reported in 1937:

South Africa’s policy to promote the buying of wool was far less successful than expected. At the same time the South African market was flooded by Japanese products. In contrast, imports of European goods, especially British ones, were declining sharply and the pro-British element in South Africa thus strongly attacked the failure of the “Gentleman’s Agreement” with Japan and the fact that Japan purchased such a small quantity of South African wool. In addition, every newspaper has been running articles on Japanese insincerity and on the unfair competition of Japanese traders. Anti-Japanese sentiment is increasing dramatically as the mood of the people grows more hostile to Japan and its products. (Minami Renpō 1937, 3)

Conclusion

Japanese commercial expansion in the early 1930s was rapid and seemed to threaten the interests of British and South African manufacturers alike. Furthermore, Japanese ambitions were not, it appeared, limited to the expansion of exports. South Africa had begun to fear that Japan harbored political ambitions in the African continent and perhaps even colonial intentions.

The Union of South Africa’s decision in October 1930 to grant “honorary white” status to a limited number of “recommended” Japanese visitors ignited fears among white South African that were related to their previous fears of Indian and Chinese immigration, but the fear of the “Yellow Peril” was more intense due to Japan’s rapid economic and political expansion. The
fear of a Yellow Peril in the 1930s was used by white South Africans to justify the need for white solidarity and even Black-White solidarity in the face of Japanese political and economic expansion. The Japanese, for their part, became increasingly upset by the discriminatory measures aimed at limiting their exports, free movement, and settlement throughout the British Empire, including South Africa. This contributed to the deterioration of Anglo-Japanese relations in the decade before World War II.

Note

†Unless otherwise indicated, “pounds” refers to South African pounds. In 1930, 1 S.A. pound was valued at about US$4.84.

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Indigenizing Deities: The Budai Maitreya and the Group of Eighteen Luohans in Niche No. 68 at Feilaifeng

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From the tenth century onward, Chinese Buddhism and its art increasingly won over both scholars and common people, and new indigenous subjects and styles catered to their aesthetic tastes. The reincarnation of Buddhist deities as Chinese monks or lay Buddhists reflects one aspect of this change. Exemplifying new forms of Buddhist deities in China are carvings of Budai (“Cloth Bag”), a Chinese rendering of the Maitreya Buddha, and of the eighteen luohans, an indigenous group of deities based on a group of sixteen from India, both of which reside in niche no. 68 at the rock-cut cave temple complex Feilaifeng in Hangzhou. The author analyzes how the local monk Budai became a representation of Maitreya, how artists created the image of the Budai in the niche, and how the eighteen luohans and their iconographies originated in order to clarify the dynamics by which indigenous deities were created.

From the tenth century onward, China experienced a tremendous transformation in its religion and art. In the area of Buddhist art, this transformation was manifested in increased sinicization and popularization. As the modern Chinese scholar Xu Pingfang 徐蘋芳 suggests, the common people provided the social foundation for the popularization of religion during the Song (960–1279) and Yuan (1271–1368). The result of the popularization of religion was the multiplication of deities worshipped by the people and the social popularity of religious rituals (Xu Pingfang 1996, 56). In contrast with earlier periods, Buddhism and its art became increasingly associated with scholars and common people rather than with aristocrats. Chinese creations, such as spurious Buddhist sutras, images produced based on fake sutras in Chinese, and Chinese accounts of Buddhist deities differing from Indian prototypes abandoned by “orthodox” Buddhists before the tenth century, were developed and widely admired during the Song and the Yuan. One result of this shift was the evolution of new indigenous subjects and styles that perfectly matched the common people's aesthetic tastes instead of imitating Indian works of art. The reincarnation of the Buddha and bo-
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dhisattvas as Chinese Buddhist monks or lay Buddhists and some new Chinese indigenous deities that entered the original Indian pantheon reflect one aspect of this change.¹ The carving of Budai 布袋 (Cloth Bag), a Chinese version of the Maitreya Buddha, and the eighteen luohans 羅漢, an indigenous group of luohans based on a group of sixteen from India, in niche no. 68 at the rock-cut cave temple complex of Feilaifeng 飛來峰 (Peak that Flew [from India]) typify the new forms of Buddhist deities in China.

Feilaifeng, the largest extant site of Buddhist art in the Hangzhou area, is notable for its caves and cliff sculptures produced from the tenth century onward. More than two hundred carven images survive from the Song dynasty, and over one hundred remain from the Yuan.² Niche no. 68 was created during the Southern Song (1127–1279) period, and it is now the most famous niche in Feilaifeng.³ At its highest point in the center, this open-air, semicircular arched niche measures 330 centimeters from top to bottom. The circumference of the entire niche is 900 centimeters. Budai sits in the middle of the niche with the eighteen luohans sitting or standing on either side of him. The figure group is depicted in a rocky setting, an appearance that the artists achieved by working with the natural qualities of the rock face (fig. 1).

![Figure 1: Budai and Eighteen Luohans (detail), Southern Song period (1127–79). Niche no. 68 at Feilaifeng. Photo by the author.](image-url)
From the tenth century onward, the Chinese created indigenous Buddhist deities by adopting Indian deities and reconciling them with Chinese beliefs and artistic traditions. The ways in which Indian Buddhist sutras, revisionary Chinese texts, and the Chinese artistic tradition interacted to create indigenous deities in China calls for careful study. Niche no. 68 perfectly demonstrates the process of creating indigenous Buddhist deities. Because people regard this niche as the representative work of Feilaifeng, it has been widely studied, but most previous discussion has presented only a general introduction. Further study of this niche is therefore necessary in order to clarify its iconography and textual references, as well as its religious contexts, for the purpose of clarifying how the Chinese indigenized Buddhist deities in general. I will first analyze texts on Budai, explaining how this local monk came to represent the Future Buddha (Maitreya) in China, as well as how artists visualized the Budai in niche no. 68 based on descriptions of the deity in hagiographies and previous iconographies. I will also discuss the important role that niche no. 68 played in the development of subsequent images of the Budai. Because Budai is believed to be an incarnation of the Maitreya Buddha who appears as a common Chinese monk, I will briefly summarize Chinese religious beliefs about the incarnation of Buddhist deities. Finally, I will discuss the origin of the eighteen luohans, a Chinese group based on the Indian group of sixteen, and their relation to Budai.

Textual Accounts of Budai & the Budai Image in Niche No. 68

The story of Budai is recorded both in Song Gaoseng Zhuan 宋高僧傳 (Biographies of Eminent Monks Compiled in the Song), which was compiled by Zanning 贊寧 (919–1001) in 988, and in Jingde Chuandenglu 景德傳燈錄 (Jingde Record of the Transmission of the Flame) by the Northern Song (960–1125) monk, Daoyuan 道源 (active first half of the eleventh century). According to these texts, Budai is the hao 號, or informal name, of a Chan monk named Qici 契此 who lived from the second half of the ninth century to the early part of the tenth century. He was well known as a free spirit and famous for the large bag that he always carried. Budai is connected with Maitreya because of the poem referring to that deity that he spoke before his death. Helen Chapin and Richard Edwards have presented a limited picture of Budai based on preliminary explorations of the textual record (Chapin 1933; Edwards 1984, 11–5). In this section I will trace Budai’s transformation from a Chinese monk to his manifestation or reincarnation as Maitreya based on a more thorough examination of Chinese Buddhist texts.

Beginning in the late tenth century, more information about Budai became available. Zongjing Lu 宗鏡錄 (Record on the Great Mirror) by the monk
Yanshou 延壽 (d. 975) is probably the earliest extant text related to Budai. In chapter nineteen of this book, Yanshou records a Buddhist poem by Budai and refers to the monk as Budai Heshang 布袋和尚 (The Monk Holding a Cloth Bag), but does not provide any information about the monk’s life or career (Taishō 48. 523a). Later, Zanning’s Song Gaoseng Zhuan explained that Budai was a native of Siming (present-day Ningbo in Zhejiang province) and died during the Tianfu 天復 reign (901–4) of the Tang period (618–907). According to Zanning, he was an eccentric figure with an upturned nose and large belly. He spoke in an obscure fashion, often confusing those with whom he tried to communicate. He wandered through markets begging, carrying his cloth bag tied to the end of a staff, and sleeping wherever he wished. His identification as a manifestation of Maitreya comes from his famous poem in which he writes: “Maitreya, true Maitreya. People today fail to recognize him” (Taishō 50. 848bc). Zanning’s record is the first to detail Budai’s appearance and character, and to connect the Chan monk with Maitreya.

The large image of the monk in niche no. 68 has most of the basic iconographic features of Budai mentioned in Song Gaoseng Zhuan. He sits leaning to the right, left leg bent upward at the knee, left foot exposed and planted firmly on the ground, right knee bent outward, right foot tucked under his left leg. The back wall supports his ample weight, as does a rock positioned under his right arm. He places his right hand, palm downward, on a large bag. In his left hand he holds a Buddhist rosary. He wears a monk’s robe tied loosely with a rope. The oval head has a protruding forehead, a relatively high brow, an upturned nose, large ears, plump cheeks, and a double chin. The jovial figure laughs with his mouth partially open. The outer corners of his closed eyes turn upward, further imparting joyful expression. His shoulders seem to shrug, hiding his neck. The upper half of his body is partially exposed, showing his plump arms, fleshy chest, and extremely round belly (fig. 1).

There are several Indian scriptural references to the cloth bag. According to these texts, the Buddha once told his disciples that they should have with them a cloth bag about one chi 尺 (33 cm) square, in which to carry a begging bowl. This bag would not only make the bowl easier to carry, but it would keep the bowl from getting dusty. The Tang dynasty monk Yijing (635–713) notes that the actual use of this type of bag did not originate in China (Yijing, Taishō 24. 372c), so Indian Buddhist traditions probably inspired Chinese monks like Budai. In the iconography of Budai, the cloth bag visually echoes his large belly and reaffirms something of his personality.

The Northern Song monk Daoyuan synthesized Yanshou’s and Zanning’s writings, partially altering their accounts while providing more information of his own. Daoyuan, for example, claims that Budai was a native
of Fenghua county in Mingzhou (present-day Ningbo in Zhejiang). He relates that when asked about Buddhist doctrine, Budai, in true Chan tradition, would obscurely respond by putting down or picking up his cloth bag. According to Daoyuan, Budai recited a poem just before his death in Yuelin Si (Mountain Woods Monastery) in Fenghua in 916 during the Late Liang dynasty (907–23): “Maitreya, true Maitreya. [He] manifested [his] body in a hundred billion [different disguises]. [He can] manifest [himself before] the living at any time. [But] the living do not recognize [him]” (Daoyuan 1004, Taishō 51. 434a).\(^5\) This poem underscores Budai’s identity as a manifestation of Maitreya. Daoyuan’s text was influential among later Buddhists, to some extent supplanting Zanning’s text.\(^6\)

Budai’s legend gained currency during the Song period (960–1279), and records of the period connect him with the worship of Maitreya. Chapter twelve of Dahui Pujue Chanshi Yulu (Discourse of the Wise and Enlightened Chan Master), compiled by the Song monk Yunwen (dates unknown), observes that “if we bow down to the Maitreya Buddha we can rely on [Budai’s] broad intestine and big belly” (i.e., his generosity). The implication is that to worship the Maitreya is to worship Budai. In addition, Yunwen describes Budai holding a cloth bag and a staff on his shoulder, from which hangs a pair of broken wooden shoes (Taishō 47. 859a). The “eccentric” (Wensu, Taishō 48. 131c) nature celebrated by Song monks is evident in niche no. 68 at Feilaifeng, where he appears as a laughing monk with big belly, lying casually on his side, his open robe exposing his plump body.

The Southern Song monk Zhipan based his book Fozu Tongji (Comprehensive History of Buddhism, second half of the thirteenth century) on the works of Zanning and Daoyuan, but added new information about Budai. He claims, for example, that Budai kept his alms in his cloth bag. The bag aroused the curiosity of sixteen children, who chased him and tried to seize it (Edwards 1984, 18). This text is the earliest extant account connecting Budai with the sixteen children who appear as the sixteen luohan (plus two indigenous luohans, as discussed below) in niche no. 68. Zhipan also mentions that Budai, amid a throng of people, would open his bag and inexplicably remove things like a bowl, wooden shoes, food, or a stone. Another anecdote relates that the lay Buddhist Jiang Mohe, while bathing with Budai, saw an eye on the monk’s back. Jiang touched the eye and asked Budai, “Are you a Buddha?” Budai cut him off and asked him not to mention the incident to others. When Budai traveled to Min (present-day Fujian province), a lay Buddhist named Chen asked his age. Budai answered that his cloth bag was as old as the empty sky. He also told Chen that his family name was Li and that he was born on the eighth day of the second lunar month (Taishō 49. 390c). Zhipan’s account
further illustrates the development of the legend of Budai, as well as his eccentric personality.

**Niche No. 68 & the Tradition of Budai Images**

Niche no. 68 clearly belongs to the Chinese artistic tradition and the traditions of the Budai image. During the Song and Yuan (1279–1368) periods, Budai was a popular subject in Buddhist art. Zanning says that after Budai's death, people from the Zhejiang and Jiangsu regions enthusiastically painted his image (Zanning, *Taishō* 50. 848c). This indicates that Budai's image was already widespread in these two provinces (including Hangzhou) during the tenth century, probably because Budai was a native of Zhejiang. Daoyuan states that Buddhists and lay people were equally eager to paint Budai's image, but he does not indicate where this phenomenon was most prevalent (Daoyuan, *Taishō* 51. 434b). It seems that Budai had already become a favorite subject in Northern Song Buddhist art and that by the eleventh century his popularity was no longer regional. The Yuan dynasty monk Juean 覺岸 likewise records that during the Yuan period there was a general eagerness to paint Budai images and to make offerings, indicating the continuing popularity of Budai images after the Southern Song period (Juean, *Taishō* 49. 848a).

The Budai figure in niche no. 68 can be related to traditions in both painting and sculpture. There are no extant images of Budai from the tenth century when Budai first began to rise in prominence, but images from the eleventh through thirteenth centuries show some similarities and differences. Two northern Chinese stele images, known through rubbings and probably based on painted images, depict the monk standing and facing left. The first one, probably the earliest extant image of Budai, has an inscription attributed to Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037–1101) and dated 1088, in which Su says he once saw a Budai image painted by Cui Bai 崔白, who was skillful in painting birds, flowers (Guo Ruoxu 1963, 60), and Buddhist and Daoist images, during the Xining reign (1068–77) (fig. 2). The image shows a plump Budai holding a long staff on his right shoulder while a large cloth bag hangs from the staff. In contrast to the Feilaifeng Budai, this Budai is not smiling (Soper 1951, frontispiece). Perhaps this was an image popular in the north during the late Northern Song period when Su Shi was active. The second rubbing is inscribed with the Jin dynasty reign title Yuanguang 元光 and dated 1223. The iconographic characteristics of this Budai are similar to the Budai of 1088, including the large cloth bag hanging from his staff, but, as Edwards suggests, this figure is stylistically closer to the sculpted Feilaifeng Budai (Edwards 1984, 12). The round head, smiling face, and fleshy chin and neck are standard features, but the Budai of 1223 differs from the Feilaifeng image in three respects. It has a proportionally larger head and plumper body, dons a necklace rather than holds a rosary, and, most importantly, stands rather than sits (Tao Jinsheng 1977, 94).

Some Southern Song Budai paintings depart from the 1088 stele rubbing attributed to Cui Bai. For instance, a Southern Song painting of a standing Budai in the Umezawa Kinenkan 梅澤記念館 collection in Japan depicts the monk facing right, as opposed to the image on the 1088 stele rubbing, which faces left. Although the figure has a plump body and large belly, his posture is different from the Budai figure of 1088 (Osaka shiritsu bijutsukan 1980, fig. 288). He turns his head to look back, as his right hand grasps a large cloth bag behind him.

A painting from the Shanghai Museum illustrates an early example of what may be a seated Budai sharing some features with the Feilaifeng Budai. This painting bears the signature of the artist Liang Kai 梁楷 (died early thirteenth century) and depicts the head and torso of the Budai. His hunched shoulders are bare, and he appears to be grasping his garment with both hands, which are hidden under the fabric at his chest. The large cloth bag, outlined by a single brushstroke, appears at the lower right of the painting. Edwards illustrates the similarity between the facial expressions of this painting and the Feilaifeng Budai: “the full laugh – an intricate pattern of curve and angle – takes on an importance similar to the open-mouthed laugh of the Maitreya carving” (Edwards 1984, 13). This laughing,
full-faced Budai is not seen in the Northern Song rubbing of 1088, and thus may represent a standard feature of the Budai images later popularized by Southern Song artists (see the discussion below).

Southern Song artists also created images of Budai that vary in their facial features and gestures. An image called *Budai Stroking His Stomach*, housed in a Japanese collection and attributed to the famous Southern Song monk painter Muxi 牧谿 (i.e., Fachang 法常, ca. 1220–80), is one such example (Osaka shiritsu bijutsukan 1980, fig. 283; Xia Wenyan 1995, 131). Like the painting attributed to Liang Kai, this work is a half-length portrait and the figure has the same round head, heavy cheeks, and wide, gleeful smile. Here, however, Budai’s left hand is exposed, resting on his bare belly. The eyes do not have the common inverted crescent shape seen in many Budai figures but are instead small and slant upwards beneath a furrowed brow. The inscription notes that Budai “fully laughs with [his] mouth opened. [His] hand touches [his] chest.” The Song monk Wensu 文素 (dates unknown) provides a similar description of Budai: “the wind whistles through the pine trees, [Budai] tilts [his] ear to listen, laughs, and touches his abdomen” (Wensu, Taisho¯ 48. 131a).

A Southern Song hanging scroll in the collection of the Tokugawa Reimeikai 徳川黎明会 Foundation in Tokyo depicts a seated, full-length Budai. Budai’s pose is similar to that of the sculpture in niche no. 68; he leans languidly to his right and rests his left hand on his left knee. However, this Budai turns his head to the right, where his hand grasps the cloth bag, and glances at a child who has put his arms on the bag and fallen asleep (Tōkyō kokuritsu hakubutsukan 1971, fig. 28). This painting is similar to the standing Budai figure in the Umezawa Kinenkan collection in Japan in that both figures turn their heads and grasp a cloth bag. The latter gesture was probably a characteristic of painted Budai images in the Southern Song and connects these images to the Feilaifeng Budai, who rests his hand on his bag.

Unlike the painted images, most extant Budai sculptures are seated figures that share similar features with the Feilaifeng Budai. The Budai in niche no. 68 is probably not the first sculpture to depict this posture, but it is difficult to find an earlier sculpted example. A Yuan dynasty Budai in niche no. 45 at Feilaifeng is similar but has a more formal appearance. He sits upright with his left leg crossed and right knee pointing upward. Like the Budai in niche no. 68, his left hand grasps a rosary (fig. 3). This figure is also similar to those installed in typical Tianwang Dian 天王殿 (Guardian King Halls) in later eras. Figures of Budai as the Future Buddha apparently became standard in Guardian King Halls in the Ming, Qing, and modern periods (Ferdinand Diederich Lessing 1942, plate 10), eras when Budai was popular across the country, not just in his native Zhejiang province.
Religious Contexts of the Budai Image

The carving in niche no. 68 cannot be separated from the belief in incarnate Buddhist deities, which extends back to the Tang dynasty. Baozhi 寶志 (i.e., Zhigong 志公, 425–514), Sengjia 僧伽 (617–710) and Wanhui 萬回 (632–712) were monks with an eminent place in Chinese Buddhist history (Chu-fang Yu 2001, 198–222). As early as the later Tang period, people worshiped these monks. The Japanese monk, Ennin 圓仁 (active ninth century), who came to Chang’an (present-day Xi’an) in 840, saw the images of all three monks worshiped in a niche in the Tang dynasty capital of Chang’an. Ennin brought a similar group of images back to Japan (Ennin, Taishō 55. 1084c). However, the representation of the three monks was not generally popular in Tang Buddhist art. Song texts confirm the belief that Baozhi, Sengjia and Wanhui were incarnations of Guanyin and performed numerous miracles during their lifetimes (Li Fang 1961, 638; Zanning 1987, 448). Beginning in the tenth century, Sengjia became a highly popular object of worship and subject of Buddhist art. Many monasteries, monastic halls, and stupas were built for the worship of Sengjia. In addition, Buddhists created many individual images of Sengjia in which he is por-
trayed as a seated monk (Xu Pingfang 1996). One Song-era anecdote describes Baozhi revealing his “true” appearance as the eleven-headed Guanyin (Alan Berkowitz 1995, 581). There are Song dynasty images of Baozhi, Sengjia, and Wanhui carved at Beishan (Northern Mountain) Cave Temples in Dazu County. Chapter one of the Yuan-era Qiantang yishi (Anecdotes of Qiantang) by Liu Yiqing records that the people from the Southern Song capital Lin’an (present-day Hangzhou) liked to make offerings to Wanhui and called him Wanhui gege (Brother Wanhui) (Ding Bing 1976, vol. 6, 3404). Many believed that the three monks were incarnations of Guanyin and that Guanyin had come to live amid the people of China.

By the late Southern Song period, people believed that many Buddhist deities had appeared in various incarnations in China and that many Chinese monks who lived in the Song or earlier periods had been incarnations of Buddhist deities. The representative expression of this belief system is Zhipan’s Fozu Tongji. Under the title “Shengxian Chuhua” (The Appearance and Incarnation of Saints), Zhipan lists many Chinese and Indian monks whom he believed to be incarnations of Buddhist deities in China (Taishō 49. 462ac). We cannot find any such references in pre-Song texts or in Indian Buddhist scriptures. Apparently, Song people created these legends based on the biographies of eminent monks from pre-Song periods. According to these legends, many Indian Buddhist deities became Chinese monks or lay Buddhists and appeared in China, all of which demonstrates the increasing Sinicization of Buddhism during the Song period. Belief in incarnate deities made Song Buddhism and Buddhist art more secular and popular. Amid this atmosphere, the Chan monk Budai was transformed into an incarnation of Maitreya, and the Feilaifeng Budai appeared in niche no. 68.

The Group of Eighteen Luohans

Luohans, or arhats, are the enlightened and saintly men who are the Buddha’s disciples. They have been depicted in Chinese Buddhist art since at least the fifth century, but such images have been more abundant since the tenth century. The eighteen luohans located in niche no. 68 at Feilaifeng add two figures to the group of sixteen of Indian tradition, thereby demonstrating this proliferation. Why and how the Chinese extended the sixteen to eighteen is a fundamental issue for the study of the indigenization of Buddhist deities.

The group of eighteen luohans was based on the group of sixteen. The sixteen luohans primarily derive from pre-Tang and Tang dynasty Buddhist texts such as the Da Aluohan Nantimiduluo Suoshuo Fazhu Ji 大阿羅漢難提密多羅所說法住記 (Record of the Abiding Dharma Spoken by the Great
Arhat Nandimitra), translated by Xuanzang 玄奘 (600–64) in 654 (Taishō 49. 12–4). Fazhu 塔主 records that when the Buddha entered nirvana, he enjoined the sixteen great luohans to protect and preserve the dharma until the advent of the future Buddha Maitreya. This sutra, in addition, introduces the names of the sixteen luohans and the sixteen regions, including Jiufeng Shan 鷲峰山 (Vulture Peak Mountain), to which they were dispersed after the Buddha’s achievement of nirvana (Taishō 49. 13a). Fazhu 塔主 inspired belief in the sixteen luohans and stimulated the production of images. According to texts, Tang dynasty artists created many paintings and sculptures devoted to the sixteen luohans. Sita Ji 寺塔記 (Records of Monasteries and Pagodas) by the Tang scholar Duan Chengshi 段成式 (d. 863) records that at Linghua Si 靈華寺 (Spiritual Flower Monastery) in Chang’an, there were “sixteen figures of eminent monks standing in the western corridor of the Buddha hall. These [figures] had been removed from the southern palace in the early period of Tianbao (742–56)” (Duan Chengshi 1964, 10). These sixteen eminent monks are probably the sixteen luohans. According to Xuanhe Huapu 宣和畫譜 (Painting Catalogue Compiled in the Xuanhe Reign), the Tang dynasty artists Lu Lenjia 盧楞伽 (active eighth century) and Wang Wei 王維 (699–759) painted the sixteen luohans (Yu Jianhua 1964, 53, 170), but the validity of this record is uncertain. During the tenth century, the sixteen luohans became a popular subject of painting and sculpture (Zhou Shujia 1991, 706–8). The most famous luohan painter in Chinese history is the monk Guanxiu 貫休, who was active in that period (Huang Xiufu 1964, 55). According to the Song official Cao Xun 曹勳 (1098–1174), there were sixteen gilt bronze luohans installed in a pagoda in Yongming monastery 永明寺 (present-day Jingci monastery 淨慈寺 in Hangzhou), which was established in 954 (Cao Xun 1970, 751).

In the tenth century, groupings of eighteen luohans began to appear in Chinese Buddhist art. The earliest known images of this new grouping appeared in a set of paintings showing the eighteen luohans done by Zhang Shi 張氏 of the Early Shu kingdom (907–25). The Northern Song official Su Shi 湯氏 owned the paintings and wrote one poem for each of the depicted luohans (Su Shi 1997, vol. 2, 73–6). A damaged luohan group, carved in the Wuyue period (907–78) in Yanxia cave 煙霞洞 of Hangzhou, is the earliest extant example of this subject in China. In the Northern Song, the eighteen luohans were increasingly popular in Buddhist art. The eleventh-century luohans in the Sandashi Dian 三大士殿 (Three Great Beings Hall) at Chongqing Si 崇慶寺 (High Blessing Monastery) in Changzi county, Shanxi province, are a good extant example (Zhongguo meishu quanji bianjia bianji weiyuanhui 1988, figs. 55–7). In addition to those of niche no. 68, Feilai Feng contains three sets of Eighteen Luohans in niches nos. 9, 17, and 24, produced in the Northern Song (Gao Nianhua 2002, figs. 31, 32, 33–5, 37–55).
Chinese artists and Buddhist monks added two luohans to the group of sixteen. Theories about the identities of the seventeenth and eighteenth are various. In the poems that he wrote about the paintings of the eighteen luohans attributed to Guanxiu, Su Shi says that the seventeenth luohan is Qingyou 慶友 (Nandimitra) and the eighteenth luohan is Bintoulu 賓頭盧 (Pindola) (Su Shi 1933, 10). The Southern Song monk Zhipan, author of Fozu Tongji, suggests that the last two luohans in the group of eighteen are Mahākāśyapa and Kundopdhanīya, and that Bintoulu is Binduluo 賓度羅 (Pindola), one of the original sixteen. In defense of this notion, he cites Fanyi Mingyi Ji 翻譯名義集 (Collection of Names and Meanings from Translations) by the Song monk Fayun 法雲. In addition, Zhipan asserts that Qingyou was the author of Fazhu Ji and that he could not have received the orders that the Buddha gave to the sixteen luohans because he was not present. Mile Xiasheng Jing 彌勒下生經 (Sutra on Maitreya’s Coming) mentions that Mahākāśyapa, Kundopdhanīya, Pindola, and Rahula, the four great disciples of Śākyamuni, postponed their achievement of nirvana and remained in the world to protect the dharma until Maitreya’s coming (Dharmarakṣa, Taishō 14. 422b). They are the first four luohans who received the orders of the Buddha, and Pindola and Rahula later became members of the group of sixteen. Zhipan, therefore, suggests that the eighteen luohans are the group of sixteen from Fazhu Ji plus Mahakasyapa and Kundopdhaniya, two of the four luohans from Mile Xiasheng Jing (Zhipan, Taishō 49. 319b). Zhipan’s opinion is reasonable, but most artists and Buddhists from the Song through modern times still mistakenly believe that the last two luohans in the set of eighteen luohans are Qingyou and Bintoulu, as Su Shi suggests. In any case, Chinese Buddhists rounded out the new group of luohans based on the Indian group of sixteen in roughly the tenth century. Since Budai is supposedly an incarnation of Maitreya and the Buddha is waited on by the Sixteen Luohans in Indian scriptures, it was reasonable to depict the group of eighteen assisting the Budai in niche no. 68 at Feilaifeng.

The popular names of the last two luohans are Xianglong 隆龍 (Subduing the Dragon) and Fuhu 伏虎 (Vanquishing the Tiger), which explains why the dragon and a tiger, respectively, accompany them in the images of the eighteen luohans at Feilaifeng, in keeping with traditions that date from the Northern Song. Su Shi wrote an essay in 1081 in which he mentions seeing a luohan figure flanked by a dragon and a tiger in a temple (Su Shi 1997, vol. 2, 63–4). On this basis, Zhou Shujia 周叔迦 (1899–1970) infers that Xinglong and Fuhu derive from a later period and that their identities were mingled during the Song period (Zhou Shujia 1991, 709). In his poems about the eighteen luohan paintings by the early Shu kingdom painter Zhang Shi, Su mentions two luohans, one accompanied by a dragon, the other by a tiger (Su Shi 1997, vol. 2, 75). The extant earliest ex-
ample of Xianglong and Fuhu can be seen in the group of eighteen luohans in Yanxia cave (Zhongguo shiku diaosu quanji bianji weiyuanhui 2000, figs. 15–24). These artifacts suggest that the two luohans were probably created in the first half of the tenth century and became the final members of the group of eighteen. By the Northern Song, Xianglong and Fuhu, the dragon- and tiger-taming luohans, had become standard members of the group. Later artists inscribed these two figures’ names on their paintings. For example, in chapter eight of Midian Zhulin 秘殿珠林 (Pearl Forest in the Secret Hall), dated 1786, the Qing dynasty Qianlong Emperor (reigned 1736–95) inscribed the paintings of Zhuang Yude 庄豫德 with an excerpt from Guanxiu Bu Lu Lengjia Shiba Yingzhen 貫休補盧楞伽十八應真 (Guanxiu’s Supplement to Lu Lengjia’s The Eighteen Luohan Who Responded to the Truth). It says that “the sixteenth [should be seventeenth] and eighteenth [luohans] were ambiguous. Consulting Icangskya Khutukhtu 章嘉呼圖克圖, [I] discovered proof.” He asserts that the seventeenth luohan is Xianglong (Mahakasyapa) and the eighteenth luohan is Fuhu (Nadamidala) (Guoli gugong bowuyuan 1971, vol. 8, 97–8).

None of the eighteen luohans in niche no. 68 at Feilaifeng have inscriptions to identify them by name, but Xianglong and Fuhu can be identified based on the animals that accompany them. Luohan 7, to the left of Budai, is a standing figure flanked by a crouching tiger (fig. 5). This figure is presumably Fuhu. Luohan 16, to the right of Budai, sits in a lotus posture and looks to his upper right. There is a dragon carved above his head. This figure is presumably Xianglong (fig. 6). In positioning these two figures, the artists did not follow the sequence of the sixteen luohans given in Fazhu ji translated by Xuanzang. Artists intermingled and rearranged the figures into a new group that probably followed the tradition of the eighteen luohans seen in niche no. 24 in Yuru cave at Feilaifeng (Gao Nianhua 2002, 36).

The depiction of Xianglong in niche no. 68 differs in its iconography from the traditional form of this figure. The fifteenth luohan of niche no. 24, likewise a depiction of Xianglong, lifts a bowl with his left hand and watches a dragon above him while the fifth luohan from the left in niche no. 9 has similar features but lifts a bowl with his right hand. The ninth luohan in niche no. 17 also bends his right arm at the elbow and raises his right hand holding a bowl. To his upper left is a dragon flying toward him. This identifying iconography was also used by artists in later periods. In a Song dynasty hanging scroll from the collection of the Palace Museum in Taipei, for example, a luohan holds a bowl in order to catch a dragon flying in the heaven (Guoli gugong bowuyuan 1989, vol. 3, 267–8). Luohan 16 in niche no. 68 at Feilaifeng does not hold a bowl but features a dragon, which is the most essential attribute of the figure.
In Buddhist scriptures, the Buddha and many of his disciples have the power to subdue dragons. Chapter one of *Shijia Shipu* (Pedigree of the Śākyamuni Family), for instance, relates that the Buddha subdued a dragon in his cave in Magadha, a kingdom in central India (Daoxuan, *Taishō* 50. 92c). *Sifen Lü* (The Four Books of the Vinaya) says that Śākyamuni once captured a fire dragon and put it into his bowl (Buddhayasas and Zhu Fonian, *Taishō* 22. 793b). Among the disciples of the Buddha, Maudgalyayana (Mulian 目連) had the power to throw dragons to other regions (Baochang, *Taishō* 53. 75b). Kāśyapa and his five hundred disciples also had power to subdue dragons (Gautama Sanghadeva, *Taishō* 2. 621c). These stories probably had some impact on the development of the Xianglong luohan. At Feilaifeng, the Xianglong luohans in niches nos. 9, 17, and 24 hold bowls in which to capture dragons, and luohan 16 from niche no. 68 is accompanied by a dragon, as described by *Sifen Lü*.

In ancient times, Chinese people believed that dragons could bring rainfall or cause droughts and floods. People, therefore, revered monks who had the power to control dragons. Chapter ten of *Gaoseng Zhuan* (Biography of Eminent Monks) by the Liang dynasty (502–57) monk Huijiao 慧皎, for example, tells the story of Shegong 涉公, a western monk who arrived in Chang’an, the capital of the Early Qin kingdom (351–84), in 376. He knew incantations that could draw the supernal dragon to the earth for the benefit of the people. During times of drought, Fu Jian 符堅 (reigned 357–84), the king of the Early Qin, would invite Shegong to perform his incantations. The dragon would descend into his bowl, and there would then be heavy rain. Fu Jian and his officials once saw the dragon in the bowl, and they respected Shegong as a deity in his own right. From Shegong’s arrival until his death in 380, there was no drought (*Taishō* 50. 389b). According to the scholar Daniel Stevenson, Tiantai monks of the Song period were likewise supposed to have the power to subdue dragons and bring rain (Daniel Stevenson 1999, 356). It was only appropriate, then, to worship Mahākāśyapa, who had precisely these powers, and to include him as a member of the eighteen luohans.

Fuhu also has a symbolic accompanying animal as indicated by his name (Vanquishing the Tiger), but the indigenous influence is more noticeable in his case. Indian scriptures comment on Xianglong and the dragon but do not say anything about a luohan having the power to vanquish a tiger. The texts, however, do introduce the tiger as a theme. *Mohe sengzhi Lü* (Vinaya of Mahāsāṃghika), translated by Buddhabhadra (359–429) and Faxian 法顯 (d. about 422), includes a parable of monks subduing a dangerous tiger as an allegory of Buddhist teaching (*Taishō* 22. 257a). In chapter thirty of *Abitan Bajiandu Lun* (Eight Discourses by Abhidharma), translated by the Early Qin monks Sengjiatipo 僧伽提婆 and
Zhu Fonian 竺佛念, the Buddha equates human anger with the tiger’s ferocious character (Taishō 26. 915b). Chapter five of Dacheng Jipusaxue Lun 大乘集菩薩學論 (Commentary on the Anthology of the Mahayanan Bodhisattva), translated by the Northern Song monk Fahu 法護 between 980 and 983, asserts that the karma of those with angry hearts manifests itself in fearful encounters with lions, snakes, and tigers (Taishō 32. 90c). Chapter twenty of Abidamo Fashi Lun 阿毗達磨發智論 (Commentary on the Abidama’s Dharmic Widsom), translated by Xuanzang, conceives the tiger as the symbol of human anger (Taishō 26. 30a). In chapter four of Xin Huayan jing Lun 新華嚴經論 (New Commentary on the Huayan Sutras), Li Tongxuan 李通玄 (635–730) used a white tiger, one of four traditional Chinese gods, to symbolize an inauspicious or evil scourge (Taishō 36. 745b). Furthermore, Chinese monks used the term fuhu (“vanquishing the tiger”) to symbolize certain Buddhist theories. For instance, Chan monks used the concept of “taming fierce tigers” to signify winning over ignorant minds (Chuyuan, Taishō 47. 623b). Zhujing Yaoji 諸經要集 (Collection of Key Thoughts on the Sutras) by the Tang monk Daoshi 道世 gives an allegorical example in which the monk Tanguang 曇光 (d. by 384) tames a fierce tiger in front of his knee (Taishō 54. 100a). This tradition of symbolism and allegory almost certainly inspired Chinese Buddhists artists to create Fuhu luohan.

Chinese Buddhist texts also include many stories in which eminent monks subdue actual tigers and preach Buddhist dharma to them. In chapter eleven of Gaoseng Zhan, for example, Huijiao tells the story of the monk Tanyou 曇猷 (d. 390–6), who is connected to the legend of the sacred monks at the rocky bridge at Mount Tiantai (Wen Fong 1958). While Tanyou sat in meditation in a mountain cave one day, ten tigers appeared and crouched before him. Despite the presence of the intimidating animals, Tanyou continued to chant the sutras. When one tiger fell asleep, Tanyou tapped its head with a scepter and asked: “Why don’t [you] listen to [my chanting] of the sutra?” Eventually, the tigers departed (Taishō 50. 396a). The Fuhu luohan who points his fingers at the crouching tiger in niche no. 24 at Feilaifeng (fig. 4) is associable with Tanyou preaching the Buddhist dharma to a tiger. Xu Gaoseng Zhuan 續高僧傳 (A Sequel to the Biography of Eminent Monks) by the Tang dynasty Daoxuan 道宣 (595–667) tells an interesting story about the monk Faxiang 法嚮 (d. 630). When he lived in Ninghai (present-day Ninghai county in Zhejiang province), he was told that tigers had become a terrible local menace, injuring dozens of people every day. Just then, a tiger ran into the ritual hall and snatched a human victim. Faxiang commanded the tiger to release the person, and the tiger obeyed. Later, a crowd of tigers gathered in front of the ritual hall. Faxiang touched the tigers’ heads with his staff and preached dharma to them...
In Song Gaoseng Zhuan, the monk Zanning tells a story about the monk Zhiman (志滿 d. by 805). When he traveled to Huan-glian Mountain in Xuancheng (present-day Xuancheng county in Anhui province), he was told of the tragic harm done by tigers in the area. Zhiman answered that tigers also have a Buddha nature. He burned incense and prayed, and the tiger attacks never repeated themselves (Taishō 50. 766c). Chapter twenty-five of Song Gaoseng Zhuan records a story about another Tang monk, Daoyin (道陰 active first half of the ninth century). One night, he met a tiger that leapt in the road in front of him and roared. Daoyin sat on the ground, closed his eyes, and chanted from the Jingang jing (The Diamond Sutra). Under the influence, the tiger crouched in the grass and remained by his side until the early morning (Taishō 50. 871c).

The Appearance of the Eighteen Luohans in Niche No. 68

As the sixteen luohans were dispersed after the Buddha achieved nirvana, it was reasonable to produce luohan figures both individually as well as grouped. The sixteen paintings of luohan images by Guanxiu and the luo-
han sculptures in Yanxia cave are early examples of the luohan group. In niches nos. 9, 17, and 24 at Feilaifeng, most of the luohans are individual figures, but some luohan figures in these three sets form a small group and appear to talk each other (Gao Nianhua 2002, figs. 32, 38, 45, 50). After the Northern Song period, artists continued to produce smaller groups of individual luohan figures within a group of sixteen or eighteen, and this approach continued through modern times.

The eighteen luohan figures in niche no. 68 at Feilaifeng are presented in several small groups. On the left side of Budai, luohans 1–3 face the main figure and make up one group (fig. 5). Luohans 10 and 15 face Budai, and luohan 15 holds a stupa that originated in the Hangzhou area. On the right side of Budai, luohans 12–4 make up another group. The central figure in this group is Luohan 13 who holds a traditional Chinese handscroll (fig. 6). Moreover, luohan 17 grasps a Chinese traditional ruyi 如意 (as-you-wish scepter) with his two hands. The above three luohans with Chinese elements illuminate the indigenization of the eighteen luohans. Luohans 7 and 9 turn their heads toward Budai and thus seem to form a pair. Although some of the luohan figures have no apparent thematic connections (these include luohans 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11 and 15), they are carved in an overlapping manner. The niche seems to depict a scene in which the luohans appear on a mountain and form a circle around Budai.

![Figure 5](image_url) Luohans 1–9, Southern Song period. Niche no. 68. Photo by the author.
Like the carvings in niche no. 68, some paintings depict the eighteen luohans in several smaller groups. In one painting, the artists represent the luohans in a landscape setting. A hanging scroll attributed to Li Gonglin 李公麟 (1049–1106) in the collection of the Palace Museum in Taipei may be the earliest extant painting of this type. The painting depicts four groups of figures: three seated luohans conversing, two standing luohans conversing, three luohans standing on a bridge looking downward, and four seated luohans conversing. Other luohans are depicted riding a tiger and holding a flaming pearl. It is the landscape setting that unifies them (Guoli gugong bowuyuan 1989, vol. 1, 277). Unlike the scriptural descriptions of luohans (as in Fazhu Ji), which portray the luohans engaged in their specific duties while dwelling in different places, this painting depicts the luohans engaged in Buddhist activities near the same river in the mountains. This painting probably adheres to a certain form of Song-period luohan painting.

After the eleventh century, paintings tend to show the eighteen luohans in a single group, closely connected to each other. Nine standing luohans overlap each other in each of the paintings that make up a pair of Yuan dynasty hanging scrolls in the collection of the Palace Museum in Taipei (Guoli gugong bowuyuan 1990, vol. 5, 179–82). Similarly, a consolidated group of eighteen luohans appears in a Yuan dynasty hanging scroll dated before 1348 in a Japanese collection. These luohans stand in a group

![Figure 6](image-url)
to view a handscroll (fig. 7). On the left side, Xianglong lifts a bowl and watches a flying dragon; to the right, Fuhu stands beside a tiger (Osaka shiritsu bijutsukan 1980, fig. 298).

The eighteen luohans of niche no. 68 at Feilaifeng fit within the larger tradition of luohan composition preserved in painting. During the Song period, eighteen luohan figures were often arranged in small groups in a landscape setting. During the Yuan period, luohan figures often appeared in a single group occupying the same setting. The characteristics of the eighteen luohan figures in niche no. 68 represent a midway point in the evolution toward aggregation.

After the ninth century, the eighteen luohans were closely associated with a larger group of five hundred luohans. In his Song Gaoseng Zhuan, the monk Zanning claimed that the five hundred luohans, despite their Indian origins, lived in Mount Tiantai 天台山, a holy mountain in present-day Zhejiang province where the Tiantai school was founded. This book also mentioned a great hall there, in which the kings of Wuyue kingdom made their offerings (Taishô 50. 880b). The belief that the five hundred luohans live in Mount Tiantai endured from the Song period onward. The Yuan dynasty artist Wu Zhen 吳鎮 (1280–1354) wrote a poem in praise of the Northern Song artist Li Gonglin’s painting Da Aluohan tu 大阿羅漢圖 (Paintings of the Great Luohans). Wu said: “[Do you] know where the five

According to Buddhist texts, the five hundred luohans have multiple duties, one of which is to assist the sixteen luohans that dwell in this world and protect the Buddhist dharma. *Fashu ji* mentions that the sixteen luohans dwell in sixteen different regions, each assisted by a group of between 500 and 16,000 luohans. Only the second luohan, Kanakavatsa 迦諾迦伐蹉, is accompanied by five hundred luohans, who dwell in Kasmira 迦濕羅國 to the north.\(^\text{18}\) *Fashu ji* probably inspired Chinese Buddhists to associate the five hundred luohans with the eighteen luohans. About ninety years after the carving of the roughly hundred luohans in Qinglin cave 青林洞 at Feilaifeng, a stele that mingled the names of eighteen and five hundred luohans was carved in 1098 on the cliff of Bailong dong 白龍洞 (White Dragon Cave) in Huixian shan 會仙山 (Meeting Immortals Mountain) in Yishan county, Guangxi province. This stele implies that all of the luohans are Sakyamuni’s disciples, and the eighteen stay in the world to obey the order of the Buddha, while the five hundred serve as their followers.\(^\text{19}\) The group of eighteen luohans was developed from the sixteen, so they share the same duty to remain in the world until the arrival of Maitreya, as described in *Fashu ji*. As each of the five hundred luohans has the mission to assist one of the sixteen luohans to protect Buddha’s law in the world, Chinese Buddhists reasonably associated the two groups.

A later stele, carved in 1134, clearly associates the eighteen and the five hundred, placing both groups in the residence of the five hundred luohans. The stele was originally located at Qianming yuan 乾明院 (Bright Sky Cloister) in Jiangyin county, Jiangsu province. The stele was damaged in 1860, but Beijing Library has a rubbing of the front side made during the reign of Jiaqing (1796–1820) or Daoguang (1821–50) of the Qing dynasty. We can see the titles of “Zhushi Shiba Zunzhe” 住世十八尊者 (“Eighteen Luohans Remain in the World”) and “Shiqiao Wubai Zunzhe” 石橋五百尊者 (“Five Hundred Luohans at Rocky Bridge”) and the names of the luohans.\(^\text{20}\) This arrangement followed that of the stele from the White Dragon cave in Guangxi. Beijing Library has not published rubbings taken from the back of the stele, but the Southern Song offiicial Gao Daozu 高道素 provides notes in *Jiangyin xian xuzhi* 江陰縣續志 (*A Sequel to the Gazetteer of Jiangyin County*) by the Qing scholar Miao Quansun 籀荃孫 (1844–1919). Miao’s book lists the names of the many donors, most of them women, carved on the back of this stele, and it quotes an inscription that says that Zhao Miaozhi 趙妙智, Sun Shijiuniang 孫十九娘 and others commissioned a niche to include a Maitreya figure (Miao Quansun 1970, 1209–18). Instead of showing the Buddha served by the sixteen luohans from Indian scriptures, this scene depicts the Buddha being served by the eighteen along
with the five hundred, in keeping with later Chinese ideas. The stele of Qianming cloister mingles the names of the eighteen luohans and the five hundred luohans, suggesting that the Song people believed that eighteen and the five hundred shared the same residence. This idea probably derives from the stele of the White Dragon cave and from earlier, now lost works of the Northern Song period, since the notion that the five hundred resided in Mount Tiantai was already accepted during the tenth century.

This assumption is confirmed by an essay in which Cao Xun suggests that the five hundred luohans “disperse and dwell in mountains and forests and appear in different guises [in order to] fill the world with blessed lands [futian 福田]” (Cao Xun 1970, 751). In fact, this is the role performed by the sixteen luohans, according to scripture translated by Xuanzang. Cao’s perspective corresponds with those of the two steles mentioned above, and, as noted in the preceding discussion, the original idea can be traced back to the tenth century. The patrons who commissioned the luohan figures of niche no. 68 most likely shared the belief that the eighteen and five hundred luohans occupy the same mountain, which explains their arrangement. The grouping of the figures were probably meant to suggest that they dwelt in the same mountain, Mt. Tiantai, in order to fulfill their duties while waiting for the advent of the future Buddha Maitreya, who is in turn figured as Budai.

Steps Taken to Indigenize Images

Niche no. 68 at Feilaiifeng provides a wonderful illustration of how the Chinese indigenized images based on Indian conceptions. From Chinese Buddhist texts, we can trace Budai’s transformation from a local Chan monk to an incarnation of Maitreya. The features of Budai in niche no. 68 can be linked with paintings and sculptures depicting this monk, making the figure a midpoint in Budai’s evolution from local to pan-cultural deity during the Ming and Qing periods. During the Tang period, people began to believe that Buddhas and bodhisattvas appeared incarnate in China. During the Song period, many eminent Chinese monks were said to be incarnations of Buddhist deities. The carving of Budai in niche no. 68 represents this tendency in Chinese Buddhist art and thought. Carved as companions to Maitreya, the eighteen luohans of niche no. 68 assist the indigenous incarnation of this future Buddha. This new grouping of luohan figures, sixteen from India and two entirely indigenous to China, demonstrates the Chinese appropriation and elaboration of Indian tradition after the tenth century, arranging the figures in a single group, for example, to reflect the Chinese theory that they reside at Mt. Tiantai. The preceding discussion demonstrates the steps by which the themes of Indian texts were indigenized and sinicized, giving rise to unique a Chinese belief system and ultimately to new images and artistic traditions.
Notes

1 For the transformation of Chinese Buddhism and its art during the Song and the Yuan periods, see Chang Qing 2006.
2 For an overview of Buddhist sculpture at Feilaifeng, see Gao Nianhua 2002 and Edwards 1984.
3 Huang Yongquan 黃湧泉 suggests that this niche was carved in the Yuan period (Huang Yongquan 1958, 7). In contrast, most modern scholars, such as Yan Wenru 閻文儒 (1912–94), Jung Eunwu 鄭恩雨, and Gao Nianhua 高念華, believe that this sculptural group was created in the Southern Song period (Yan Wenru 1987, 294; Gao Nianhua 2002; Jung Eunwu 1994, 206). Richard Edwards offers more evidence in support of a Southern Song date (Edwards 1984). Paula Swart also dates niche no. 68 to the Southern Song (Swart 1987). I agree with Edwards and others who propose a Southern Song date.
5 Richard Edwards translates: “Maitreya, truly Maitreya / Divides his body into ten thousand million parts/ From time to time appearing to that time / But recognized by none” (Edwards 1984, 12).
6 According to Edwards, this hanging scroll was probably painted in the late Southern Song or early Yuan period (Edwards 1984, 13).
7 In Yanxia cave, there is a Budai sculpture without any inscription. Wang Shilun and Zhao Zhenhan suggest that this Budai was carved in the Song period (Wang Shilun and Zhao Zhenhan 1981, 44). However, the Budai sits straight and grasps a rosary with his right hand. This pose is closer to the Yuan-era Budai in niche no. 45 than to the Budai of niche no. 68 at Feilaifeng. In addition, the characteristics of the Yanxia Budai are similar to the Budai sculpture at Yonghe gong in Beijing (Ferdinand Diederich Lessing 1942, plate 10). It is reasonable to infer, then, that the Yanxia Budai was carved during or after the Yuan period.
8 The Boston Museum of Fine Arts has a Southern Song painting from a set depicting the five hundred luohans. Baozhi appears as eleven-headed Guanyin (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston 1992, fig. 140).
9 The main figure in Cave 177 of Beishan grottoes is Sengjia sitting in a lotus posture. Two monk figures sit against the two sides of this cave. They are Baozhi and Wanhui (Dazuxian Wenwu Baoguansuo 1984, figs. 47–51; Liu Changjiu, Hu Wenhe, Li Yongqiao 1985, 407).
10 During the fifth century, Ru Dacheng lun 入大乘論, translated by the Northern Liang period (397–439) monk Daotai 道泰 (active first half of the fifth century), mentions that the sixteen great disciples, including Pindola and Rahula, dispersed to live on various islands. All of them were charged with protecting the dharma and remaining in the world (Taishô 32. 39b). Chapter one of Xuanhe huapu 宣和畫譜 (Painting Catalogue Compiled During the Xuanhe Reign) mentions a painting of the sixteen luohans by the famous Liang dynasty painter Zhang Sengyao 張僧繇 (active first half of the sixth century) (Yu Jianhua 1964, 31). It is not known whether or not the painting was genuine, but it seems to have reflected the content of Ru Dacheng lun.
12 According to chapter nine of Chunyou Lin’an zhi 淳佑臨安志 (Gazetteer of Lin’an Written in the Chunyou Reign), the eighteen luohan sculptures in Yanxia cave were com-
missioned by the Wuyue king, Qian Ti 錢俶 (Shi E 1983, 169). Fifteen luohan images survive in Yanxia cave. Songeun Choe suggests that there should have been eighteen original luohan figures (Choe Songeun 1991). I agree with her suggestion. However, traditional Chinese scholarships suggest that there were sixteen original luohan images. See Zhongguo shiku diaosu quanji bianji weiyuanhui 2000, figs. 15–24.  

Chapter one of this book says that the meaning of Bintoulu is budong (immovable). Fayun records that someone called him Binduluo (Taishō 54. 1064b).  

Another example is Jiangyin jun Qianming yuan luohan Zunhao 江陰軍乾明院羅漢尊號 (The Sacred Names of the Luohans at Qianming Cloister in Jiangyin jun), a stele carved in 1134 at Qianming yuan 乾明院 (Bright Sky cloister) in Jiangyin county, Jiangsu province. It was damaged in 1860. Beijing Library possesses a rubbing probably made during the reign of Jiaqing (1796–1820) or Daoguang (1821–50) during the Qing dynasty. The stele records the names of the eighteen luohans; the last two are Qingyou and Bintoulu (Beijing tushuguan shanbenbu jinshizu 1993, 3).  


Wen Fong's research demonstrates the origin and development of this belief (Wen Fong 1958, 15–6).  

However, Xuanzang does not mention images of the five hundred luohans in western regions (Taishō 49. 13a). For an English version of Fazhu ji, see Shan-shih Buddhist Institute 1961.  

The stele is titled Gongyang Shijiarulai zhushi shiba zunzhe wubai da aluohan shenghao 供養釋迦如來住世十八尊者五百大阿羅漢聖號 (Offerings to the Sacredly Named Eighteen Luohans who Remain in the World [to Abide the Teaching] of the Sakyamuni Buddha and the Five Hundred Luohans). It was discovered after 1949 and is not recorded in any epigraphy books. This stele lists the names of each luohan in the groups of eighteen and five hundred (Bai Huawen 白化文 1991).  

The title of this stele is Jiangyin jun Qianming yuan luohan Zunhao (Beijing tushuguan shanbenbu jinshizu 1993, 3).  

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Indigenizing Deities: The Budai Maitreya


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Two Decades of Local Democratic Experiment in China: Developments and Changing Assessments

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In the late 1980s, China began to allow direct elections at the village level. In the 1990s, the direct elections were extended from the non-governmental villagers’ autonomous organization to the township government, the lowest rung of the administrative hierarchy. However, the new experiments were categorically forbidden in 2006. Less competitive versions of the public nomination and selection process were resumed in Guiyang City for the district and deputy municipal leaders in 2008. These shifts reveal the varied attitudes toward local democratic experiment. This paper reviews the various forms of these experiments and analyzes various assessments.

Introduction

Prior to the Seventeenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China in October 2007, a heated debate was underway among officials and scholars about the general orientation of the “Reform and Opening to the Outside World” (gaige kaifang 改革开放) that would reach its thirtieth anniversary in late 2008. Some argued that the expanding private sector and shrinking public sector were eroding the socialist state and that the state should reign in the reform process by re-imposing political and economic control. Their adversaries called for yet more extensive political reform, arguing that the gap between the rich and poor, between the coastal areas in the east and the hinterland, and between the demands for greater resources and the deteriorating environment, can only be alleviated by further reform. According to this school of thought, market-oriented reform can go no farther without political openness and recognition of private ownership. The debate became particularly intense when the National People’s Congress (Quanguo Renmin Daibiao Duhui 全国人民代表大会) examined a draft of the Law on Property Rights (Wuquanfa 物权法), which included clauses that called for the protection of private property. The central leadership put an
end to this debate a year or so before the Party Congress (Dangdaihui 党代会). In February 2007, Premier Wen Jiabao (温家宝), in a rare political move in recent Chinese politics, published an article in The People’s Daily (Renmin ribao 人民日报). The article repeated the official line and reiterated the Party’s stand of twenty years earlier: its priority would remain economic development, based on the two pillars of keeping a tight lid on political reform while furthering the “Reform and Opening to the Outside World” (Wen 2007). Addressing the conference marking the thirtieth anniversary of the initiation of the “Reform and Opening to the Outside World” on December 18, 2008, Hu Jintao (胡锦涛) vowed “never to take the old road of the closed nor go astray by altering the banner” (Hu 2008), basically iterating what Mr. Wen had expressed earlier. What do these messages say about the fate of political reform?

According to Wu Jinglian, China’s economic reform has been incremental in nature since the early 1980s. This is to say that the economic aspects of the traditional planning mechanism have been retained while the market mechanism has been applied to developing the private sector and Chinese-foreign joint ventures (zhongwai hezi qiye 中外合资企业). These ventures are largely credited with China’s rapid growth but also blamed for a number of unfortunate consequences. These involve the collusion between political authorities and business interests, the imposition of burdensome regulations that affect consumers and businesses, and the imposition of fees that function as bribes (Zhang 2008). Is the incremental approach workable for the political reform?

Since the late 1980s, China has introduced direct elections at the village level. There are two opinions about the impact of grassroots political reform centered on direct elections. Some scholars believe direct election will help maintain one-party rule while others hold that it will lead to more general political reform or even to political revolution. Has the Chinese leadership’s assessment of the villagers’ committee elections (Cunweihui Xuanju 村委会选举) changed? If so, for what reason?

Chinese leaders have advocated either the bottom-up or the top-down approach to electoral reform, or some combination of the two. When direct village elections were introduced in the 1980s, the veteran Party leader Peng Zhen envisaged a bottom-up development that would eventually result in direct elections at the county and even provincial level (Peng 1990, 25). After two decades of experiment, does this remain a possibility? What kind of decision is the leadership now mulling?

This paper will try to answer these questions by reviewing developments over the past two decades.
A Review of Local Democratic Experiments in the Past Two Decades

Since the introduction of the Villagers’ Committee elections nationwide in 1987, China has seen various local initiatives that experiment with residents’ political participation and selection of local officials. Deliberative democracy, for example, has been applied to the budget formulation and approval process of some town governments. Wenling City, Zhejiang Province, undertook this kind of initiative in 2001, bringing together local residents and officials to discuss local affairs, especially government budget formulation and implementation, as well as major public works and services (Jia 2009). Many county and city governments have solicited annual public assessment of the performance of government departments and officials. In Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, the public annually assesses municipal government departments, with the leaders of the two lowest rated bureaus losing their positions (China News Service 2002).

Village elections, meanwhile, have their urban counterpart in the election of neighborhood committees (juweihui xuanju 居委会选举). In 1998, Sifang District, Qingdao Municipality, Shandong Province, organized the direct elections of neighborhood committees (Ministry of Civil Affairs 2007). In the following year, twenty-six cities throughout the country followed suit in accordance with a directive from the Ministry of Civil Affairs (Minzhengbu 民政部). In cities such as Shanghai and Nanjing, residents showed little enthusiasm for participating. In the following two or three years, little progress was made in the attempt to render the quality of urban community elections comparable to rural elections. The ice was broken after two towns in Nanning Municipality, Guangxi Autonomous Region, successfully organized direct elections for all eight neighborhood committees under its jurisdiction in July 2001. By 2002, such elections had spread from large cities to medium-sized and smaller cities, and shifted from sporadic experiments to the collective actions of an urban district or a city.

Direct elections of the village autonomous organization have led to the election of the village Party branch (dangzhibu 党支部) with the inauguration of the two-ballot system in Hequ County, Shanxi Province. The new electoral method allows ordinary villagers to cast votes in opinion polls of the candidates. Party members then elect the Party Branch from the list created by the popular vote (Dong 2007).

Further, direct elections have been upgraded from the non-governmental villagers’ autonomous organization to the township or town government (xiangzhenzhengfu 乡镇政府), the lowest in the hierarchy of administrative structure. Sichuan Province took the lead in such experiments. At the end of 1998, the Nancheng Township of Qingshen County and Buyun Township of the Central District of Suining City organized di-
rect elections of government leaders almost at the same time (Xin 2005; Yang 2008).

Various forms of indirect elections have been used to select Party and government leaders up to the prefectural level. In 1999, Dapeng Town in Shenzhen Municipality organized three rounds of polls involving three groups of local elites to select the head of government. This kind of more restrictive solicitation of popular opinion was soon widened by Zuoli Town in Shanxi Province, where all eligible voters cast votes of confidence, preceding the vote of the deputies of the Town People’s Congress (Xiangzhen Rendadaibiao 乡镇人大代表) (Du 2002). The so-called “two ballot system” marks the limit to openness in elections at the lowest level of government, as the central government deemed “unconstitutional” the earlier Buyun Township election, in which the popular vote was binding (Zha 1999). The “public nomination and public selection” (gongtui gongxuan 公推公选) method was used to select both party secretary (dangweishuji 党委书记) and government leader in Yangji Town, Hubei Province in 2002 (Long, Zhang, and Zhou 2003). The various forms of experiments can be summed up this way:

1. Direct election by all voters (Buyun Township, Suining City, Sichuan Province).

2. “Three-ballot system” (Dapeng Town, Shenzhen Municipality, Guangdong Province). Voters nominate candidates; elites select final candidates for the People’s Congress (PC); PC deputies elect the leader.

3. “Two-ballot system” (Zuoli Town, Linyi County, Shanxi Province), which is also used for the selection of the Party secretary and PC chairman. Voters cast vote of confidence; the Party committee nominates candidates; the Party congress or People’s Congress elects leaders.

4. “Public nomination, public selection” (Nanbu County and Suining City, Sichuan Province). The top six in written exams attend oral exams administered by 100-odd elites. The Party congress or People’s Congress elects leaders.

5. The PC deputies (dangdaibiao 党代表), rather than the county Party committee (dangweihui 党委会), directly nominate candidates (Mianyang City, Sichuan Province).

6. “Two nominations plus election” (Yangji Town, Jingshan County, Hubei Province). This method is similar to the method used by Dapeng Town, but the second nomination is made by the Villagers’ Representative Assembly.
There have also been experimental competitive elections to select deputies to the People’s Congresses at the township and county levels. Although the law required deputies at these levels to be directly elected as early as 1982, the elections were for the most part organized perfunctorily with little or no real competition (E E 2007). Experiments in this vein were conducted in the last three years or so against the background of discouraging formal directives or circulars from middle level authorities but with the support of individual officials at higher levels.

As shown above, local democratic experiments represented by village self-government (cunmin zizhi 村民自治) reached a high point at the turn of the century. In this respect, the following two points are particularly noteworthy:

Firstly, the Organizational Guidelines of the Villagers’ Committee (Cunweihui Zuzhifa 村委会组织法) was revised and enacted by the National People’s Congress in 1998 as a formal law after eleven years as a “law for trial implementation.” The new law incorporated the experience of the nationwide experiments of the previous decade by endorsing the so-called “sea election” (haixuan 海选), which was used for the first time in Lishu County, Jilin Province. This law enlarged the scope of elections and protected the voters’ free expression of their will by providing for private booths in which to fill out ballots (Xinhua Daily Telegraph, 2009).

Secondly, all provinces, municipalities directly administered by the central government (zhixiashi 直辖市), and autonomous regions have held direct village elections after the adoption of the new law. Prior to 2001, Guangdong and Yunnan Provinces delegated township government to the villages. The new officials served in what became known as village administrative affairs offices (cungongsuo 村公所). These offices were staffed by the appointees of the township government and therefore no direct elections were required. The nature of the law for trial implementation meant provinces could decide not to organize the Villagers’ Committee elections.

All of these experiments share a common characteristic: they are promoted or guided by the government. Under the government organization, the local residents or cadres go to the polls and thereby receive democratic training. On this basis, village and urban community residents’ self-government as launched in the early 1990s has been termed “mobilized democracy” (dongyuanshi minzhu 动员式民主). Meanwhile, the CCP’s main political mobilization methods as evolved since 1920s have been sustained, such as political propaganda and agitation, organizational control, leadership domination and mass mobilization. More specifically, “Mobilized Democracy” has the following features: (1) the party-state adopts the traditional mobilization method to encourage local residents to stand for or take part in the elections; (2) in the process of mobilization, the party-state is the initiator while the local residents passively participate; (3) the mobi-
lized democratic practice is based on the policies of the party-state rather than on a comprehensive body of law; (4) the party-state makes and explains the policies as well as conducts mobilization; and (5) the mobilized democracy is confined to the grassroots, extending not even to the lowest level of government.

This kind of mobilized democracy meaningfully initiates democratization but also has limitations that eventually lead to difficulties or stagnation. Since 1998, the new law has created tensions between the Villagers’ Committee and village Party Branch and between the village and the township government. These tensions impede the further development of the village self-government. Attempts to smooth these relationships involve guaranteeing the Party’s leadership and the control of the government. The specific response to the tension between the Villagers’ Committee and village Party Branch has entailed the “two ballot system” as adopted by Linyi County, Shanxi Province; this involves one official concurrently serving as the chairman of the villagers’ committee and as the secretary of the village Party branch. The response to the tension between the village and the township government was to make the township government administration more transparent. However, most township governments find numerous ways to limit this openness. In theory, village self-government means that villagers run their own affairs. The villagers’ committee should be elected by and serve the villagers, but in reality the village self-government is promoted by the township government. The committee looks up to the township government and carries out tasks assigned by the government instead of executing the wishes of the villagers. In many provinces, committee members are paid by the township government. Frequent and widespread disputes over village elections and over township interference in village self-government point to the institutional deficiencies of mobilized democracy.

Against this background, the sixteenth Party National Congress (Zhonggong Shiliuda 中共十六大) adopted in 2002 the approach of “using intra-party democracy” (dangnei minzhu 党内民主) to promote the people’s democracy (renmin minzhu 人民民主) (Hu 2007). The innovations of intra-party democracy address the competitive elections of deputies to the town and county Party congresses, make sessions of the Party congresses annual instead of once every five years, and assign important decisions, especially concerning personnel appointments, to the full Party Committee (Dangwei Quanti Huiyi 党委全体会议) instead of its Standing Committee (Dangwei Changwei Huiyi 党委常委会). Its value and implications for China’s democratic development will be discussed later.

In 2006 direct town elections were categorically forbidden. In 2008 public nomination and public selection was resumed in Guiyang City for the district and deputy municipal leaders (Han 2008).
between the direct election and the public nomination and public selection is that the former is open to all eligible voters while the latter is limited to the participation of local elites.

Of all these types of experiments, direct village and township elections are most significant as new steps in democratization because they present real choices to voters and because candidates can present their own platforms or promises to voters.

**Varied Attitudes about Democratic Experiments**

The first few Villagers’ Committees were set up by the farmers in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region around 1980. They soon won the recognition of the party-state as they filled the management vacuum in the rural areas after the collapse of the commune system. There was a consensus among the central leadership on institutionalization of the village self-government. Its role in re-organizing farmers was immediately appreciated, and the official status of the Villagers’ Committee was enshrined in the Constitution in 1982. The consensus was equally a function of pragmatism and ideology. The effectiveness of village self-government is comparable to the traditional village government (cungongsuo 村公所) in organizing the rural society, while the administrative and fiscal costs are lower. Ideologically, village self-government is a continuation of the CCP’s emphasis on the masses in that it is an innovation of farmers, which should be respected by the Party. Furthermore, the institutionalization and functioning of the new grassroots organization embodies the mass orientation, while village self-government institutionalizes this orientation. The measures were instrumentally deepened the farmers’ identification with the party-state by partially empowering them. Such consensus explains how the village self-government overcame initial obstacles and became the officially endorsed form of organization at the grassroots level in the rural areas.

Two assessments of village self-government have persisted. Its proponents favor it in the hope that it will empower rural residents and initiate democracy in China with the prospect of extending it to the county and even provincial level. They are encouraged by more recent developments such as the implementation of direct township elections. Its opponents have no faith in the proper exercise of democratic rights by the rural residents because in their eyes farmers lack democratic ideas and skills, and they maintain that village elections are likely to be dominated by clans or controlled by money politics. The Party apparatus are reluctant to give up control of the party-state over villages, envisaging that direct elections will result in Villagers’ Committees composed of non-Party members. The local government departments, especially at the township level, fear loss of control over villages as their role shifts from “leadership” to “guidance.” They
perceive an inevitable conflict between the right of self-government and the
government administrative power, and they foresee that the situation will
become worse if village self-government deteriorates and leads to disorder
in the rural areas.

For these reasons, the central leaders led by then-NPC Chairman
(*Quanguo Renda Weiyuanzhang* 全国人大委员长) Peng Zhen and the Minis-
try of Civil Affairs (the implementing agency) had to make a tactical retreat.
The impact of the proposed Organizational Guidelines of Villagers’ Com-
mittees was lessened by turning it into a law for trial implementation. It
will be first implemented in some areas on an experimental basis. At the
initial stage of institutionalizing village self-government, the priority is to
obtain the support of the local branch of the Party and local government as
these bodies are reluctant to let villagers run their own affairs. At this stage,
reasonably enough, the quality of elections is a secondary consideration;
without implementation, issues of quality are strictly irrelevant.

Following experiments that began in 1988, the Ministry of Civil Affairs
identified the direct election as the key to the institutionalization of village
self-government. The focus was placed on designing relatively free and fair
electoral procedures to allow “capable persons” to serve on the Villagers’
Committees. They were expected to help consolidate the grassroots organi-
zations, maintain the local social order, and promote local economic devel-
opment. For this reason, the Ministry formed a united front with local gov-
ernment. The village self-government partially improved the relations be-
tween the party-state and farmers and alleviated conflicts between officials
and villagers. This fact resulted in the temporary partnership between the
Ministry and Party departments.

However, with the forceful promotion of direct elections of Villagers’
Committees, questions about their value arose. As the Party Branches re-
maintain the “leadership core” in the villages, no matter how competitive the
elections are and how competent and accountable the elected cadres are, the
democratic value of such experiments is limited. The two-ballot system that
opened the Party Branches to the poll of ordinary villagers has improved
the quality of village democracy to some extent. Up to this point, it seems
that village self-government was still viewed positively by the central lead-
ership. It is notable that in 1998 Former President Jiang Zemin praised it
as “the third invention” of Chinese farmers, following the introduction of
the household contract responsibility system (*jiating lianchan chengbao zer-
enzhi* 家庭联产承包责任制) and the development of rural enterprises (*Ren-
min Ribao* 1998).

Toward the end of 1998, Suining County, Sichuan Province, made the
breakthrough of extending direct elections to the township level. The im-
mediate official reaction of the central leaders was negative. Despite this,
however, less competitive elections than those of Buyun Township were
organized in several provinces. Later experiments emphasized use of the “opinion poll” to select the candidates for secretary of the township Party committees. Ordinary villagers or residents cannot elect the Party secretaries (they must be elected by the Party members), but the most popular candidates are put on the ballot at the official or formal election with voting restricted to Party members.

Following the decision of the NPC in October 2004 to extend the term of office of the town (township) government from three years to five, elections of the deputies to the People’s Congresses at the county and township levels were scheduled to be held between July 2006 and December 2007 (NPC 2006). This would have provided opportunities for the reformers to make further experiments. However, to the disappointment of some reformers, Mr. Sheng Huaren, vice-chairman of NPC Standing Committee, reiterated in August 2006 that direct elections of township government leaders were illegal and warned that evil foreigners were using the tool of human rights and democracy against China (Sheng 2006). As noted previously, no further experiments were carried out until 2008.

The current setback or stagnation has something to do with the institutional limitations of mobilized democracy. These built-in limitations can be summed up by the following points: (1) the contradiction between the varied goals of mobilized democracy; (2) the conflict between its goal and means; (3) the conflict between the internal power structures of the party-state; and (4) the conflict between policies and laws.

The party-state aims at giving the local residents some political freedom in the management of local affairs while keeping final control of the grassroots autonomous organizations. In this context, the Villagers’ Committee and the Neighborhood Committee carry the dual characteristics of administrative and autonomous organizations. On the one hand, the committee members are the agents of the local government, responsible for fulfilling the tasks of the state. On the other hand, they are the leaders of the local community, responsible for handling local affairs and conveying the demands and opinions of residents to the government. Their dual roles originate from the different and sometimes conflicting sources of power. The government and local residents have different expectations of them. When the interests of the local government and residents align, all goes well but when they contradict, the committee members will be blamed by either the government or residents. The centralization tradition means that the state extends its reach to the grassroots, resulting in the serious interference in the local residents’ autonomy. In the rural areas, the township government often meddles in village affairs. It often removes the elected committee members from office although it is against the law. If it is clever, it can effectively control the Villagers’ Committee via the village Party branch.
The purpose of the party-state’s endorsement of mobilized democracy is to adjust the mode of local management. Once putting into motion, however, the new governance model operates on its own rules, which are often unacceptable to the local government. For example, the government devoted much effort to improving electoral rules and procedures at the early stage of direct elections when villagers doubted that they would be allowed to hold free and fair elections. Later, with the improved regulations, villagers often use the elections to resist the interference of the local government.

Under the principle of “Party controlled cadres” (dangguanganbu 党管干部), the local Party organization departments used to appoint the village leaders. With the competitive elections producing more non-Party members in the Villagers’ Committees, the Party organization departments become more concerned. In turn they exerted pressure on the government department responsible for village self-government.

The central and middle-level government and the township government sometimes clash over the implementation of grassroots autonomy. According to the Organizational Guidelines of the Villagers’ Committee, the township government can only guide the work of the village autonomous organization instead of exercising leadership, but in fact, the township government cannot get the job done without the effective support of the village cadres (cunganbu 村干部). Its heavy-handedness tends to strain its relations with the Villagers’ Committee. The wronged village cadres often win the sympathy of the central and middle-level government. After the emergence of the political alliance between the local government, local elites (including village cadres), and the local economic corporations, a new triangular power pattern has emerged in recent years between the central government, local government, and farmers. The local government tends to use a variety of means to protect local interests and expects the central government’s support. Normally the central government ignores the improper behavior of the local government as long as it can maintain stability. Hence the farmers’ interests are often sacrificed.

The CCP depends on policy (zhengce 政策) to exercise its leadership. This was not a problem in the early stages of mobilized democracy, but its stable development cannot do without law. In reality, the development of democracy must contradict the interests of the local Party departments. Hence, there must be law and the law must be obeyed. If the rule of law is to be respected, the policy has sometimes to give way. Mobilized democracy has triggered several debates. According to the Organizational Guidelines of the Villagers’ Committee, some people argue, the committee is the highest authority in the village as it is elected by all eligible voters, and the Party Branch, which is not authorized by the villagers, should follow its leadership. This view has of course many opponents. The verdict of the CCP center is that the Party must lead the Villagers’ Committee. In the
current policy environment, the relevant existing laws sometimes meet re-
sistance and not all prospective laws required by democratic development
are likely to be enacted. As sound law will undermine attempts to control
elections, it is understandable that electoral law is largely a vacuum.

The Rationale for the Ban on Direct Township Elections

The direct village and township elections have had many political implica-
tions. While they have directly impacted the lowest level of government,
they also have had long-term and strategic influence on China’s meso- and
macro-politics. Nobody can predict the political outcome of the direct elec-
tions, either theoretically or practically. This results in the differing opin-
ions among central leaders and the wavering development of the grassroots
democracy.

More specifically, direct village elections raise the following questions
with important implications for local governance: (1) whether they will
strengthen or weaken the status of the village Party branches; (2) whether
village elections will produce cadres more inclined to listen to the opinions
of villagers and safeguard their interests; (3) whether village elections will
reduce the political control of the township government over the village
institutions; and (4) whether the village elections will make state policies
more difficult to implement in the countryside.

Viewed from the macro-political perspective, the fundamental question
is whether village elections will enhance the legitimacy of the Chinese
Communist Party or not. The related question is whether the implementa-
tion of the direct elections in villages will start a bottom-up chain reaction
that will impact the higher levels of government as the veteran leader Peng
Zhen envisaged.

From the very beginning, grassroots democracy has been considered
compatible with strong control by the party-state, and elections have been
designed to increase mass support for the Party. With this understanding, it
can be hoped that elections will continue to proliferate and serve as a
mechanism of general Chinese democratization. However, the 2000 Taiwan
election saw the long-term ruling Kuomintang lose power. The series of
“color revolutions” in Eastern Europe and Central Asia resulted in the
coming to power of pro-Western governments. It was against this back-
ground that Chinese leaders heightened vigilance against the so-called
peaceful evolution strategy (hepingyanbiao 和平演变) of the West. In a related
move, the Chinese government tightened control over NGOs. Then came
the NPC decision on forbidding further experiments in direct township
elections with the understanding that direct elections may threaten rather
than enhance the Party’s rule, as was believed up to then. If such an analy-
sis holds water, the decision is still in line with the Party’s overriding concern to strengthen its own governing capability.

It is worthwhile here to review the background and original goal of the party-state’s adoption of mobilized democracy. In 1978 when the reform and opening to the outside world drive was initiated, the Chinese leadership abandoned collectivism in the economic sphere and replaced it with a policy that permits both economic growth and economic inequality. Meanwhile, in the political sphere, the Chinese leadership resorted to a strategy in which administration took the place of politics in order to satisfy the demands for political participation, as well as to meet the demands of the political, economic and intellectual elites for regime stability. This meant that political reform was shunned, and administrative reform was packaged as political reform. For example, while lower ranking cadres or scholars had no opportunity to run for political office, they could take part in public elections for middle-ranking government positions organized by the Party Organization Department. This traditional model of political participation is still operative.

Some central leaders want to continue the political socialization of the masses through a kind of institutionalized mass movement, using grassroots autonomy as a platform for the local residents’ political participation. Although this policy is compromised by the economic development model advocated by local authorities, by the economic deprivation of the farmers as a function of the modernization process, and by the non-democratic nature of the culture, the interaction between central and local leaders produced a consensus on “electing capable persons.” Hence mobilized democracy gained the chance for implementation.

Mobilized democracy was launched by the party-state and therefore could be applied nationwide, but the central authorities bring to the experiment in democracy an innate ideological conservatism, which explains the constant attempts to reign in democratic momentum when it exceeds the bounds that authorities envisage. By contrast, local governments have shown varied attitudes. Their opposition at the early stage and their later support are consistent with their perceived interests. They care less about ideology. When facing local problems, they are willing to push mobilized democracy if they consider it likely to be effective. Both the central authorities’ initial plan and the local government’s embrace of it represent a kind of adjustment in governing mode in light of the economic and social changes. From the perspective of the party-state, mobilized democracy is a form of grassroots autonomy and therefore represents an adjustment of the relationship between the state and society.

Both village self-government and urban community self-government represent the effort of the party-state to transform grassroots organizations from administrative bodies to autonomous bodies as part of its larger effort
to adjust the governing mode of the society. The two kinds of self-government suggest an institutional arrangement based on the state’s delegation of power to the society rather than an institutional arrangement based on the transfer of rights from local residents to autonomous organizations. Under this arrangement, the government concedes to society only very limited autonomy, namely, the residents’ limited right of participation in the control of grassroots autonomous organizations. The local autonomous organizations largely accept the implementation of the party-state’s policies as their primary mission while enjoy limited authority in handling communal affairs. In allowing elections and conceding the right to participate in the management of local affairs, the party-state hopes to produce “capable persons” who will obey higher authorities.

Under China’s unified party-government political system, the central authorities have emphasized the consolidation of local Party organizations and their leadership role in implementing mobilized democracy. In fact, both village self-government and urban community self-government are promoted as a supplement to the local Party organizations. In the elections of grassroots autonomous organizations, the party-state has always made it a priority to ensure that Party members are elected. In short, the mobilized democracy leaves little room for development.

While considering what the party-state refuses to sanction, it is also necessary to note what the party-state has advocated and implemented. Intra-party democracy and the “people first” policy (yiren weiben 以人为本) should be discussed in this light. The CCP declares intra-party democracy vital to its survival, and it has been an important topic among scholars since it was officially put forward at the CCP’s Sixteenth National Congress in 2002. The Fourth Plenum of the CCP Seventeenth Central Committee (Shiqijiesizhongquanhui 十七届四中全会) reaffirmed the basic program of “expanding intra-Party democracy to develop people’s democracy” in September 2009 (Xinhua 2009).

The importance attached to the intra-party democracy is in fact a response to the ever louder call for democracy in Chinese society. Democratic reform has created pressure from outside of the system, including demands for the reform of the Party. If the Party sticks to authoritarian rule, the Party may be torn internally by dissension and shunned by the public. Facing societal pressure, the Party must place political reform on its agenda. The practical challenge is to undertake reform without endangering its own status. Compared to ceding power to the society or allowing the democratization of society, intra-party democracy is relatively safe, as delegating authority to lower-level Party organizations and allowing Party members to enjoy greater freedom and participation do not threaten the Party’s ultimate control. Hence, the Party’s support for intra-party democracy makes sense. But it is a passive choice.
In general, most scholars within the establishment view the relationship between intra-party democracy and the democracy of the country positively. Wang Guixiu, for example, argues that intra-party democracy affects other sectors, entails little risk, and involves substantive change, and that it therefore makes sense to support intra-party democracy as the vanguard of political reform (Wang Guixiu 2003). Xu Yaotong argues that, considering the lack of democracy in both the Party and society, developing the intra-party democracy as a first step toward a democratic society is feasible (Xu 2006). The scholars disagree on the way to implement intra-party democracy. Some support a top-down approach, while others prefer a bottom-up approach.

Local experiments with intra-party democracy have yielded some positive developments, including, as noted previously, the annual session of the local Party congress, direct election of the Party Secretary, and check between the Party departments. In general, they have not surpassed similar experiments involving the township government and village organizations. The experiments, though conducted with many limitations, have at the same time produced new problems. Distortions in the implementation process, as reflected in the leaders' domination rather than the participation of the ordinary Party members or local residents, render intra-party democracy symbolic. Such experiments will not give much hope to the public, nor can they be an effective means of augmenting the legitimacy of the Party's rule or improving local governance. The crux of the issue is the reluctance of power-holders to share power. The situation raises doubts about strategy itself. Many look to intra-party democracy to facilitate the people's democracy, but the fact is that democratic experiments starting with the direct election of the Villagers' Committees preceded the new concept. Before intra-party democracy can play a role in fomenting societal democracy, it must catch up with the latter in scope and quality. As yet, there is no sign of such developments. Therefore a question is valid: Could it be a tactic to restrain the momentum toward direct election of the township government leaders?

The difficulty in promoting both local and intra-party democracy may have prompted the Chinese leaders to consider another option. It may not be cynical to analyze the people-first policy in this light. In his government report delivered to the NPC annual session in March 2007, Premier Wen Jiabao put forward specific programs for improving the people's livelihood such as provision of health care and social security packages to all eligible citizens, efforts to ensure that all students admitted to colleges and universities are able to attend through scholarship programs and waiver of tuition fees for all students admitted to the schools of education run by the Ministry of Education (Jiaoyubu 教育部) (Xinhua News Agency 2007). These can be regarded as new, concrete measures for implementing the Building New Countryside Program in keeping with the concepts of scientific develop-
ment and promotion of a harmonious society advanced by President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen. They are an indication of a shift in the focus of government from a single-minded pursuit of GDP to provision of public goods and services.

The positive publicity surrounding these people-first policies contrasts with the controversy surrounding the experiment on direct elections. Does this mean a re-thinking of the emphasis on local governance and a new understanding of the route for China’s political development?

The Party now seems to prefer people-first policies geared toward maintaining robust economic growth. In addition to expanding democracy, improving the legal system, and continuously pushing forward political structural reform, as Premier Wen recently stressed, the government is currently focused on spurring economic development, safeguarding the rights and interests of citizens, combating corruption, improving the trust-worthiness and competency of government, and promoting social harmony (Wen 2007). In order to improve the provision of public goods and services, efforts are underway to strengthen the central power. A notable recent trend is a revival of vertical control. Of course, to the Party all means are acceptable as long as they tighten and prolong its grip on power, no matter whether its legitimacy is based on popular active support as expressed in regular elections or passive consent as a function of the Party’s ability to deliver benefits.

Conclusion: A Strategic Choice Pending Within the Central Leadership

The experiments to date have proved that China should and can introduce direct elections to lower levels of government, first at the township level. A political decision should be made by the top leadership rather than by individual central leaders. The leadership, however, should not endorse further experiments on the models created in the past two decades. One reason, as the prominent local reformer Luo Chongmin has concluded, is that any bottom-up reforms are too costly and therefore a bad option. Luo is esteemed nationwide for spearheading comprehensive reforms in many fields. When he was the Party Secretary of Honghe Prefecture, Yunnan Province, Mr. Luo made the largest scale experiments in direct township elections (planned for the whole prefecture and actually organized in a county), merger of the rural and urban residence registration systems, and conversions of hospital and media institutions into limited liability companies. He comments that all such reforms should start at the top (Pan 2009).

Another reason why the leadership should not endorse further experiment on recent models is that the various forms of public nomination and public selection are too procedurally complicated. The variety and frequency of elections are a strain on both human and material resources, and
may lead to premature apathy among ordinary voters. Areas most active in promoting local democracy hold numerous separate elections, including elections of (1) Villagers’ Committees; (2) Village Party Branches; (3) Township Government Leaders; (4) Township Party Secretaries and Party Committee Members; and (5) Deputies to the County and Township People’s Congresses. If conducted according to the electoral rules and procedures, each election may require more than one round of voting, as primaries are normally required. The over-politicization of life may become a burden on citizens and may not be conducive to fostering a sound electoral and political culture.

I participated in an experiment to combine some categories of elections under a project entitled “Support Township Competitive Elections” in Ya’an Municipality, Sichuan Province, from 2004 to 2006 (Thørgensen, Elklit, and Dong 2008). Four townships organized direct elections of Party and government leaders as well as deputies to the township People’s Congress on the same day in April 2006. The experiment was successful in combining the different elections and improving competitiveness, but it could not avoid complicated procedures under the applicable Party rules and local electoral laws and regulations.

The attempt to denigrate the universal values of democracy means there are politically powerful forces against the democratization of the Chinese politics, but as the Hu-Wen leadership recently reiterated, the move towards the rule of law and democracy is endorsed by the Party’s political platforms. Therefore the general direction is likely to be maintained. Facing such vocal opposition, local reformers may be more cautious as they contemplate further experimentation. This creates a challenge before the central leadership; there is a race between the pace of corruption and reform, which brings about another race between reform and revolution (Zhou 2009; He 2008). The more realistic option, it seems, is to implement democratic reform that will make local officials accountable to the public but that will not immediately weaken the central control.

The incremental approach to political reform, meanwhile, seems inadvisable. As demonstrated by attempts to increase competition in township elections, retaining the existing cadre-appointment procedures makes broader experiments too complicated and waters down the element of genuine reform. Outside of the economic sphere, it is unthinkable to create a new polity alongside the existing one. There can only be one form of government leadership at any level, so incrementalism can only mean making the selection process more competitive rather than simultaneously maintaining the existing structure while creating a new one alongside it. The downside is cumbersome procedures that test voters’ endurance.

It may be too early to claim that the bottom-up strategy of democratization has been rethought. Even if this proves to be the case, it is actually
consistent with China's basic approach to reform. As established by Deng Xiaoping, this approach focuses on implementing market-oriented economic reform while keeping a lid on the political reform. Nevertheless, three decades of dramatic economic growth have been accompanied by increasing gaps between the different regions and different social strata. The resulting social tension has tested the Party's governing ability. The "people-first" and "harmonious society" (hexieshehui 和谐社会) policies attempt to respond to such social tension. If it has been proven that economic growth will not automatically solve social problems, it needs to be proven that the new people-first policies can be effectively implemented. There is a growing consensus among Chinese officials and scholars that it is high time to introduce substantive and major political reform. The party-state bureaucracy and especially local governments manifest widespread corruption and internal inertia. Placing them under the supervision of the public is necessary more than ever before.

After two decades of competitive elections conducted at the village and township levels, major decisions need to be made to establish electoral categories and simplify procedures. Mere repetition of various previous experiments is not advisable as there are too many categories and methods of elections and their procedures are too complicated. The achievements made to date can only be consolidated with the momentum of sustained development. The consequence of no progress is regression. With the suspension of direct township elections in 2006, the quality of the recently held Villagers' Committee elections has deteriorated. Contrary to the practice of the recent past, the Chinese media lately has said little on the subject of village elections. If they are permitted again, even as a mere showcase, competitive election will not serve a purpose without more room to manoeuvre and experiment.

One idea is to amalgamate the election of township Party and government leaders simultaneously with that of the People's Congress deputies. Requirements for office might also be relaxed. Candidates might merely be required to be older than eighteen, literate, and Party members (for Party positions). Primary elections should be open to more or all voters. At least two kinds of "ticket system" might be used: (1) The Party secretary and government head form a ticket; or (2) The government head selects the deputy leaders. Candidates should be permitted to conduct campaigns with the support of volunteers. Campaign guidelines (use of funds, use of media) should be specified in the campaign regulations. The assembly of Party members and People's Congress must respect the will of the voters and endorse the result of popular poll.

In short, more meaningful experiments require political decisions at the top. Sporadic piece-meal reforms are unlikely to contribute significantly to the democratization of China.
Notes

1The draft Property Law was debated seven times by the NPC Standing Committee from December 2002 to December 2006 and finally passed at the annual plenary session of the NPC on March 16, 2007. Its passage was unprecedented as a draft law normally requires three readings. Also extraordinary was the fact that the draft Property Law was published on July 11, 2005, in an attempt to solicit the opinion of the public. Hundreds of retired senior officials and scholars wrote an open letter against the measure addressed to Party General Secretary Hu and NPC Chairman Wu Bangguo 吴邦国 two weeks before the seventh debate by the NPC Standing Committee in December 2006.

2In Zuolin Town, the election of the township Party and government leaders employed the “two ballot system.” Ordinary voters cast the first ballot. The second ballot is cast by the Township People’s Congress deputies for the election of the government leader or by the Party members for the election of the Party secretary. In Hequ County, by contrast, the election of the village Party branch secretary employed the “two ballot system.” The villagers took part in the primary elections and the Party members endorsed the result of the primary.

3In this form of poll, voters are issued a ballot with which to vote for whomever they want to serve on the villagers’ committee. In extreme cases, the poll may result in dozens of names being proposed. In this case, those who receive most votes go on to the second round of voting.

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The State Goes Pop: Orientalism in *Grief over the Yellow River*

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This article examines how the Chinese state – as one of the subjects whose position within the national power structure has been fundamentally complicated by globalization and transnational capitalism – negotiated the Orientalist structures of feeling in the “leitmotif film” of the 1990s. It investigates the state’s appropriation of Orientalist epistemes in *Grief over the Yellow River*, an influential and popular leitmotif film. I argue that the Chinese state, through the instrument of the director, reworked Orientalism to foreground the state-sponsored mode of “national sentiment,” in which romantic love, familial affection, and clan loyalty give way to an overriding impulse to sacrifice oneself for China. This reworked Orientalist mode of national sentiment bespeaks the Chinese state’s endeavor to govern contemporary China through cinematic narrative.

**Orientalism: A Productive Entry Point**

The publication of Edward Said’s *Orientalism* in 1978 marks a critical moment in the development of modern Western humanities and social sciences. According to Said, the cultural difference between “the Orient” and “the Occident” is a discursive structure made possible by the Western capitalist world rather than a basic truth of the history of human civilization. The Orient is rendered a necessary Other in relation to the Eurocentric Self of the West. Saidian Orientalism brings to the fore the constant efforts of European culture to represent and reconfigure the Oriental Other in relation to the Occidental Self and directs critical attention to the imbalanced power relations inherent in such practices. Providing a new critical space and path to self-cognizance and reflexivity, *Orientalism* ranks as one of the most significant contributions to Western socio-cultural critical theory (Dai 2002, x).

Said’s discussion pertains to Western representations of the East and particularly to the Muslim “Orient” with which his study is primarily concerned (Schein 2002, 387). However, “his critics and supporters alike have extended his model far beyond the confines of that part of the world” (Chen 2002, 1) and Saidian Orientalism has inspired the productive explorations
of the manifold representations of the “self-other” nexus in different local contexts. Critics have pointed out that the Saidian paradigm excludes the “West” as a potential object of essentialist representation, stopping short at the conclusion that the “East” is mute and therefore inherently incapable of “othering” (Schein 2002, 387–88). Ever since the publication of Orientalism, many studies inspired by it have identified in non-Western cultural locations creative “othering” practices that do not necessarily cohere with the Saidian paradigm.

This article examines this kind of creative Orientalist cultural practice by the Chinese state in contemporary China. In the post-Mao era, the party-state is increasingly confronted with dual pressures, as its impulse to control film as an important part of its ideological apparatus runs up against the commercialization of Chinese film, in which the market and consumers increasingly influence production, circulation, and reception. In its overt nationalist claims and enormous domestic popularity, the 1990s “leitmotif film” (zhuxuanlv dianying 主旋律电影) represents the state’s response to this double pressure. The central concern of this article is how the state – whose position within the national power structure has been fundamentally complicated by globalization and transnational capitalism – negotiated the Orientalist structures of feeling in the leitmotif film in the 1990s. It examines the state’s appropriation of Orientalist epistemes in the production of an influential and popular leitmotif movie Grief over the Yellow River (Huanghe Juelian 黄河绝恋, 1999, hereafter HHJL). HHJL’s invocation of China’s struggle against Japan in the twentieth century and the maneuvering of an appropriated or “internalized” Western character as a main narrative element fashion a mode of “national sentiment” (minzu qinggan 民族情感) in which romantic love (aiqing 爱情), familial affection (qinqing 亲情), and clan loyalty (zongzu zhi qing 宗族之情) give way to an overriding impulse to sacrifice oneself for China. I argue that the Chinese state, through the instrument of the director of HHJL, reworked Orientalism to foreground the transformation of the Western character into yet another embodiment of this mode of national sentiment. This reworked Orientalist mode of national sentiment bespeaks the Chinese state’s endeavor to govern the people through cinematic narrative.

**HHJL & Patriotism**

The globalized, information-based modern economy has created non-Western, indigenous societies with consumption-driven masses. The state and the elite class of the Orient exert their agencies by appropriating various Orientalist epistemes and establishing “Oriental” identities that, in many cases, appeal to the indigenous masses. HHJL is an instance of such processes in contemporary China. The movie tells the story of Owen, an
American pilot during the Second World War. He learns the noble spirit of the Chinese people and the greatness of the Chinese culture when he is rescued by the Communist-led Eighth Route Army after an emergency landing near the Great Wall. Owen joins a detachment of the Eighth Route Army as it marches to a communist base across the Yellow River. On the way to the base Owen falls in love with the girl soldier An Jie 安洁, whose lingering memory of being raped by the Japanese makes her a determined fighter. The detachment is disarmed and jailed by the militia force of the An clan, whose members have a long feud with the clan of the detachment leader Heizi 黑子. The leader of the militia force is An Jie’s father, who eventually releases the detachment and tries to help them ferry across the river. Both Heizi and An Jie die in a Japanese riverside ambush, but Owen survives. Half a century later, Owen returns to the Yellow River to mourn the Chinese people who rescued him.

*HHJL* was directed by Feng Xiaoning 冯小宁, a filmmaker who graduated from the Beijing Film Academy in 1982 along with internationally renowned Fifth Generation directors such as Zhang Yimou 张艺谋 and Chen Kaige 陈凯歌. Unlike his classmates, Feng is known for his persistent exploration of themes of patriotism and nationalism. He was handpicked by the state film bureau to direct a series of influential leitmotif movies that include *HHJL*, *Red River Valley* (Hong He Gu 红河谷, 1996) and *Purple Sun* (Zi Ri 紫日, 2000), and he became one of the most distinguished leitmotif film directors in the 1990s and after. After its release in 1999, *HHJL* won the three major film awards in China: the Golden Rooster Award (*Jinji Jiang* 金鸡奖), the Hundred Flowers Award (*Baihua Jiang* 百花奖), and the Palace Column Award (*Huabiao Jiang* 华表奖).

The Golden Rooster is awarded by the China Film Association (*Zhongguo Dianyingjia Xiehui* 中国电影家协会), a professional association of mainland film practitioners; the Hundred Flowers Award by *Popular Cinema* (*Dashong Dianying* 大众电影), a film magazine with a vast audience in China; the Palace Column Award by the state film bureau. In a 2005 talk, Zhao Shi 赵实, vice chief of the State Administration of Radio, Film, and Television (SARFT), partially explained the reason that the state endorsed *HHJL*. Zhao argued that patriotism is an important tradition in Chinese film, allowing it to “share the fate of the nation and breathe together with the people.” *HHJL*’s acceptance in these different quarters testifies to its significance in the development of the 1990s Chinese film industry. It therefore makes a good case study for the investigation of the relation between the leitmotif film and the state.

Patriotism is the central thread of the state-sponsored mode of national sentiment in leitmotif movies such as *HHJL*. Within the context of modern China, the vision of the nation as a community of sympathy is subject to
the manipulations of multiple national subjects, of which the state is the most powerful and skillful. As Naoki Sakai points out, the principle of national sympathy demands that the circuit of feeling be coterminous with the boundaries of the nation as defined by the state, that one extends sympathy to one’s fellow countrymen and antipathy to those designated enemies of the nation, and that one maintains a practical, interactive, and empathetic relation with one’s fellow countrymen and an epistemic, objectifying, and antipathetic relation with outsiders (1997, 142). In the first half of the twentieth century, the overt national crisis of the Japanese invasion provided the occasion to harden the national boundaries between China and Japan, a process overseen by both statist political groups — Chiang Kai-shek’s Nationalist Party and Mao Zedong’s Communist Party. At the price of millions of Chinese and Japanese lives, this historical hardening process solidified the originally abstract national sympathy and transformed the general love for China into specific loyalties to either of the two groups. In other words, overt historical crises such as the Japanese invasion gave the state the natural power to speak for the nation and transform the abstract, universal national sympathy into specific, hardened loyalties to the state-represented nation — or the nation-state.

Chinese films after 1949 refurbished and reinvented this history in cinematic spectacle. The communist state has constantly resorted to the cinematic representation of the anti-Japanese struggle to instigate mass allegiance to its various causes. Patriotism – the ideological sanction to sacrifice individual welfare, happiness, and lives for specific causes of the state in the name of the survival and glory of the nation – directly emerges from such maneuverings of state power. As Jing Tsu puts it, xenophobia has always catalyzed the consolidation of national communities, and professions of national sovereignty occur most passionately in response to injuries perpetrated by perceived outsiders (2005, 2–3). HHJL’s well-crafted evocation of the struggle against Japan powerfully foregrounds the patriotic theme that the Communist Party anxiously promotes under current circumstances. That is, the party-state’s shaky position as political ruler/economic manager in post-socialist China results in an even more insistent campaign to arouse the patriotism and enlist the loyalty of the masses. In this light, HHJL’s patriotic theme not only reopens historical wounds but also serves as a starting point for reading contemporary Chinese society.

The Orientalist Mode of National Sentiment: Romantic Love & the “Internalized” Western Gaze

Noting the state’s doctrine of patriotism – its effort to consolidate its prerogative to “speak for” the nation – is not enough to tease out the complicated relationship between the state and the masses as exemplified by
Patriotism is one of the most prominent traditions of the politically sensitive mainland film from 1949 through the early 1980s. How does the leitmotif film of the late 1990s cohere with this time-honored tradition of mainland film? To answer this question, we must scrutinize the state’s appropriation of Orientalist epistemes. Leitmotif works such as Feng Xiaoning’s *HHjL*, *Red River Valley and Purple Sun* would not have gone over so well with Chinese masses without the state’s reworking of Orientalist epistemes. I argue that the Chinese state reworked Orientalism to transform the Western character Owen into another embodiment of the mode of national sentiment in which romantic love (*aiqing* 爱情), familial affection (*qinqing* 亲情), and clan loyalty (*zongzu zhi qing* 宗族之情) interact to sanction and encourage political martyrdom. It is the state’s appropriation of Orientalist epistemes that made *HHjL*’s mode of national sentiment a populist form of expression. The following discussion of *HHjL* will explore the state’s agency in this appropriation process from three interrelated perspectives: the construction of the appropriated or “internalized” Western character, the gender politics of China-West interactions in the articulation of national sentiment, and the trope of “dying for China.”

Abdallah Laroui understands Western Orientalism as follows:

Orientalism is Western when it takes the West not as an event, but as an idea preordained in all eternity, complete and final from the beginning. And if it starts from this point, it has to construct its subject-matter as an explicitly, totally different item, reduced to the form it had at its birth. The two assumptions are clearly related; if the West is a fulfilled promise, the non-West has to be unfulfilled since unannounced. If the first is predetermined the second is necessarily accidental. In both cases no evolutionary process is ever conceived. Positive changes, when detected in the West, are predicated on preexistent seeds, and so are defects, flaws, wants in the non-West. One is a welcome miracle, which can change and remain the same, while the other, particularly Islam, is an unwelcome accident, not permitted to change without betraying itself. (1997)

This characterization of Western Orientalism brings to light the imbalanced relationship between the Western “gazer” and the non-Western “gazed” on an epistemological level. The subjectivity of the Western gazer is a preordained eternity — a wellspring of wisdom from an external, perfect realm that sheds light on the imperfect, non-Western world. In *HHjL*, however, the incarnation of the Western gazer – the American pilot Owen – is displaced from his advantageous epistemological position as an external referee. Owen’s epistemological adventure – that is, his coming to “know” China – is “internalized” within the cinematic narrative and actually becomes a key element of the state’s imagination of national sentiment.

In *HHjL*’s narrative, Owen is positioned as a truthful witness to the Chinese struggle against Japan. The movie starts and ends with Owen’s trip
back to China in the 1990s, and his experience with the Eighth Route Army detachment in the Anti-Japanese War is told in a flashback style. His status as “witness” is highlighted in an introduction provided by the distributor of the film:

... a detachment of the Eighth Route Army saved an American pilot and escorted him to the Communist base. ... The pilot witnessed [mudu 目睹] the unyielding national spirit of the Chinese people in front of the cruel invader and deeply felt the great bosom [xionghuai 胸怀] of the Chinese people and the Eighth Route Army. ... The literal meaning of mudu is “eye-witness.” Owen’s function as a truthful witness is upheld by two narrative strategies. In the first strategy, the visual narrative is complemented by English voice-overs produced by Paul Kersey, the American actor who plays Owen. Kersey’s voice-overs expose the “real thoughts” of the Western character and have the “formal” status of the truth — or more accurately, they project what the Chinese state likes the Western character to think. In the second strategy, flashbacks are interspersed with photos of Chinese people Owen met in the war. As Roland Barthes argues, the genius of photography – “still pictures” – is the specificity of the subject of the image and the notion that the subject “really was there” (1981). The semiotic authenticity of photography also validates the formal truth of Owen’s story. HHJL’s inclusion of this American character not only validates the formal truth of its anti-Japanese storyline but also plays into its discourse of national sentiment. Owen is depicted as a genuine and ardent admirer of the wartime Chinese. An elderly man sitting on a flight to China as the movie begins, Owen reflects upon his experience in wartime China:

Everyone has special times in their life; one of my greatest memories is a few short days I spent in China more than fifty years ago. I’ll never forget the land ravaged by the war, or the valiant Chinese people who faced the challenges of their incredibly hard lives with unwavering courage and spirit, the cave dwellings and the ancient temples built on the foundation of silt clay, and the magnificent Yellow River. . . .

Owen is an admirer of the wartime Chinese people in a general sense, but his admiration has important and calculated gender implications as the movie plays with the gender politics of Orientalism and bends Orientalist paradigms. Orientalism highlights the Western cultural hegemony usually defined by a dominating, exploitative gaze. In his work on Egypt, Timothy Mitchell writes that the West is characterized since the nineteenth century by an “ordering up of the world itself as an endless exhibition.” Everything seems to be set up as though it were the model or the picture of something, arranged before an observing subject into a system of signification, declar-
ing itself to be a mere object, a mere “signifier” of something further (2002, 496, 500). Not surprisingly, the dominating Western gaze and its object are recast in cross-cultural communication as an imbalanced gender relationship. Non-Western females are perceived as vulnerable objects under a dominating Western male gaze. Discussing the gender implication of Western fascination with China’s tradition of foot binding, Wendy Larson argues that the interest in this practice makes clear that “Westerners both eroticize and exoticize Chinese culture. Their obsessive interest in the prurient aspects of China serves to set them apart as [male] masters looking down on a vulnerable [female] subject, as well as to situate Chinese culture as the object of their gaze and the cause of their pleasure” (2002, 185).

The first encounter between Owen and the Chinese girl soldier An Jie is staged in classic Orientalist style. After his emergency landing, Owen is attacked by a Japanese fighter plane and faints to the ground. He wakes up and finds himself on the Great Wall. He is greeted by a beautiful Chinese girl speaking fluent English. Then the voice-over cuts in:

It was a miracle to meet an English-speaking girl in such a small village. So I was rescued by a group of Chinese soldiers in the Eighth Route Army. . . . An Jie was a medical student in Peking. She resolved to join the Eighth Route Army while the war was breaking out. Because of her medical training and English-speaking skills, she was assigned to accompany me. It seemed that God had sent me an angel. . . .

An Jie treats Owen’s wounds, and he takes to calling her “Angel.” She gets used to – even starts to like – her new nickname. On their way back to the communist base, Owen and An Jie fall in love. After their release by the militia force of the An clan, they hide in an ancient temple while Heizi seeks help. At this moment Paul Kersey’s passionate voice cuts in: “Within the walls of the temple the war seemed faraway; I was lost in the mysterious ambience of the oriental culture. The birds and the [green pine woods, songlin 松林] were our companions. Angel and I had our own little paradise. . . .” Accompanying the voice-over are visual sequences of their romantic life in the ancient temple. These narratives embody many Orientalist clichés: a Western male becomes lost in a mysterious non-Western land; finds his God has prepared everything in his favor, not least by providing an indigenous girl ready to act as the companion of his exotic – mostly erotic – journey; finds that the indigenous girl can speak – or be easily taught to speak – his language and is willing to be named and loved by him. What seems to be restaged at this juncture is the Orientalist paradigm of an indigenous girl being named and penetrated by her Western master — a blunt instance of the preordained, unique Western culture “enlightening,” mentally and physically, non-Western people.
Although to a certain extent An Jie does function as an erotic object of Owen’s exploitative gaze, the female character is more than a mere object of the dominating Western male gaze. Her disruptive power is first embodied in the female body’s challenge to the erotic Western gaze. On their way to the communist base, the detachment takes a break by a brook in order to bathe. While An Jie bathes privately, Owen sneaks a peek at her. In contrast to the paradigmatic female body in an Orientalist peeping game – an indigenous female nude body full of sexual temptation – An Jie’s body is mostly clothed and features two unusual “adornments”: bruises on her leg (the only exposed part of her body besides her face and hands) and a grenade hanging from her neck. The bruises tell of the physical sufferings of the Chinese female (and perhaps the Chinese in general) while the grenade symbolizes that her life could come to an end at any moment. The erotic pleasure Owen seeks in his voyeuristic peek is abruptly intercepted by An Jie’s body. He starts to look disconcerted even before An Jie notices his presence. At this moment An Jie is alerted by Heizi, who detects Owen and gives a warning yell. An Jie is so angry that she stares back at Owen. Under her fierce gaze, Owen loses his composure, recoils from the brook’s edge, and ends up slumping to the ground. In this sequence Owen’s erotic gaze is challenged by the Chinese female body, which successfully disrupts the erotic pleasure of the Western gazer, resulting in a visual and psychic shock that he cannot bear. In this sense, An Jie’s body becomes a weapon by which the gazed-at Chinese female – the supposed “vulnerable object” – overwhels the gazing Western male, the supposed “master.” Notwithstanding her status as the erotic object of the Western gaze, An Jie manages to transfer her prescribed sexual vulnerability to the Western gazer through the weapon of her body.

The challenge of the Chinese female body to the Western male gaze is only part of *HHJL’s* portrayal of the romantic love between An Jie and Owen. Owen’s political conversion complements An Jie’s disruptive power as an atypical Orientalist object. An Jie’s love is never a purely individual passion but is always mixed with a sense of political duty to “convert” the Western other into one of “our own.” During their stay in the secluded ancient temple, for instance, their discussion has the quality of a political lecture. Sitting close to each other, An Jie teaches Owen how to say and write in Chinese “Flying my plane to fight the Japanese” and “I am a friend of the Chinese people.” Owen’s eagerness to learn is part of his courtship, in which he involuntarily surrenders himself to his Chinese lover’s political agenda. In the party-state’s imagination this pedagogical process is crucial to an appropriate romantic interlude involving China and the West. The former must subjugate the latter – emotionally and politically – in the name of love.
Thirdly, An Jie’s power over Owen is fully embodied in her voluntary sacrifice of her romantic love and her very life for China. When they are detained by the militia of the An clan, Owen passionately argues that they should surrender to the Japanese in exchange for their lives. Owen insists on the value of their lives, but An Jie says, “We would rather lose our lives than our dignity as soldiers.” In the intimate atmosphere at the ancient temple, An Jie finally opens herself to Owen. When he asks why she so little values her life and wears the grenade, she says, “I am a soldier and I am also a woman. . . . When I have to make a choice between death and imprisonment I have to choose death because I know exactly what kind of demons the Japs are.” The film cuts to a flashback, which relates An Jie’s experience in Peking, where she was raped by Japanese soldiers. Terribly sorry for An Jie, Owen gently comforts her while the voice-over narrates, “I finally understood this dear Chinese girl standing in front of me. The Japanese had forced her and her countrymen to live under terrible conditions. The Chinese would rather die fighting the Japanese than lose their dignity and live.” The explanation of the grenade lays bare the significance of raped female bodies in the statist imagination of national sentiment. An Jie’s rape bespeaks the loss of Chinese people’s “dignity” and thus taints the greatness of the nation. The only acceptable national sentiment for An Jie, it seems to the Chinese state, is to martyr herself for China so that her complete sacrifice of individuality – love, happiness, and life – may redeem the taint. An Jie’s choice to wear the grenade – a literal weapon and a figurative symbol of war – embodies her commitment to such national sentiment.

Just before they leave the temple and board a ferry by the Yellow River, Owen asks An Jie to quit the army and come with him to the United States. Owen argues that they have both served their military terms and that they deserve the right to pursue their own happiness. Although she is deeply moved, An Jie firmly declines Owen’s invitation and says, “My countrymen are still fighting. . . . Military service term? When others put a sword on your neck, you do not have any right.” The scene contrasts two conceptions of the relationship between individual life and national duty. Owen insists that the restrictions national duty puts on individual life are limited and conditional. As long as he has served his term, his duty towards his nation is fulfilled and he has the right to pursue personal happiness. An Jie nevertheless believes that the nation rightfully demands the unconditional sacrifice of its people. If China is embroiled in war, her own duty is to fight and to be ready to die for China. In such conditions she has no right to love, but a duty to fight and die.

The national sentiment that An Jie embodies wins over Owen and transforms him into a soldier willing to fight and die for the Communist-led anti-Japanese cause. Owen is not upset after An Jie declines his de facto
marriage proposal. Instead, he gently removes her grenade, saying “I will be around to protect you.” He does not throw the grenade away but keeps it on his own body. In the ambush by the Yellow River, the Japanese troops hold Heizi’s daughter Huahua hostage and demand the surrender of the Chinese soldiers and Owen. Owen volunteers to exchange himself for Huahua. Surrounded by the Japanese soldiers, he threatens to detonate the grenade and successfully rescues Huahua. That Owen puts his life on the line to save Huahua signifies that he has changed, that he is now a willing martyr for China. Owen’s transformation powerfully testifies to An Jie’s power and validates the state ideology.

In sum, *HHjL* reworks the Orientlist paradigm of the relationship between Western males and indigenous females to foreground the power of the Chinese female An Jie and the national sentiment she represents. In the sentimental interplay between Owen and An Jie, she manages to challenge his erotic gaze, convert him to her political agenda, and eventually transform him into a determined soldier ready to die for the Communist-led anti-Japanese cause. The national sentiment An Jie represents – her willing sacrifice of romantic love and embrace of political martyrdom – is critical to Owen’s political conversion and emergence as a Communist soldier.

The Orientalist Mode of National Sentiment:
Chinese Masculinity in Question

It is intriguing to examine one more dimension in the state’s imagination of Owen as the appropriated or “internalized” Western character. The romantic encounter between Owen and An Jie is only part of the story of Owen’s fascination and sympathy with the Chinese people. His experience with various male characters also suggests his sympathy. In *HHjL* there are three major Chinese male characters: Heizi, An Jie’s unnamed father, and a subordinate of An’s father named Sanpao. The imbalanced gender relationship of Orientalism is not only embodied in the relations between the Western male and the non-Western female but also in the interactions between the Western male and the non-Western male, in which the former often renders the latter a feminized other. Hollywood’s emasculation of Jackie Chan is a case in point. In the classic Hong Kong movies of the 1980s, Jackie Chan is usually portrayed as both a daredevil fighter and a humorous romantic lead. In Chan’s various Hollywood roles beginning in the 1990s, however, his characters are largely stripped of male sexual appeal. It seems that in Hollywood movies his charisma lies only in “his uncanny capacity to withstand pain and his relentless tenacity in defeating his evil opponent” (Choi 2005, 208). Certainly involved in this transformation is the long-time Orientalist bias of Hollywood film by which Asian
men are stereotyped as sexually unappealing in comparison to “masculine” Western men.

*HHJL* unexpectedly affirms the Chinese males’ sexual inferiority, depriving the Chinese male characters of their sexual appeal to set off a Chinese form of masculinity that is grounded not in sexuality, but in familial affection, clan loyalty, and political martyrdom. In contrast to Owen’s physical virility, the Chinese male bodies are stripped of their sexual appeal. The detachment leader Heizi is portrayed as a father who deeply cares for Huahua and as a widower who deeply mourns his wife, whom the Japanese killed. Neither of these identities has a sexual implication. An Jie’s father is also a widower whose sentimental drives are exclusively embodied in his paternal affection for An Jie and his bereavement after losing his wife in a clan fight. As Hongmei Yu suggests, the widower identity of both Heizi and An Jie’s father indicates a suspension of their male sexuality (2008, 246). As these two characters are deprived of their sexuality, Sanpao is physically deprived of his male potency because of a wound received in a fight with Heizi’s clan.

The weakening of the three characters’ sexual identities nevertheless highlights their non-sexual affective power. In the statist imagination, the asexualized male bodies connect family, clan, and the nation through their perceived losses and the sufferings of their families. These losses drive the Chinese males to martyr themselves for the nation. On their way to the communist base, Owen tries to strike up a conversation with Heizi by complimenting the red undergarment (*hong dudou* 红肚兜) he wears. Owen upsets Heizi by asking where he bought the undergarment. Huahua later tells Owen that the red undergarment originally belonged to her dead mother. At this moment the camera pans out and provides a medium-close shot of the saddened Heizi with his machinegun. Owen’s voice-over describes Heizi’s family tragedy, accompanied by footage of Japanese troops killing Chinese:

I learned later that his hometown had been attacked by the Japanese three years earlier [to] test the effectiveness of the newly-invented gas bombs. More than a hundred villagers were captured by force and locked in a temple. Among them were Huahua’s mother and brother. Shortly after Heizi found his wife’s body, he removed her red undergarment and carried it with him as he rejoined the Eighth Route Army.

This sequence indicates that the loss of his wife and son – the rupture of Heizi’s familial ties – fuels his determination to fight and die for China. In order to protect Owen and An Jie, Heizi eventually fights and dies by the Yellow River.

In a similar vein, the paternal love of An Jie’s father trivializes other concerns such as the clan feud and the collaboration with the Japanese, and
loosens his attachment to his own life. When the An clan attempts to revenge itself on Heizi, An Jie rushes upon the scene and threatens to kill herself if her father orders the execution. The father is amazed by An Jie’s behavior. He orders the release of all the detainees and says with pride, “Only my daughter can play this trick.” In another telling sequence, Heizi goes to the father for help, while An Jie and Owen remain in the ancient temple. Heizi tells the father about An Jie’s rape and entreats him to fight the Japanese troops. At this juncture a medium-shot shows the father gazing at a photo album in dim light. The camera focuses on two old photos of him holding An Jie when she was a little girl. Finally a medium close shot reveals the father’s face. With tears in his eyes, the father seems to have made a decision. The ensuing narrative explains that the father wound up dying in a failed attempt to help An Jie, Heizi, and Owen cross the Yellow River. These sequences and narratives shape the character as a caring father who would sacrifice anything for his daughter. The father’s story of self-sacrifice is explained by An Jie’s suffering.

Compared to Heizi and to An Jie’s father, Sanpao is a morally ambiguous figure. He is a member of the An clan and serves as the intermediary between the clan and the Japanese army. He is portrayed as a corrupt, cowardly collaborator during most of the movie. What is unquestionable, however, is his personal loyalty to An Jie’s father, and by extension, to the An clan. When the militia first detains the detachment, An Jie’s father asks Sanpao what to do with the detainees. Sanpao answers without hesitation, “My lord, the daughter is the family [qinren 亲人], the foreigner is the outsider [wairen 外人], and Heizi is the enemy [chouren 仇人]. The foreigner is not worth all the lives of the clan. As for Heizi, he is the long-time enemy of our clan and must be killed.” This answer demonstrates Sanpao’s loyalty to the An clan. Whether handing Owen to the Japanese or taking revenge on Heizi, his morally questionable proposals stem from his genuine concern for the clan. In the climax of the movie – the Japanese ambush by the Yellow River – An Jie’s father is trapped and killed by Japanese troops, who knew of his smuggling plan in advance. Sanpao is jailed in a hut where the detachment and An Jie’s father are supposed to meet, and he is deeply terrified by the brutality of the Japanese troops. However, a brief flashback to the father’s last glance at Sanpao suggests the clan leader’s will to fight the Japanese and protect the detachment. Sanpao winds up burning the hut to alert the detachment of the ambush, and the Japanese bury him alive. The rupture of his clan bond – the Japanese murder of An Jie’s father – empowers Sanpao to alert the detachment at the cost of his life, transforming a cowardly collaborator into a martyr for the cause of national salvation.

The deaths of the three male characters by the Yellow River comprise one of the most pronounced examples of national sentiment in HHJL. However, the male sentiment intersects with Western character differently
than the female sentiment represented by An Jie. Unlike An Jie, who takes the initiative to transform Owen and frequently fixes him in her gaze, the three male characters do not view but are viewed by the Western character. Owen, for example, recalls his first impression of Heizi, calling him “a dark-faced fellow of few words.” The communication between Owen and Heizi is never as extensive as that between Owen and An Jie; the encounter between Owen and An Jie’s father is also brief; throughout the movie there is no exchange of words between Owen and Sanpao at all. The Chinese male characters’ lack of initiative largely shifts the task of communication back onto Owen. In this sense they more readily fall in the category of “traditional” Orientalist objects than does An Jie.

The Chinese male characters nevertheless loom large in preparing Owen to die for the Chinese nation. Although the viewing initiative between the Chinese male characters and Owen by and large falls on the Western man, the male sentiments affect Owen in a more intangible way. If An Jie influences Owen through detailed conversations, moves, and gestures, her male counterparts rely on music, a form whose sentimental effects go beyond the descriptive ability of words and images. Soon after Owen and Heizi squabble over the red undergarment, Heizi walks away and starts playing a sad folk tune on a leaf whistle. The most flamboyant still shots of the movie – presumably mirroring the gaze of Owen – portray, first in a medium-long shot and then in a long shot, Heizi sitting alone among trees while playing music. Owen takes great interest in the leaf-whistle and soon becomes a master of it. He plays it at different critical moments: during his romantic interlude in the ancient temple, after An Jie’s confession of her rape, and during the commemoration of his lost comrades by the Yellow River in the 1990s. Although Heizi never conveys verbally to Owen his passionate loyalty to family and the Chinese nation, Owen feels this loyalty and is transformed by it through the mediation of music. On the premise that music is the sound of the heart, the film suggests that despite the lack of direct communication Owen still inherits the willingness to die for China from Heizi, and by extension from all the male Chinese characters. However intangible it is, the lasting influence of the Chinese males on Owen is brought to the fore and represented by the film’s motif of music.

The intangibility of the male characters’ influence by no means implies its inferiority to An Jie’s influence. The different strategies of intervention attest to the versatility of the Chinese state’s appropriation of Orientalist epistemés. In the case of the female, the romantic, sexually appealing female body must go through a rite of passage – the rape by the Japanese – to achieve its national agency. As for the male, the state fashions an a priori link between the male body and the nation. The asexualized male body ensures that the rupture of male ties to family and clan generates the willing-
ness to die for the nation. Either way, the Western character is subjugated to the Chinese ideal of political martyrdom — admiring it, cherishing it, and willing to be assimilated by it. Through these strategies of appropriation the Chinese state successfully transforms Owen into another embodiment of the mode of national sentiment in which romantic love, familial affection, and clan loyalty give birth to the readiness to die for the nation. The transformation of the Western character into “one of our own” generates an imagined superiority of the Chinese national culture.

Conclusion

*HHJL*'s vast popularity in China and general unpopularity beyond China proper prove that *HHJL* – and by extension, the leitmotif genre of the 1990s – encodes and projects an indigenous audience susceptible to its sentimental power. The film medium’s ability to annunciate the state’s nationalist agenda is increasingly integrated with its ability to mobilize the indigenous audience through the configurations of Orientalist structures of feeling. It is in this sense that my case study of the 1990s leitmotif film provides a point of convergence between nationalism and consumerism in post-socialist China.

In *HHJL* the state pitches individual sentiments against a significant intruder – the Japanese – to bring about a situation in which the needs of the nation-state are firmly grounded in those gendered sentiments. On one hand, the Japanese defile An Jie’s body, the contamination of which gives rise to her willing sacrifice of romantic love for the Communist-led anti-Japanese cause; on the other hand, the violent murder of their loved ones mobilize the Chinese men to die for this cause. The overt national enemy sutures the fulfillment of individual sentiments – or the lack thereof – and the needs of the nation-state, producing the patriotic mode of national sentiment in which romantic love, familial affection, and clan loyalty produce the self-sacrificial willingness to die for the communist-led cause of saving China from the Japanese invasion.

This patriotic mode of national sentiment is constructed by the state to offer to the masses an alternative Orientalist discourse of East-West cultural communication. Harking back to Abdallah Laroui’s notion of Western Orientalism, a typical Western Orientalist discourse has to construct the Western subject-matter as an *a priori* existence. Accordingly, the West is a welcome miracle that can change and remain the same, while the Oriental other is an unwelcome accident that is not permitted to change without betraying itself. The state largely reverses the power relationship in the representation of national sentiment in *HHJL*. Owen is internalized into the world of the wartime Chinese people. His experience and memories of these people is meant to validate the *a priori* existence of this world. As the
VCD introduction of the movie puts it, throughout the movie Owen is intended to “witness” and “feel” the national sentiment of the Chinese people and the Eighth Route Army as they confront the cruel Japanese invaders. Owen’s personal transformation indicates his betrayal of his old self and embodies the overwhelming intervening power of the Chinese national sentiment. Through such a reverse representation, the Chinese state fashions this mode of national sentiment as an *a priori* existence that possesses the dominant power of cultural conversion in East-West communication.

This Orientalist reworking of the patriotic mode of national sentiment generates a productive reading of contemporary Chinese society. As *HHjL* demonstrates, the party-state invites the contemporary Chinese masses to undertake an “outward and backward” act of cultural imagination through vehicles such as the leitmotif film. The patriotic mode of national sentiment encourages the contemporary Chinese masses to review wartime history with heartwarming nostalgia and to focus on the external relations of China with the West rather than on the party-state’s internal faultlines. This outward and backward gaze creates the habitual consumption of alternative Orientalist spectacles, which also normalizes the party-state’s prerogative to speak for the Chinese nation. In this sense, the less heavy-handed, more emotionally appealing mode of national sentiment in *HHjL* provides a new way for the party-state to govern its increasingly diverse masses.

Notes

1 For a comprehensive study of the contemporary development of the Chinese leitmotif film, see Yu (2008).
2 I use “national” instead of “nationalist” because the latter may prompt some readers too closely to associate *minzu qinggan* with xenophobia.
3 The current economic prosperity along the Pacific Rim may well call for a critical refashioning of the power structure of the Saidian paradigm, since one can argue that industrialism – one of the crucial criteria with which Said developed his binary categories of the Orientalist and Orientalized entities – might thrive in a Confucian-collective spirit in the non-Western societies (Gellner 1993, 3–4). Geller’s critique is corroborated by Aihwa Ong’s study of “petty Orientalism.” She argues that overseas Chinese from Hong Kong and Southeast Asia rework in “the transnational context of corporate and media circulation” Anglo-European academic concepts – the grand Orientalist discourses – into confident pronouncements about Oriental labor, skills, deference, and mystery. In contrast to Said’s assumption that the object of Orientalism cannot respond, she suggests that Asian subjects selectively participate in Orientalist formulations as they negotiate shifting discursive terrains in the world economy (1993, 746).
4 SARFT has been the state bureau responsible for overseeing the film industry since 1998.
5 The translation is mine.
6 This recapitulation of Sakai is from Lee (2007, 227).
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8For a detailed study of how the film was received and discussed both in China and beyond, see Shen (2010), especially pp. 195–209.

References


The Adulators and the Adulated: 
Religious Patronage of a Regional Ruler 
in Early Tenth-Century China 

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This article explores the significant role played by religious groups in the legitimation of the Former Shu founded by Wang Jian in the chaotic early tenth century. Whereas the Daoist priest Du Guangting attempted to legitimate the regime on religious grounds, the Buddhist monk Guanxiu employed his literary talent to depict the military ruler as a savior in a tumultuous age. This article also suggests that the Wang Jian’s religious patronage was pragmatic; he used religion to justify his rule but never lessened tight control over religious groups. 

When the memorial reached Wang Jian 王建 (847–918) on a late afternoon in the fall of 908, the founding emperor of the Former Shu (Qian Shu 前蜀, 907–25), weary yet excited, was returning by horse to his palace from the northern suburbs of the capital Chengdu 成都, where he had just reviewed his imperial armies. The memorial had been submitted by the imperial Daoist master Du Guangting 杜光庭 (850–933). It told of two large yellow clouds that had become an august purple as they hovered near the city walls — an event that coincided with the military parade. The yellow clouds, Du explained, had appeared during the reigns of Yao 尧 and Shun 舜, two sage and ancient kings, while purple clouds had allegedly appeared during the reigns of two other great monarchs. Thus Du Guangting predicted that Wang Jian would “surpass” (chao 超) these historic examples, adding, “your virtue has caused Heaven to summon auspicious clouds, an event observed by Chinese as well as barbarians, their merriment extending from the mountains to the seas” (Du 1986, 1.2–3). 

Although the source does not mention the monarch’s response to this memorial, Wang Jian most likely appreciated it, not only for the political compliment, but also for Du’s creative interpretation of auspicious phenomena, which fortuitously coincided with his urgent need for legitimacy. Wang Jian emerged from the political chaos of the closing years of the Tang
Religious Patronage in Tenth-Century China

dynasty (618–907). He had once served in the imperial army and successfully rose to power and occupied a domain in the Shu (today’s Sichuan province), where he received the title military governor (jiedushi 節度使) and then king of Shu 蜀王. In 907, upon learning that one of his rivals in north China had murdered the last Tang monarch, he proclaimed himself emperor of the Great Shu empire (Ouyang 1974, 63.783–91; Xue 1976, 136.1815–9; Zhang 1964, 1.2b–13; Wang 1960, 219.17a–b; Wang 2008). A wise and far-sighted ruler, Wang Jian realized early that he could conquer Shu on horseback, but could not govern the land by martial means. In many senses, justifying his imperial rule amid the divisions of tenth-century China, known as the period of Five Dynasties and Ten States (Wudai Shiguo 五代十國, 907–79), was a greater challenge than his military conquest of the region. An illiterate man hailing from a humble family in north China, he obviously lacked broad support in the territory and had none of the reputation that might have attached to an aspirant from a prestigious elite clan. Thus, from the start of his reign in 907, legitimation of his imperial authority was his most pressing concern. Under these circumstances, Du Guangting’s memorial was not surprising, as it provided supernatural justification for the legitimacy demanded by the new court.

This article aims to explore the dynamic interactions between Wang Jian and the religious luminaries under his protection during the chaotic late Tang and early Five Dynasties periods. Wang Jian fully realized the importance of religion to the legitimation and consolidation of his new regime in the Shu, a region known for its deep-rooted religious traditions. Driven by this pragmatic motivation, Wang Jian, like most potentates of his day, looked to diverse religious traditions to bolster his sovereignty but never lessened supervision and control over religious groups. There was a mutually beneficial cooperative relationship between the ruler and his religious supporters. Wang Jian patronized the Buddhist monks and Daoist priests to establish his legitimacy during his transition from provincial governor to an imperial emperor, while the religious elite, represented by Daoist priest Du Guangting and Buddhist master Guanxiu 貫休 (832–912), deemed participation in the relatively safe Shu state the most practical way to survive the chaotic early tenth century, and both actively contributed to the Shu ruler’s legitimation.

Du Guangting & His Service at the Shu Court

An indigenous religious tradition of China, Daoism had gained great popularity in the Shu area since the Han dynasty (202 B.C.E.–220 C.E.) (Duan 1999, 147–57). As early as the fourth century, a regional regime in Shu had adopted Daoism to consolidate its rule (Kleeman 1998, 61–85). The religion flourished during the Tang dynasty, as the Tang rulers declared Laozi 老子,
the supreme Daoist deity, their ancestor, and extensively invoked Daoist liturgy to help legitimize their power (Barrett 1996; Benn 1987; Xiong 1996; Sun 1975). Its popularity in Shu continued during the late Tang due to the presence of Xizong’s 僖宗 (873–88) court-in-exile at Chengdu (Verellen 1989a, 1999b, 1994). Given this history, Wang Jian’s support of Daoism was inevitable. It served as to legitimate his power and mediate between the local cults and the new leadership from outside of the region. Moreover, Wang Jian used Daoism to demonstrate continuity between the preceding royal house and himself as self-declared successor to the Tang. This can be inferred from Wang Jian’s enhancements of the Zhangren Temple 丈人觀 at Mount Qingcheng 青城山 (forty-five miles northwest of Chengdu), the sanctuary of a deity that Xizong enfeoffed in 881, two decades before Wang Jian’s accession (Huang 1986, 1.7a–8b).

Throughout his reign, Wang Jian showed great generosity toward Daoism and its representatives at the Shu court. His benefactions included the construction of Daoist temples, the conversion of royal mansions into temples, and the bestowal of escalating honorary titles for prestigious Daoist masters. For example, in 912, upon receiving report of an auspicious text found at Mount Xianju 仙居山 (thirty miles north of Chengdu), Wang Jian ordered the construction of a new temple, which was “built of huge stones with multiple functions” (SGCQ 115.1704). The relationship was mutually beneficial: Daoist support legitimized the emperor and imperial support enriched the culture of religion. Such reciprocity was reflected in his cooperation with the Daoist master Du Guangting.

Du Guangting was the most celebrated Daoist figure during the late Tang and early Five Dynasties (Tao 1986, 1.11b–12b; Wu 1983, 47.674–6; Luo 2002a, 2002b; Wang 1993; Verellen 1999b). He studied Confucianism in early youth and took the civil service exams in Xizong’s reign before becoming a Daoist disciple. Diligent and eager to learn, Du was versed in both Confucian and Daoist classics. He also studied Daoist teachings, scriptures, history, and magic arts, and wrote many books during his lifetime (Luo 2004). Not surprisingly, the Daoist genius soon obtained numerous honors from the Daoism-friendly court. During Xizong’s refuge in Shu, Du helped the exiled court maintain liturgical practices that associated the emperor with sacred local sites and confirmed the Tang’s continuing mandate to rule (Verellen 1989a and 1998). Subsequently, Du accompanied the emperor back to the Tang capital, Chang’an 長安, but soon headed back to the south. His peregrinations closely paralleled those of Wang Jian, and the two men likely came to know one another. Eventually, Du Guangting emigrated farther south to the inner Shu region, where he lived for the rest of his life and became an imperial priest of Wang Jian.

No source gives an exact date for Du Guangting’s initial involvement in Wang Jian’s government, but he enjoyed the ruler’s respect well before 907,
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and thereafter played an influential role at the Shu court. Understandably, both his reputation as an erudite scholar and his affiliation with the Tang appealed to the new ruler. Wang Jian’s trust in the Daoist is reflected in reports that the ruler “frequently discussed state affairs with Du” (Sima 1956, 268.8773).

Doubtless, Du Guangting’s primary contribution to his new patron involved religious services that, like those he performed for Xizong, linked the new emperor to a divine mandate. These Daoist rituals constituted a significant part of Wang Jian’s legitimation. According to the Mount Xianju apocrypha of 912, Wang Jian enshrined a local saint named Zhang Hongdao 章弘道 as His Holiness Jiansheng 鑒聖真人 in response to an auspicious prophecy. Such an act, which “implied . . . a divine investiture of the king,” was further legitimated by a series of Daoist rituals under the instruction of Du Guangting (Verellen 1989a, 63; Du 1986, 13.62–3, 14.63–4, 16.72).

Franciscus Verellen cites another Daoist ritual performed by Du Guangting for the Shu emperor, officials, and members of the imperial family. Known as rituals of Personal Destiny (benming 本命), these practices, sponsored by members of the political elite on their birthdays, were supplications for good fortune, peace, and prosperity, both for the state and their families. “By obtaining divine protection for community leaders,” Verellen posits, “Personal Destiny rituals in fact conferred a form of investiture.” Wang Jian performed this grand ritual as part of his accession in 907, a year that coincided with his sixtieth birthday (Verellen 1989a, 68–73; Du 1986, juan 4–10). Sources also record many liturgical prayers drafted by Du for the emperor and the imperial family. These eulogize the merits of Wang Jian (Du 1986). By performing rituals and composing liturgical prayers, Du Guangting identified himself with the court and acted as a state priest whose religious services were closely bound with the political, military, and administrative affairs of the Shu.

Du Guangting was also renowned for compiling, interpreting, and disseminating portents, prophecies, and marvels — a talent Wang Jian utilized to help demonstrate his mandate. Du’s Record of Marvels (Luyi ji 錄異記) preserves many reports of auspicious portents, which, in his words, “were destined to occur” (Du 2000, 1506). Du’s role was to record and reveal the meaning of signs bearing Heaven’s will. When a portent was reported by local officials, he presented a well-written congratulatory memorial, which not only traced the historical precedent of the portent, but also predicted the future prosperity of Shu. In one such memorial, Du commented on a divine sword “discovered” at Hezhou 合州 (Hechuan 合川 in today’s Chongqing 重慶): “The First Emperor of Qin once found a sword in the center of a river and eventually swallowed the entire realm; now, Your Majesty finds a sword in a river, meaning that you will also unify the world”
In 910, a county magistrate reported that a huge dam had formed miraculously overnight amidst a torrential storm, thereby sparing Chengdu from floods. In a memorial congratulating the throne on the intervention of deities, Du vividly describes the marvel, an account preserved in his *Luyi ji* (Du 1986, 4.1527). Wang Jian surely appreciated Du Guangting’s gift for interpreting signs in a manner that reinforced his political authority. In 916, the emperor consulted Du about the meaning of a folk ballad that his expeditionary army retrieved from a battlefield in the north. Skillfully, Du linked the ballad to the ongoing war between Shu and Qi states (a regional power in today’s Shaanxi), claiming that the Shu ruler would soon “pacify the Three Qin regions and rule the world” (Du 1986, 2.7).

Du Guangting was highly effective at fabricating supernatural incidents to help legitimize the royal ascendancy of Shu rulers. Under his influence, the legendary Daoist immortal Wang Zijin 王子晉 was enshrined as ancestor of the royal house of Shu (Ouyang 1974, 63.792; Wu 1983, 44.652; Wuguo gushi, 1.12a; Yuan 1986, 35.19b). One of his famous collections concerning Daoist immortals, *Wangshi Shenxian zhuan* (Biographies of the Immortals in Wang Clan), contains accounts of fifty-five Daoist deities and immortals with the surname of Wang and was obviously written to “adulate Wang Jian” (Chao 1968, 3B.305). In a prophecy cited in his *Luyi ji*, Du pictured the kingdom of Shu as a “sacred land” endowed with Numerous qualities, suggesting a mandate from Heaven: “With its mountains and rivers, Shu is a blessed land. It has long been suited to serve emperors and princes as a capital. . . . If you remove the ‘insect’ particle from the character ‘Shu’ and write ‘gold’ [in its place], the character would appropriately mean ‘golden virtue.’ [The house of Wang] will rule in perpetuity as kings over this western region, and all the world shall bow to it (Du 2000, 2.1516). Clearly, both the interpretation of Shu’s “sacred geography” and the dynasty’s symbolic identification with metal are intended to establish Wang Jian as a destined and legitimate successor to the Tang. It is likely that Du invented the story and propagated it widely in Shu. Later eras, of course, regarded his collections of supernatural incidents as “fictional anecdotes” (xiaoshuo 小說). Later people even coined a term, “duzhuan” 杜撰, literally meaning “Du’s fabrication,” to refer to any incredible compilation (Yongrong and Ji 1997, 144.1908). Wang Jian, however, surely favored such fabrications.

Du Guangting played other roles at the Shu court, as indicated by the large numbers of memorials that have been preserved to this day. In addition to his Daoist role, Du served as a senior advisor, directly participating in political and military decision making. In 911, when the emperor insisted on personally leading troops to defend the northern border, Du submitted two memorials in succession, trying to dissuade Wang Jian from
endangering himself (Du 1986, 1.4). In 916, when Shu troops seized Longzhou 隴州 (Longxian 隴縣 of Shaanxi) from Qi, Du’s congratulatory memorial celebrated the victory and praised the emperor’s military merit (Du 1986, 1.5). In 916, as well, Du wrote a memorial that celebrated the completion of a grand palace (Du 1986, 3.12). In 917, Du wrote another memorial in support of Wang Jian’s decision to execute a surrendered general (Du 1986, 2.10).

Du Guangting also developed a justification for Shu’s massive military build-up and Wang Jian’s militancy, a stance obviously in contravention of Confucian ideals. In a supplication composed for a Daoist ritual sponsored by a magistrate, Du claims, “Within, [Wang Jian] subdues insurrection; without, he calms his borders. Still, he is unable to relinquish arms. When it comes to displaying the power of the Son of Heaven, and to wielding the general’s battle-ax, all depends on expediency and only opportunity matters” (Du 1986, 6.30; Verellen 1989a, 71–3). Elsewhere appears a similar argument intended to legitimize Wang Jian’s military deployments during an age of tumult. In the aforementioned memorial celebrating the appearance of yellow clouds, Du extols the Shu ruler for his benevolence, calling him a “sage king” who deployed armies only because “the Central Plains are still not at peace” and “used the military to save the people from exploitation” (Du 1986, 1.3).

In return for his support, Wang Jian generously rewarded Du. He received the special honor of “individually meeting and advising the throne,” without having to stand among other Daoist and Buddhist supplicants (Du 1986, 1.2). In 913, Du became Grand Counselor of the Golden Seal and Purple Ribbon (jinzi guanglu dafu 金紫光祿大夫), Imperial Remonstrator of the Left (zuo jianyi dafu 左諫議大夫), and Duke of Cai (Cai guogong 蔡國公) with the sobriquet Gentleman of Great Accomplishment (Guangcheng xiansheng 廣成先生). Three years later, he was appointed deputy minister of the Board of Finance (hubu shangshu 戶部尚書), clearly demonstrating that he performed both as Daoist master and as civilian official (Du 1986, 1. 1–2; Luo 2003; Verellen 1989a, 64, 73–4). This unique status continued under the reign of Wang Jian’s son. After receiving a Daoist register in the palace, Wang Yan bestowed the title Celestial Master of the Dissemination of Perfection (chuanzhen tianshi 傳真天師) upon Du, an act that represented the summit of his career at the Shu court (Zhang 1964, 1.14b).

**Guanxiu & His Poems for the “Sage Ruler”**

Buddhism was also a major social force in medieval China, and it constituted another powerful tool by which Wang Jian attempted to legitimate his rule. After a brief setback in the mid-ninth century, Buddhism rapidly emerged as an important influence on the state and society in the late Tang
and Five Dynasties (Li 1995; Cao 2005; Wang 1960, 52.11b–17b, 194.19a–20b, 821.23a–25a). Like Daoism, Buddhism enjoyed enormous popularity during the Tang, which is widely considered a golden age of Chinese Buddhism (Weinstein 1987). Its popularity during the Shu was remarkable. "The people of Shu are addicted to Buddhism," a tenth-century source confirmed (Li 1987, 238.1837). When a famous monk presented a lecture at Chengdu in 822, over ten thousand Chengdu citizens are said to have flooded the monastery (Zanning 1986, 6.22b). Many Shu governors in the late Tang were fond of Buddhism, such as the famous Cui Anqian 崔安潜 (Sun 2002, 3.57). When Xizong took refuge in Shu, the emperor extended his patronage to Buddhists, bestowing a purple cassock, a symbol of extraordinary imperial favor, upon a local Buddhist master (Cao 1960, 632.7246, 674.7710–1). Buddhism remained a state-endorsed religion after Wang Jian came to power. Some of his soldiers carried Buddhist sutras in one hand and arms in the other, according to a tenth-century account of the mania for Buddhism among the Shu people (Li 1987, 238.1837). The popularity of Buddhism in Shu during the Five Dynasties is also evidenced by the plethora of statues carved on hills throughout the region, many of which still survive (Yin and Zeng 1993).

Wang Jian publicly patronized eminent Buddhist monks. Learning that master Chuhong 處洪 had arrived from the north, Wang Jian established an exquisite monastery to accommodate his former mentor, who had encouraged him to join the army years ago (Liu and Peng 2002, 63A.636). In 895, Wang Jian invited another famous monk, Zhiguang 智廣, to preside over one of the largest temples in Chengdu (Gou 1964, 5.4b–5a). It is notable that a variety of Buddhist sects enjoyed similar favor. In early 901, the fame of a local Buddhist practitioner of the Tantric School named Liu Benzun 柳本尊 caught the attention of Wang Jian. The emperor summoned Liu to Chengdu and created a grand altar upon which to incant for three consecutive days (Hu 1993; Chen 2006; Wang 2001). Wang Jian’s interest in Buddhism is more clearly observed in his response to a special offering made by a monk. In early 908, a monk gouged out an eye and dedicated the sacrifice to Wang Jian — an extreme yet relatively popular act among Buddhists of the day to express their deep devotion to the faith. The newly enthroned emperor construed the sacrifice as a divine blessing and promised to host a vegetarian feast for ten thousand monks. Although Confucian officials dissuaded him from making this magnificent gesture in the end, the pledge clearly reflects the emperor’s zeal for Buddhism (Sima 1956, 266.8687–8).

Like his attitude toward Daoism, Wang Jian’s interest in Buddhism not only exhibited his respect for the religion but also reflected his effort to legitimate his own rule. A group of eminent monks assumed posts at court, playing a role similar to that of the Daoist priests. They contributed to the
 royal house and its rule by performing religious rituals and incantations. Three were granted the title “state masters” (guoshi 國師) (He 1964, 6.7a–b; Wu 1983, 47.673). Wang Jian frequently visited Buddhist temples, listened to the lectures of masters, and celebrated Buddhist festivals with the citizens of Chengdu. Given the popularity of Buddhism in Shu, no ruler could afford to remain indifferent. Sources report that when an itinerant Indian monk reached Shu after a long journey, Wang Jian personally greeted the foreigner along with hundreds of thousands of devout Chengdu citizens. He must have seen the arrival of the monk from a distant “holy land” as a sign of broad recognition of his sovereignty. The arrival of the foreign master, in Du Guangting’s interpretation, was evidence that “the imperial compassion [of Wang Jian] had spread even to foreign lands,” indicating that “both the Chinese and barbarians are civilized [in Shu] where all the people enjoy happiness” (Du 1986, 2.10–11).

If Du Guangting represents Wang Jian’s cooperation with the Daoists, Guanxiu represents the Buddhist establishment’s support for the Shu ruler. A native of southeast China, Guanxiu was famed for poetry, which helped win him patronage among a number of regional potentates in the late Tang and early Five Dynasties (Zanning 1986, 30.10b–12b; SGCQ 47.669–72; Franke 1976, 55–61). By one account, Guanxiu once submitted a poem to his first political patron Qian Liu 錢鏐 (852–932), the military potentate of Wu-Yue 吳越 (893–978), complimenting the governor for “pacifying fourteen prefectures with a single sword.” When Qian requested the monk to change “fourteen” to “forty,” suggesting an ambition to expand territory, the monk refused, insisting that he could not misrepresent reality (Shi 2003b, 73–4). Though historians are not likely to credit the anecdote, it vividly portrays Guanxiu as a stubborn, talented monk seeking patronage from the powerful, but unwilling to play the sycophant and compromise his dignity. Not surprisingly, the monk had difficulty getting along with his second patron, Cheng Rui 成汭 (d. 903), governor of Jingnan 荊南. It is said that one day when Cheng asked Guanxiu to teach him calligraphy, the monk declined, holding that such instruction deserved to be convened in a more formal manner (Tao 1986, 1.13b). Eventually Guanxiu, then in his seventies, moved to Shu in search of a better patron, inspired perhaps by Wang Jian’s reputation for favoring Buddhists and literati. It soon turned out to be a wise decision.

In the fall of 902, Guanxiu reached Chengdu and submitted his first poem to the Shu ruler, whose unification of the Three Chuan was nearly complete:

河北江東處處災，唯聞全蜀勿塵埃。
一瓶一缽垂垂老，千水千山得得來。
Disasters strike north of the Yellow River and southeast of the Yangzi;
I heard that the dust of war has alone eluded Shu.
Though terribly aged, I carried the canteen and alms bowl,
Contentedly arriving at Shu after crossing countless rivers and mountains. (Guanxiu 1965, 20.43)

The contrast between the tranquil Shu and the tumult elsewhere was no exaggeration. Thus, the eminent Buddhist master poetically cast the peaceful Shu kingdom under Wang Jian as a desirable and well-regulated locale. Upon reading the poem, Wang Jian was “overjoyed” and treated Guanxiu with beneficence, calling him “the Contented Monk” (dede heshang — a term borrowed from Guanxiu’s poem. Wang Jian even kneeled before the Buddhist master’s table while addressing him. For a decade, until Guanxiu’s death in 912, the monk “consistently enjoyed the great favor of the Son of Heaven,” as one of his disciples observes, and in return made a special contribution to the legitimation of Wang Jian’s power (Guanxiu 1965, 53–4; Tian 2003).

While Du Guangting promoted the legitimacy of Shu mainly through religious services, Guanxiu’s primary vehicle was his elegant poetic verse. “As a Buddhist, I have nothing but poems with which to repay the imperial favor,” as he himself admitted (Guanxiu 1965, 19.41). A prolific number of poems are preserved today in Chanyue ji (Collection of the Zen Moon), an anthology compiled by a disciple in 923. The work contains many pieces written after Guanxiu entered Shu, some revealing his close relationship with the Shu ruler, some glorifying the merits of Wang Jian and justifying the ruler’s legitimacy.

The achievements of the Shu ruler are the main theme of Guanxiu’s poems. As in the aforementioned poem marking his arrival in Shu, Guanxiu used his poetry to evoke, with deft aesthetic sensibility, the peace and prosperity of Shu. In his description, “the land of Shu is peaceful and unified” and “people of all four classes [i.e., scholars, peasants, artisans, and merchants] are newly revived and a wide domain enjoys stupendous wealth” (Guanxiu 1965, 5.12). In another poem, Guanxiu writes, “there is no war along your peaceful borders, crops mature in sweet-smelling paddies” (Guanxiu 1965, 16.35–6). Guanxiu brought a particularly Buddhist understanding of Wang Jian’s pacification of the Shu in a chaotic age, offering that “the ruler’s compassionate heart resembles that of the Buddha” (Guanxiu 1965, 20.43).

Guanxiu depicted Wang Jian as a ruler possessing both extraordinary talent and a deep commitment to the proper administration of his domain. After presenting a lecture to Wang Jian one day in 903, the master composed the following poem,
You command heroes [with the sincerity] of an untainted child,
You recruit worthy literati to compose beautiful pieces;
You [manage] the “six elements” of government with an anxious heart,
You destroy enemies with a sharp sword. (Guanxiu 1965, 19.41)

Here, Guanxiu’s verse effusively praises Wang Jian’s balanced use of military and civil power. The “six elements” in the third line refer to the policies adopted by the most diligent rulers in Chinese history: maintaining sobriety, encouraging education, exploiting geography, promoting the worthy, managing legal cases justly, and guaranteeing equitable taxes (Tian 2003, 71). Believing the Shu ruler to have succeeded in all these respects, Guanxiu judged Wang Jian qualified to oversee the world (Guanxiu 1965, 19.41).

On the emperor’s birthday in 908, Guanxiu drafted a long poem in five-character classical format to celebrate both the ruler’s birthday and the founding of the empire. The new regime was declared a reincarnation of the great Tang dynasty (“as prosperous as the enterprise of Tang”) and legitimate on this basis (“the mandate of the august Tang has been transferred”) (Guanxiu 1965, 16.35–6).

In his writings, Guanxiu frequently compared the Shu emperor to ancient kings and meritorious past emperors. In a series of poems, likely dated 904, celebrating Wang Jian’s climb to the top of a Buddhist pagoda, Guanxiu declared that the ruler was the reincarnation of Asoka (c. 300–232 B.C.E.), the great Indian king, as well as a ruler who cared for his people and country like the ancient sage king Yao (Guanxiu 1965, 19.41). These analogies definitely served to advance Wang Jian’s impending enthronement. In another composition written for Wang Jian’s birthday sometime after 907, the master pointed out that the founding of Shu was “consistent with the Mandate of Heaven” and Wang Jian was “a sage succeeding the ancient sages.” In his verse, Guanxiu placed the Shu emperor on par with the two great sage kings, Yao and Shun, writing that “the reign of [Wang Jian] will unquestionably last as long as that of Yao.” Guanxiu compared Wang Jian’s military talent to that of Han Gaozu 漢高祖 (r. 202–195 B.C.E.) and Tang Taizong 唐太宗 (r. 627–49): “Your Majesty inherits Gaozu’s generalship and Taizong’s command of armies, your virtue expanding by the day” (Guanxiu 1965, 5.12).

“The Summons of Subjects” ("Shanhu Wansui" 山呼萬歲). In the end, Guanxiu concluded that “Your majesty is the King Yao” (Guanxiu 1965, 18.39). Wang Jian surely appreciated the utility of Guanxiu’s poems, and he often visited the Longhua Monastery 龍華禪院, a chan temple specially built for the master, to listen to Guanxiu’s recitation of his newly written poems (Zhang 1964, 1.9b). The emperor’s reliance on Guanxiu extended even to practical matters of statecraft. He once led his adult sons on an expedition to visit the master, perhaps expecting Guanxiu to resolve the issue of imperial succession that was then vexing him (Zhang 1964, 1.9b; He 1964, 5.9b–10a).

Guanxiu spent the rest of his life in Shu and received many imperial honors, including a grand title believed to be the longest imperially bestowed designation in Chinese history (Wang 2005). Learning of the death of Guanxiu in late 912, the emperor “lapsed into deep sorrow for a long time,” arranging a dignified funeral with elaborate mourning rituals performed by both the Daoist and Buddhist groups at court (Guanxiu 1965, 54).

The Regional Ruler’s Religious Pragmatism

Like most of other potentates of his day, Wang Jian showed a deep preoccupation with supernatural phenomena and a fondness for the occult. Yet Wang Jian’s vigorous patronage of both Buddhism and Daoism was obviously part of the Shu ruler’s effective strategy to use the two popular religions to supplement other legitimation devices and boost the legitimacy of his regime. He believed religion should serve the state, not vice versa. This pragmatism is an important characteristic of Wang Jian’s response to religion over the course of his reign.

Wang Jian’s embrace of religion is understandable, for medieval Shu was known for its supernatural tradition. Occult practitioners had long enjoyed the patronage of aristocrats, high officials, and literati. Some military governors of Shu, such as Gao Pian 高駢 (d. 887), were known for their fascination with local sorcerers and soothsayers (Sun 2002, 11.238). Not surprisingly, this tradition had exerted a great influence on Wang Jian’s Shu. Extant sources preserve many records of the close association between Daoist divines and Shu imperial families and officials. Wang Zongshou 王宗夀, one of Wang Jian’s adopted sons, had himself practiced Daoist meditation in search of longevity (Lu 1964, 6.2b–3a). Confucian officials also came under the supernatural influence, as for example Feng Juan 馮涓, a leading civil advisor who composed a series of essays to eulogize the power of a sorcerer (Sun 2002, 390–1). A Daoist named Cui Wuyi 崔無敷, known for his accurate prophecy, was treated by Shu officials as a deity and addressed as “Venerable Master” (zunshi 尊師) (Huang 1964, 2.2b–4b).
Wang Jian was no exception to the influence of this religious culture. As early as 901, he expressed admiration for the supernatural powers of a Buddhist who had subdued demons in a nearby river (Liu 1982, 6339–41). After his ascendance, he paid deference to a Daoist diviner, whom people believed to possess the power of foretelling the future, patronizing him at court for a few years sometime after 910. According to sources, when the diviner decided to leave the court, Wang Jian “wept” at his failure to persuade him to stay (Zeng 1986, 8.25b–26a; Li 1987, 86.558). Preoccupied with his mortality in his last days, the emperor sent Du Guangting to visit a diviner and solicit a prophecy about his life-span (Sun 2002, 403). He also turned to soothsaying to make decisions in state affairs. A source records that the emperor once summoned a group of Daoist soothsayers to the inner court, hoping that they could help select a qualified heir-apparent from among his sons based on their physiognomies (Sun 2002, 1.381–2). The emperor’s last religious gesture was the construction of his grand mausoleum, Yongling 永陵, where the stone base of Wang Jian’s coffin is surrounded by twelve statues of Daoist or Buddhist deities (Feng [1964] 2002; Shen 1993).

The religious zeal of Wang Jian, however, never compromised the emperor’s imperial authority or weakened his control over religious groups. Whenever a court diviner failed to make an accurate prophecy, Wang Jian lost his temper and reprimanded the poor Daoist severely (Wu 1983, 45.654). When he initiated a project to expand the palace, the ruler did not hesitate to destroy the famous Daoist abbey, Yuju hua 玉局化, one of the twenty-four divine Daoist abodes, to create space for it (Huang 1964, 2.2b–4b; Fan 1993). It seems that the ruler’s fondness for religion primarily stemmed from pragmatic considerations and, like many monarchs in Chinese history, the Shu emperor refused to compromise his political interests. When his authority was challenged by Daoists or Buddhists, Wang Jian handled them with a merciless iron fist. Sources record an aborted insurrection in Chengdu, led allegedly by a Daoist priest named Li Hao 李暠. The conspiracy was ruthlessly put down before it started, and Li Hao was executed on a Daoist holiday deliberately selected by the ruler (Sun 2002, 12.252–3). When they violated the laws, Buddhist monks did not escape severe punishment either. In 914, when the emperor visited a monastery in Chengdu, four of his court maids absconded. Apprehended a day later, the girls confessed that the monks in the monastery had enticed them to flee. The punishment that followed was extremely brutal: the four runaway girls and twenty-two accused monks were executed publicly (Zhang 1964, 1.10a–b).

In general, Wang Jian considered religion a political tool to use and control. He largely confined state priests to rituals or literary writings related to the mandate of the Shu. As a result, the state priests remained docile and seldom risked their fortunes by offending the ruler. According to
one account, Du Guangting once received an audience at the palace. The emperor asked him if an imprisoned thief should be sentenced to death. The Daoist, probably trying to shirk responsibility, merely muttered compliantly and gave no clear answer. The emperor perhaps expected Du Guangting to beg for leniency, and when he did not, the monarch "had no choice but to kill the man" (Shi 2003a, 2.55).

Wang Jian’s association with the religious elite in the Shu illustrates the complex relationship between state and church in the chaotic early tenth century when warlords with humble origins erected regional regimes that required legitimation and local support. During this period, not a few military potentates looked to religion, particularly to Buddhism, to bolster their positions (Wang 1960, 52.11b–17b, 194.19a–20b, 821.23a–25a; Wuguo gushi 1964, 1.5a–b, 2.6a; Zhou 1964, 1.4b). Like his contemporary rivals, the Shu ruler eagerly patronized Buddhists, Daoists, and occult practitioners for both personal and political reasons. At the same time, those religious luminaries who survived the chaos of the era and enjoyed high status at the Shu court worked hard and skillfully in the interest of the regional ruler, offering not only hope for personal salvation and the wellbeing of the realm, but also helping to ensure legitimacy of the new emperor. As discussed above, the Daoist Du Guangting contributed his ritual, storytelling, and phenomenon-interpreting skills to the legitimation effort, while the Buddhist monk Guanxiu composed elegant verse in celebration of the Shu monarch and his pacific kingdom. Their services appealed strongly to Wang Jian, whose claims to “legitimate” descent from the Tang empire were always under challenge. The religious “adulators” and the “adulated” thus achieved a symbiotic balance that addressed the practical concerns of both priests and rulers amid the turbulence of the early Five Dynasties period.

Notes

1 A prayer written for Wang Jian can be dated to 894–904 (Du 1986, 6.10a). Du’s writings elsewhere indicate that Wang Jian sought his advice as early as 896, sending envoys to his abode in Qingcheng Mountain (Du 2000, 8.1552).

2 Sources give several other possible origins of the term dushuan (Morohashi 1986, 6:154–5; Hanyu da cidian 2001, 4:753).

3 More than one Indian monk must have visited Shu during Wang Jian’s reign. Sources record one visit sometime before 907 and the other in 918 (Gou 1964, 6.7a; Sun 2002, 2.405; Wu 1983, 115.1703).

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bases of Wang Jian and Meng Zhixiang were the seats of the Buddha]. In *Qian/Hou Shu de lishi yu wenhua* 巴蜀的歷史與文

化研究 1: 69–76.


Public administration has enormous implications for government’s capacity to cope with both internal and external pressure. China’s old-fashioned ruling style has not been able to meet the nation’s development needs. Since the early 1980s, China has launched six administrative reforms in order to solve the socioeconomic problems associated with rapid economic development. The five completed reforms discussed in this paper were relatively brief experiments that involved the reduction or expansion of the government with only short-lived impacts. Although none of the reforms shook the foundations of the bureaucracy, they evolved in terms of orientation, depth, and implementation. Political constraints have been among the most significant impediments to political reform with the implication that creating a favorable political environment is critical for the success of ongoing and future reforms.

Introduction

Administrative reform has been universally recognized as an integral part of the development process (Caiden 1978). In order to meet the challenges of rapid socioeconomic changes and domestic and international pressure, China has launched a series of administrative reforms since 1949. The first three reforms were orchestrated in order to run the planned economy more efficiently through streamlining and downsizing of the State Council during 1954–56, 1959–61, and 1968–70 (Drewry and Chan 2001). Those reforms were shaped by several models and considerations, all tending toward stronger central government, including (1) Marxist theories on socialist governance, (2) the Soviet Union’s governmental practice, (3) the traditional Chinese administrative model and political culture, (4) experiences of revolutionary struggles during the war time, and (5) the need for practical achievements (Zhou 1996). During this period of “political economy,” all the administrative reforms were centered on political movements and class struggles (Qiao 2003).

were significantly different from the three earlier reforms in terms of depth, scale, sophistication, and implication because they reflect the elevation of economic development as the nation’s most important goal. In spite of different objectives and focuses, they are logically coherent (Wang 2006). During this era, China strove to maintain legitimacy and stability as the Cultural Revolution and the collapse of Eastern Europe shook Chinese confidence in the socialist political and economic system. Globalization gradually became another force driving China to enhance its competitiveness. Despite difficulties, China achieved dramatic economic growth of over 9 percent per year. Public administration has developed along with the economy, but has evolved far less satisfactorily. With goals not fully met and achievements having only short-term impact, none of the reforms could claim any real success. Among various explanations for the failures of these administrative reforms, the author finds political control one of the most significant. Political control over public administration is routine in China. The occupation of critical positions by the Communist Party (CCP) in the government guarantees its supremacy over it. The CCP tends to back the status quo, as administrative reforms are likely to constrain Party power. The lack of political support for administrative reforms has therefore become a problem.

Administrative reform is regarded as the lower end of political reform and upper end of economic reform (Wang 2006). Political and economic realities jointly determine the scale and extent of administrative reform. In response to a changing world, the focus of reform has gradually shifted from structural reconfiguration to functional readjustment. Meanwhile reform has become less passive and reactive, and increasingly oriented towards problem-prevention. China is now in the middle of a new reform to improve the government’s capacity to meet multiple challenges integral to its future development. Examination of past administrative reforms has serious policy implications for future administrative reforms. For this reason, this paper will detail the history of past reforms, beginning with a discussion of their causes, followed by a description of their implementation and results. The author reaches a cautiously optimistic conclusion, believing that moderate political reform should be encouraged as a crucial precondition of administrative reform.

The Impetuses of Administrative Reform

Administrative reforms do not occur randomly; their complex evolution has multiple causes, such as fiscal pressure, shifts in social values, and globalization (Straussman and Zhang 2001). Yang (2004) stresses three major factors that explain China’s reforms: changing economic conditions, internal politics and shifts in political leadership, and crisis. Songtao Xu (2006),
China’s former vice minister of personnel, attributes administrative reforms to economic transition, globalization, political and social change, and the quest for efficiency. All the above, as Moon and Ingraham (1998) believe, can be classified as either internal or external pressures. Having considered the existing literature, the author finds that the six most recent rounds of reform were driven by two impetuses – social and political stability (internal) and globalization (external). The former was the main impetus behind the first two reforms. These reforms followed a period of turbulence, and the CCP thus considered upholding its own legitimacy a paramount priority. As China became increasing involved in global trade and politics and enmeshed in the process of globalization, the CCP promoted administrative reform in the attempt to meet the nation’s new challenges and responsibilities. This is not to say, however, that political and socio-economic stability did not remain paramount concerns. For example, the CCP Central Committee reaffirmed its commitment to a harmonious socialist society in October 2006. These two considerations – stability and globalization – are the bases of the most recent administrative reforms, as shown in the next section.

Social & Political Stability

The ten-year Cultural Revolution not only had a deleterious impact on the economy, but also thoroughly destroyed the public administration system (Tang 2004). This chaotic experience still fresh in their minds, the Chinese people as well as their leaders were afraid of instability more than anything else (Lan 2001). The old ruling style based on loyalty no longer meshed with the new social reality. The public’s trust in the government had declined because of large-scale corruption, low efficiency, and lack of accountability and responsibility (Zhang and Zhang 2001). The CCP was intensely conscious of the failure of communist parties in Eastern Europe, and it studied those examples carefully with an eye to preserving its own power. One lesson, which accorded with China’s own experience, was that economic reform and growth are essential to maintaining social stability, which, in turn, is the key to retaining political power (Fewsmith 2004). Therefore, the government undertook administrative reform to complement its new economic policies and tried to provide a stable environment to encourage economic recovery.

The reforms did not always achieve the desired results. During the 1990s, the growth of the private economy was very rapid. Between 1989 and 1998, the number of people working in the non-state sector grew four times. A middle class began to form, incorporating 15 percent of China’s population. At the same, large disparities in income began to appear and grow. The “peasant” class shrunk from about 70 percent to about 50 percent of
the populace, but its absolute numbers actually increased. The traditional working class was the biggest loser of the reform era, as the number of people working for state-owned enterprises decreased substantially and reemployment was very difficult for them. These trends generated social frustration and a growing social protest movement associated with peasant and labor discontentment. These changes gutted traditional understandings of Marxism-Leninism (thus undermining the legitimacy of the government) and created new social forces outside the CCP’s direct control (Fewsmith 2004). These socioeconomic frustrations explain “why stability is the number one priority for current leaders of China” (Lan 2001; Zheng 1999).

Globalization

Globalization means more and almost borderless competition, which implies that the investment and innovation of a given country are no longer constrained by national borders and that international competitiveness must become the primary concern of government, as in the case of China. The heavy-handed intervention of government in the economy in the recent past has proven inconsistent with a market economy and free trade. In order to attract and retain foreign investment within its territory and to promote economic growth, the Chinese government has been under continuous pressure from inside as well as outside to adopt policies and practices consistent with global trends and practice (Ngok and Zhu 2007).

Thus, globalization impacts the government as much as the economy for the simple reason that the economy is not able to compete unless the government changes its relationship to the economy rather significantly (Fewsmith 2004). Despite three decades of reform, Chinese officials remain far too likely to interfere with the economy — to uphold regional blockages to keep out goods and services from other regions, to tax businesses, etc. Globalization, particularly the rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO), requires enormous changes in Chinese governance because the WTO demands transparency and an end to government subsidies in most instances. Most of all, globalization enlarges the scope of competition, which means that various regions in China will be forced to compete with each other as investment environments. Those regions in which there is less government interference, less corruption, and more services provided to business will do better. Globalization also means competition to recruit and retain the best people, precisely those who are most mobile. So those areas that make life more comfortable for skilled personnel will do better over the long run and that generally means government becoming more responsive to the demands of the emerging middle class. Such pressures will affect everything from cadre recruitment in the CCP to the way government operates (Fewsmith 2004). In sum, China can strengthen its com-
petitiveness only by administrative reform and enhancing government performance (Dong and Yang 2007).

Administrative Reform in Recent Years

Over-administration, which compelled economic activity to adapt to administrative convenience, increasingly retarded economic development (Falkenheim 1980). Thus, a global administrative reform movement was vigorously undertaken (Kettl 2000). Since 1982, six rounds of administrative reform have been launched in China – 1982, 1988, 1993, 1998, 2003, 2008 – with a new initiative emerging roughly every five years. The six reforms were different in focus, scale, and result, but relatively coherent and incremental in nature, with later reforms largely responding to the inefficiency and failure of the last and to the particularly socioeconomic problems of the moment. All six reforms are discussed and considered here against the background by the two major impetuses introduced in the last section.

The 1982 Reform

The national economy was for the most part stagnant during the ten-year Cultural Revolution. The central government subsequently decided to shift its attention to economic growth. Since China was in an early phase of market-oriented reform, there was less emphasis on the need for the state to withdraw from direct management of the economic sector than there was on the need to restore its authority. Therefore, the first reform was largely a structural reconfiguration that attempted to downsize and streamline the government.

This reform consolidated economic management mainly by combining departments with similar responsibilities; meanwhile, it enhanced coordination and supervision. This reform lowered the total number of agencies from 100 to 61 in the State Council, from 60 to 50 in the provinces, from 40 to 30 in the autonomous regions, and from over 40 to about 25 in the counties and cities (Yang 2003). Human resource rearrangement was part of the organizational changes, including the elimination of vice-leader positions, the imposition of age limits on government positions at every level, the capping of the number of posts, and the establishment of a retirement system that terminated the practice of life-long tenure. Vice premiers were reduced from 13 to 2. The ministry level leaders were reduced from around 540 to 180 (Straussman and Zhang 2001). More than 30,000 veteran cadres retired, 145 of whom were ministerial-level officials (Lan 2001). As a result, the staff of the State Council was reduced from 51,000 to 30,000. In province and autonomous regions, the number was reduced from 180,000 to
120,000. Counties and cities reduced 20 percent of their employees (He 2007). The age of ministry-rank bureaucrats fell from 64 to 60, and the age of bureau-level officials from 58 to 54 (Straussman and Zhang 2001). In addition, the government sought to hire people who were reform-oriented, young, knowledgeable, and specialized (Lan 2001). The percentage of college-educated officials jumped from 37 percent to 52 percent (Worthley and Tsao 1999), and there was a general increase in education level.

This was the first large scale administrative reform since China adopted its “Reform and Opening-up Policy” (gaige kaifang 改革开放) in 1979. Although impressive in terms of statistics, it was very incomplete and superficial. The reform primarily reorganized departments while retaining the root organizational structure (Lan 2001). In the end, the number of employees wound up exceeding the fixed number of posts. Reform policies were increasingly difficult to implement in local governments as over-decentralization fostered localism and excessive power of the counties and cities. As a result, the basic structure and system of governance based on the planned economy remained largely intact and the government swelled again during the following years (Ngok and Zhu 2007). The government remained dominant and resistant to more fundamental reform.

**The 1988 Reform**

By the eve of the 1988 reform, the total number of departments and agencies had increased to 72, with an addition of 82 provisional organs at the central level (Christensen et al. 2008). The bloated inefficiency of the government structure at all levels had greatly handicapped the progress of the newly launched economic reform. Of Shanghai’s 71 agencies, for example, nearly one-third were devoted to economic planning or directly managing industry (Burns 1993). With organizational restructuring clearly having failed to resolve the problems of the old politico-administrative system, a new round of administrative reform became necessary. The 1988 reform focused on transforming the function of the government by divorcing the government from state-owned enterprises and separating the Party apparatus from the administrative apparatus (Lan 2001).

The first important policy adopted was the “three fixes” (sanding 三定). The initiative had three objectives. The first was to fix the functions (zhineng 职能) of the public sector, which involved determining the necessary functions of the state and its organs at different levels. The general aim was to reorganize the functions of government and to decouple government and industry. The second objective was to fix the administrative organs (jigou 机构) with a view to cutting down the number of state and Party organs at central and local levels. This entailed determining which functions the state should oversee and which should be delegated to the private sector.
The third objective was to address problems of staffing (bianzhi 编制). This entailed determining the type and number of posts needed to support the essential functions and the administrative organs (Brødsgaard 2002). Some of government’s economic functions were transferred to various economic organizations such as professional associations. In general, the “three fixes” enhanced decision-making, consultation, supervision, and flow of information. The reform downsized the number of organs in the State Council from 72 to 65 by the end of 1988 (Ngok and Zhu 2007). The number of staff was reduced by over 9,700, or about 20 percent of the total (He 2007), with both increases and decreases in different departments and agencies. Even so, opposition from the bureaucracy and the Party cadres as well as unfavorable economic conditions such as high inflation limited the implementation of the 1988 reform, especially at local levels. The tug-of-war between the reformers and the conservatives created many administrative loopholes resulting in rampant corruption (Lan 2001). The chaotic situation after the 1989 Tiananmen incident terminated this ambitious reform. Nonetheless, the “three fixes” remained an underlying principle of subsequent administrative reforms.

The 1993 Reform

The 1988 administrative reform lacked permanence. According to the Secretary Bureau of the Central Administrative Office (2002), by the end of 1991, the number of employees in government and party organs of the country reached as high as 9.3 million with an additional 24.66 million working in public service units (shiye danwei 事业单位); the total cost of the public sector in 1991 accounted for 37 percent of the state’s financial expenditure. Moreover, the cadres had devised a number of coping strategies for the restructuring proposals. One of the most popular was to take leading positions in private enterprises without leaving their government positions (Burns 1993).

In early 1992, former leader Deng Xiaoping paid a visit to a few southern cities, including Shenzhen, the most successful Special Economic Zone. During the tour, Deng stressed the importance of economic development and encouraged the Chinese people to further open their minds to bolder and faster development. He also pointed out that a market economy is not synonymous with capitalism and that socialism also has its own form of market. Those far-reaching statements signaled more reform to come. The 14th Congress of the Communist Party in the autumn of that year officially ratified a “socialist market economy” in China, while also ratifying a reform of the “administrative system” to loosen the ties between government and private enterprise.
In accordance with the idea of a socialist market economy, the reform strengthened macro-control and supervision departments, consolidated departments of social management, limited government oversight of commercial details and direct management of private enterprise, smoothed interactions between departments of the State Council, rationally divided responsibilities and authority in order to avoid overlap and repetition, and downsized staffs attached to the departments. Based on carefully pilot projects involving the Ministry of Light Industry and the Ministry of Textile Industry, the initiative lasted three years (Tang 2004). Following the reform, according to He (2007), the number of organs under the State Council was reduced from 86 to 59, and the employees of the central government were reduced from 36,700 to 29,200, or by 20 percent. In the provinces and autonomous regions, the number was reduced from 76 to 56; in municipalities (zhixiashi 直辖市), the number was reduced from 100 to 75. Counties and cities also downsized the government to a certain extent. Employees at all levels of government were reduced by about 2 million or by about 23 percent. In addition, substantial progress was made toward enhancing the professionalism of the civil service with the introduction, in 1993, of recruitment examinations. The first law governing the civil service – Provisional Regulations on State Civil Servants (Guojia Gongwuyuan Zanxing Tiaoli 国家公务员暂行条例) – was enacted the same year (Ngok and Zhu 2007).

While there were mergers and cuts, ministries and agencies largely continued as before and performed much the same function. The departments in charge of economic management were not reduced as significantly as expected, as authorities had pledged that no staff would be dismissed as a result of restructuring. Many were absorbed by public service units, economic enterprises, or local governments, or were sent for retraining. The objectives of the 1993 Reform were not completely achieved due to a lack of political skill and effort (Christensen et al. 2008) and the limits of the reform itself. For example, employment in government and political parties had actually increased from 9.3 million to 10.6 million by the end of the reform effort (Burns 2001).

The 1998 Reform

During the ninth Five-Year Plan (1996–2000), China’s reform initiative entered a new phase and faced new problems, such as rising unemployment, poor performance of state-owned enterprises (SOEs), deficient domestic demand, rampant corruption, an increasing gap between the poor and the rich, and increasing regional disparity (Ngok and Zhu 2007). Further transformation of governmental functions was needed to boost the economy and solve those problems. In March of 1998, the ninth National
People’s Congress (NPC) passed a new administrative reform plan. The plan officially had three principle objectives: setting up an efficient, well-coordinated, and well-regulated administrative system; creating a corps of highly competent and professionalized administrators; and gradually evolving an administrative system compatible with Chinese society and the socialist market economy (Ngok and Zhu 2007).

The 1998 reform was particularly intent on strengthening the macro-control of the government. The existing comprehensive departments, such as the State Economic and Trade Commission (SETC), were transformed into macro-control departments and granted new functions accordingly. The specialized economic departments were turned into state bureaus under the leadership of the SETC through downsizing, corporatization, and mergers. With more and more social problems deriving from the market-oriented economic reform, the government rethought its responsibilities and capacity in the field of social services, in particular, social security. A Ministry of Labor and Social Security was established based on the former Ministry of Labor with a view to unifying the administrative structure for the provision of social security. The booming market economy also fostered unlawful activities such as speculation, illicit transactions, and production and sales of counterfeit or substandard quality commodities. Instead of managing markets directly, the Chinese government committed itself to regulating the market and maintaining market order through efforts to strengthen law enforcement and supervision departments (Ngok and Zhu 2007). In the period of between 1998 and 2000, “one-stop shopping” centers (yizhanshi fuwu zhongxin 一站式服务中心), which made it possible to apply for administrative approvals through a single office, were established. At first their aim was to attract foreign investments by making it easier for foreign firms to do business by simplifying local rules and regulations, but later their aim was to provide Chinese residents with better service (Christensen et al. 2008).

Yang (2007) provides statistics that demonstrate the unprecedented scope of the 1998 reform. Within the State Council, the number of ministry-level departments fell from 40 to 29, while the total number of personnel was cut from 33,000 to 16,000, amounting to roughly 47.5 percent of the workforce. At the provincial, municipal, and county levels, the number of government agencies was reduced, respectively, from 55 to 40, from 45 to 35, and from 28 to 18. Altogether, 1.15 million administrative positions were cut and 430,000 employees were laid off. Over 200 functions devolved from the central government to local governments, SOEs, and societal intermediary organizations (shehui zhongjie zuzhi 社会中介组织). Over 100 other functions were transferred or consolidated within the State Council (He 2007). Meanwhile, the central Party and government agencies relinquished control over 530 enterprises they had previously owned or con-
trolled; the army, armed police, and judicial agencies ceded 6,408 operational enterprises to local governments; the army ceded 297 enterprises to the private sector; government bureaus ceded 242 research and 101 design institutes to the private sector; and the state placed 94 coal factories and 174 affiliated organizations under local control.

The 1998 reform represented the government’s first attempt to redefine its own function as opposed to merely reducing its size and scope (Lan 2001). The reform accomplished a good deal, but there were still certain problems. The government’s narrow focus on business and commercial considerations and the general inefficiency of the government were unchanged; in fact, governmental expenditure increased by 20 percent in the first year of the reform. Some major business decisions were still subject to administrative control, while the selection and use of SOE executives were still subject to the traditional cadre-management system. It is also unclear whether the reform significantly improved the practices of government employees (Yang 2007). Nevertheless, it had been the most successful reform to date, creating a basis for future reforms (Tang 2004).

The 2003 Reform

Despite the 1998 reform, a well-functioning administrative system suited to a market economy was still not in place. There existed no institutional mechanism to harness the power of the government in relation to the increasingly globalized economy. The fragmented management regime resulted in a disconnection between the internal market and the external market, domestic trade and foreign trade, and import and export quotas, as well as weak and disorderly responses to disputes with foreign trade partners. Against this background, China joined the WTO in November 2001 and launched a new round of administrative reform in March 2003, when the fourth generation of Chinese political leadership came to power.

The main tasks of the 2003 reform were to deepen the management system of state assets, to improve the macro-economic control regime, to strengthen the financial regulatory system, to integrate domestic and foreign trade, and to enforce the food safety and production safety regulatory regimes (Ngok and Zhu 2007). To achieve these tasks, the components of the State Council would have to be restructured. According to Ngok and Zhu (2007), a new State Assets Supervisory Commission was established to manage state assets. This State Commission has the centralized authority to administer the property, investment, and personnel of the SOEs directly under the State Council and to guide SOE participation in international markets. A new Banking Supervisory Commission was created to strengthen the inspection of all banks and other financial institutions and to manage increasing financial risks in a vastly globalized economy. A new
Ministry of Commerce was created out of the old State Economic and Trade Commission and the Ministry of Foreign Economy and Trade. This new Ministry aimed to establish an integrated market and trade regime within the framework of the WTO. Similarly, the State Development Planning Commission was restructured as the State Development and Reform Commission.

The 2003 reform clearly expanded the 1998 reform in terms of building up a well-functioning administrative system suited to the socialist market economy. Nevertheless, the 2003 reform had its own characteristics. To some extent, the 2003 reform can be interpreted as a conscious response to the impacts of economic globalization. It was again about rationalization of economic institutions, but more about fine-tuning than downsizing. It simplified the approval procedure and strengthened the government’s service function. In all, the WTO membership provided new opportunities and new dynamics for further restructuring of the administrative system in China (Christensen et al. 2008).

The 2008 Reform

Prior to the seventeenth Party Congress in October 2007, officials and scholars were locked in a heated debate on the general orientation of the Reform and Opening-up Policy, which would celebrate its thirtieth anniversary in late 2008. Premier Wen brought the debate to a close by publishing an article in The People’s Daily (Renmin Ribao 人民日报) (February 26, 2007). He stated that the Party would remain focused on economic development, while keeping a tight lid on political reform and furthering the Reform and Opening-up Policy. Against this background, the CCP Central Committee issued in February 2008 a resolution titled “Opinions on Deepening Reform of the Administrative System” that states: “Facing the new situation and new tasks, the existing system of administrative management still has some aspects that are not compliant,” for example, insufficient reorganization of government functions, excessive administrative interference in microeconomic operations, and relatively weak social management and public services. Therefore, a new round of administrative reform was declared “imperative” (Xinhua News Agency, March 5, 2008). The second session of the eleventh NPC approved the new reform initiative in March 2008.

This so-called sixth administrative reform was informed by notions of a Chinese form of socialism, the thought of Deng Xiaoping, and the theory of “Three Representatives” (sange daibiao 三个代表). It aimed to build a service-oriented and law-abiding government and, more generally, a relatively perfect socialist administrative system with Chinese characteristics by 2020 (Xinhua News Agency, March 5, 2008). It aimed also to make China’s ad-
ministrative structure relatively stable and end the frequent reshuffling of offices after eight rounds of major reforms (Dong et al. 2010). It established a five-year plan to facilitate several specific long-term goals: (1) accelerate the functional reorientation of the government, (2) promote government organizational change under the principles of simplicity, consolidation, and efficiency, and (3) build an administrative system mindful of the Constitution and laws, and appropriately supervised to ensure both efficiency and legality. In all of these respects, the 2008 reform extended and augmented previous reforms.

It is too early to assess this on-going reform. What is clear is that the reform has not been without controversy. Dong et al. (2010) studied China’s adoption of the Western “super-department” – a key theme in the 2008 reform. They conclude that this was a case of “superstitious learning” and “biased contextualization” in which the symbolic – as distinct from instrumental – purpose of borrowing a Western reform idea for domestic use was the predominant feature. In consequence, opponents of the restructuring in the ministries and agencies were able to resist it, either by obstructing its implementation or cynically cooperating on the belief that it would run into trouble later on. This may explain, for example, why the architects of the reform were unable to merge the Ministry of Transportation (one of five new super departments) with the Ministry of Railways.

Reflections on Thirty Years of Reform

Notable in this three-decade-long period of reform is the rather brief interval between major reform thrusts and the constant oscillation between governmental reduction and expansion that characterizes it. Some scholars argue this is an unhealthy approach to administrative reform, while others argue that it was inevitable and by no means particular to China. Despite these differences in assessment, we can make some relatively objective observations.

Because party politics and administration are so enmeshed in China, administrative reform is construed as a component of political reform (Wang 2006). As distinct from the practice in Western democracies, the CCP manages the civil service system directly (Burns 1993), controlling the appointment of political civil servants through its committees within the People’s Congress. It also controls key administrative personnel and career civil servants by screening based on political standards. Although “separating the party from government” has been a slogan since 1987, this ideal has never been materially realized. One explanation is that administrative reform is closely linked to economic reform and economic reform is inextricable from politics. Xu (2006) views “the administrative reforms as an important part of our political system reforms and [also as] conditions of set-
Q. Wang

ting up market economic system. . .” Jiang (2007) goes further and conceives administrative reform as the joint between political and economic reform. The purpose of administrative reform, one might say, is to resolve the increasing contradiction between political reality and economic reality. The impetus behind administrative reform is primarily political authority motivated by economic exigency.

The CCP considers administrative reform an extension of economic reform, but its own political conservatism and an incomplete commitment to market economics have resulted in the inconsistent momentum of administrative reform. In reality, the CCP has taken an incremental evolutionist approach by which it balances political values and economic considerations, so that politically sensitive developments may delay and interrupt administrative reform (Moon and Ingraham 1998).

Evolution of Reform

Administrative reform is a process of consistent evolution to meet social, political, economic, environmental change or citizen expectation (Zhang and Zhang 2001). In terms of the theme and focus, China’s administrative reform can be divided into two and a half phases according to Wang (2006). During the first phase from the early 1980s to the mid-1990s, the reforms were focused on restructuring governmental organizations. Although transforming the roles and responsibilities of government was the main topic of the 1993 reform, emphasis still fell on organizational changes. In 1998, administrative reform entered the second phase, setting in motion the aforementioned transformational changes. Chinese administrative reform remains in this phase, but it recently began to enter another phase, whose primary objective seems to be restraining bureaucratic behavior and increasing the productivity of public organizations (Wang 2006). Measures like the Administrative License Law in 2003 (Xingzheng Xuke Fa 行政许可法), The Program for Comprehensively Implementing Government Administration in Accordance with the Law in 2004 (Quannian Tuijin Yifa Xingzheng Shishi Gangyao 全面推进依法行政实施纲要), Civil Servant Law in 2005 (Gongwuyuan Fa 公务员法), Law on the Supervision of Standing Committees of People’s Congress at Various Levels in 2006 (Geji Renmin Daibiao Dahui Changwu Weiyuanhui Jiandu Fa 各级人民代表大会常务委员会监督法), and requirements concerning transparent administration all indicate this new phase. The outcome of the 2008 reform will show whether or not China is already embarked on this third phase.

The reformist style has changed also, evolving from a reactive to a more anticipatory approach. In early 1980s, the initiation of administrative reform was a reaction to existing administrative problems. From late 1980s to the early twenty-first century, the Chinese government initiated adminis-
Administrative reforms in an adaptive way. That is, the purpose of reform was to adapt the administrative mechanism to economic reform, the social environment, and technological advances. For example, China joined the WTO in 2001 to take advantage of fair trade treaties and avoid potential business disputes that were previously resolved outside the WTO’s legal framework. Wang (2006) argues that the Chinese government has recently begun to implement reformist measures more proactively, shaping reforms based on the vision, goals, and values of the society and the public administration. An example is the long-term goal announced by the 2008 reform – the achievement of a relatively perfect, indigenously Chinese administrative system by 2020.

**Weaknesses of the Reform**

The end result of administrative reform must be some kind of permanent transformation for the better in terms of the objectives of the reformers (Caiden 1968). Admittedly, China’s administrative reforms restrained the overgrowth of governmental organizations and staff (although not always reduced them), transformed government functions, and improved public-private relations. But the results were oftentimes temporary, unstable, and incomplete, as shown in the preceding section. Therefore, it is more than worthwhile to study the weaknesses of the administrative reforms and how they were undermined.

First, the reforms paid too much attention to restructuring, especially at the central level. The most important action of each round of reform was removing, establishing, or integrating organizations and cutting down the size of staffs (Wang 2006), while in many cases organizations and staffs were downgraded rather than eliminated (Worthley and Tsao 1999). The importance of transforming roles and responsibilities of the government was recognized in the late 1980s, but in practice they were not transformed in line with rules and principles of a market economy. Cutting the number and size of governmental organizations produced results, but these results could not be sustained (Wang 2006). Restructuring is still one of the most important objectives of the 2008 reform, although this is not expected to be the case after 2020.

Second, reforms were initiated and implemented in a top-down manner. Most reforms were formulated by the top-level of government with very limited input from local governments and the public. Those reforms implemented by government at local levels largely responded to the commands and requirements of the central government. Given the vastness of China and great discrepancies between localities, this centralized approach tended to result in plans that were either too general or too specific to be adapted to widely differing local realities (Wang 2006).
Third, a sound legal basis was missing. China’s legal system, and its public administration in particular, is incomplete. Rule of man (renzhi 人治), as opposed to rule of law, has been a tradition for thousands of years. As a result, many actions of reform were formulated and implemented out of the willingness of leaders, most common in local governance. Thus far there has been no effective way to check this tendency (Dong and Yang 2007). Each round of administrative reform lacked accompanying laws to guarantee enforcement, instead depending on administrative directives to guide reform efforts (Zhang 2006). Lacking a legitimate legal basis, these reforms tended to be discarded after several years (Wang 2006). The 2008 reform is expected to improve the administrative rule of law (xingzheng fazhi 行政法治) through a series of measures. A related question is how much the court system has affected China’s administrative system. China passed the Administrative Litigation Law (Xingzheng Susong Fa 行政诉讼法) in 1989, which provides channels by which the citizens can sue the government. In spite of its enforcement for over two decades, the best evidence suggests that its deterrent effect has been modest. While the number of suits brought under the law has grown from under 10,000 per year in 1989 to over 100,000 per year in the 2000s, the law’s implementation has been hounded by interference and feigned compliance. For example, more than 30 percent of suits end up being withdrawn every year, mainly by the plaintiff for a variety of reasons; meanwhile, less than 20 percent of the suits have been upheld by the court since the mid-1990s (He 2009). Not surprisingly, the law has been widely regarded as a “frail weapon” that has not greatly reduced administrative arbitrariness (O’Brien and Li 2004). Since China’s judicial system remains deeply embedded in politics (O’Brien and Li 2004), the court system has had very limited impact on the administrative system. Lastly, Dong and Yang (2007) note that inefficient provision of public goods, lack of political participation, and excessive bureaucracy also tend to hamper the success of administrative reform.

Discussion

Various agendas, predictions, priorities, suggestions, and tendencies swirl about the prospect of additional administrative reforms. Tang (2004) believes China must improve macro-control, develop both the economy and society while balancing growth and stability, strengthen legal structures, simplify administrative procedures, and refine the civil service system. Dong and Yang (2007) would like to see various shifts in governing style: from regulatory to service oriented, from totalitarian to limited, from the rule of man to the rule of law, from rowing to steering, and from pyramidal to flat (by reducing the levels of government). Wang (2006) lists six tasks as priorities for administrative reforms in the near future: strengthening ac-
countability, increasing transparency, passing laws governing administrative procedure, implementing performance management, encouraging public participation, and allowing the emergence of nonprofit organizations. Using a more theoretical framework, Zhang and Zhang (2001) suggest a shift from the state-centered governance paradigm to the citizen-centered governance paradigm and call for restructuring the relationship between government and citizen, government and market, government and enterprise, government and society, central government and local government, executive and legislature, and state governance and global governance. Scholars widely share their opinions.

Those proposed measures may answer “what” and “why” and perhaps even “how,” but they neglect an important prerequisite for them fully to take a hold. The prerequisite is the kind of political reform that would reduce resistance to administrative reform. This does not mean that China has to engage in sweeping political reform before it experiments or implements a variety of administrative reforms. In fact, administrative reform may help initialize bureaucratic independence and make political reform more feasible (Moon and Ingraham 1998).

There is already a body of literature that recognizes the correlation between political and administrative development. In his study of the resistance to major administrative reforms in five South Asian states (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal), Khan (1991) concludes that the lack of commitment on the part of the political leadership has been the key reason why reforms have failed. Sun and Gargan’s research reveals that Taiwan’s administrative strength is a function of the interplay of three factors – the political environment, state-of-the-art public administration, and high-quality public administrators – particularly the first two (1993). Quah (1991) finds that Singapore’s administrative reforms have been relatively successful partially because of strong political sponsorship of the reform effort. These studies confirm Caiden’s argument that administrative reforms are most likely to succeed if they have relatively high levels of political support (1988). With respect to the reinventing government movement specifically, Gargan (1997) observes: “Within a regime, the relation between management practices and political variables is causal and the causal order is from political to management.” History supports his conclusion that “the stature of the management practices and administrative structural arrangements . . . is determined by prevailing political regimes and the associated attitudes and ideologies of those holding power.” Moon and Ingraham (1998) propose a Political Nexus Triad (PNT) model, according to which administrative reform is initiated by its interaction with politics, bureaucracy and civil society. Applying this model, they identify China as a politics-dominant PNT, in which bureaucracy is completely politicized and the influence of civil society is minimized. Their finding indicates that
China is in greater need of a supportive political environment than many other nations.

Deng Xiaoping realized the importance of political reform two decades ago. He argued that without political reform, economic reform cannot be implemented. He made it clear, however, that political reform must go forward under the CCP’s leadership, as the CCP is the ultimate source of government power and the final guarantor of political stability. Like its economic reform, China’s political reform has no guiding model: the leadership defines political reform on its own terms and establishes the goals of political reform in the context of economic development and its own political interests. Any political reform, therefore, has to enable the party-state to maintain the sociopolitical stability required by its economic development efforts, while strengthening its own political legitimacy and dominance (Zheng 1999). For these reasons, China’s political reform has been very incremental and small scale. Since the fall of the Soviet Union, China has often been cited as an example of “economic reform without political reform” (Zheng 1999). This is an overstatement, but it shows how far political reform has lagged behind economic reform.

This conditional, incremental approach to political reform produced an enmeshed relationship between politics and administration. The CCP and the government are organizationally parallel but are substantially unitary, and the CCP secretaries are the de facto leaders at various levels of government (Yang 2007). Indeed, the CCP bureaucracy is at least partially a permanent component of the government bureaucracy (Aufreht and Bun 1995). In many cases, it functions as an outright executive branch, engendering such problems as micro-management, redundancy, inefficient decision-making, and lack of administrative independence. The Party sets general policy and appoints and promotes government officials, while the subordinate bureaucracy implements and oversees policy (Denigan 2001). The Party also reinforces China’s informal politics, clientelism, and authoritarian governing style, making the problem of corruption worse (Yang 2007). Once the CCP – the real power holder – opposes it, administrative reform is effectively blocked. Despite central demands in October 1998 and April 1999 that the provinces cut their staff, twenty-two provinces were still refusing to do so as of May 1999 (Zweig 2001).

Given the Chinese political regime, administrative reforms alone cannot succeed in creating a well-functioning public administration. Periodic administrative reform is not enough to transform the oversized, politicized, and highly intrusive administrative system. Nor can periodic administrative reform guarantee a smooth market transition and successful integration with the global economy (Ngok and Zhu 2008). China’s political system requires its own reform in order to accommodate drastic changes resulting from the economic reform (Zheng 1999) and to allow more room
and support for long-term, well-planned administrative reform. Though the 2008 reform is still in the process of implementation, another two rounds of reform have already been announced. Their outcome will determine China’s administrative future, at least through 2020. In any case, China has a long way to go in its effort to establish a modern public administrative system. Future research should outline the advantages of political reform, both for its own sake and for the sake of fostering institutional support for administrative reform.

References


The Movie Mujrā: The Trope of the Courtesan in Urdu-Hindi Film

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The trope of the courtesan is found in many Urdu-Hindi films from the earliest period of Indian cinema. The courtesan was essential to the film musical because her character could dance and sing when the more modest heroine could not. The courtesan could also express sexual desire, longing for freedom and independence, and choice in the matter of lovers. She expressed herself primarily through the medium of the mujrā-ghazal, a musical set-piece derived from nineteenth-century century courtesan culture in northern India. This article traces the musical and dramatic trajectory of the trope of the courtesan with reference to two of the most famous courtesan films: Pakeezah (1972) and Umrao Jaan (1981).

The courtesan is a permanent and prolific figure in the arts of South Asia. She appears in Sanskrit drama, medieval mystical love poetry, nineteenth century Urdu opera, and – until recently – Hindi film. She continued to ply her sophisticated trade on the silver screen long after her real-life counterparts had devolved into common whores. I will address the question of the future of the courtesan in Hindi film toward the end of these notes. First, I will examine the trajectory of the courtesan in the film industry and discuss her role in the evolution of a particular genre of film music, the mujrā (مجراء).

I will use the English word “courtesan” to translate the Urdu-Hindi word tawaif, which refers to women who were professional entertainers and arbiters of culture throughout much of South Asian history. The early modern era (i.e., the nineteenth century) was the golden age of the courtesan in North India, especially in Lucknow and Hyderabad, the successor states to the declining Mughal Empire. The courtesans were not directly affiliated with the courts, but their clients were predominantly of the noble classes. It is part of courtesan lore that the nobles (nawab) used to send their sons to the courtesans to receive training in literature, culture, etiquette, and, we can assume, sexuality. Essentially performers, the courtesans earned most of their income singing, dancing, and reciting poetry. They also, of course, had contractual sexual relationships with their clients,
ideally finding a long-term patron to provide support. If we take nineteenth-century Urdu poetry at face value, however, we can infer that most courtesans had a bevy of young men vying for their favors, and by distributing her attentions thriftily and capriciously, she could significantly raise her price in the market. The downside, as to be expected, was that a courtesan could not marry in the traditional sense, and the merest hint that a girl had tawaif blood running in her veins was enough permanently to destroy her hopes of marrying.

In literary tradition, the Indian courtesan, in contrast to her European and Japanese counterparts, participates in a constellation of metaphors derived from the Bhakti-Sufi tradition. As described in A.K. Ramanujan’s book *When God is a Customer*, medieval mystical poetry in South India often adopted the courtesan as a metaphor for the human soul and the customer as a metaphor for God — loved and sought after but often absent. Why was the courtesan so central? Because courtesans monopolized the voice of feminine romantic love and sexuality in South Asian society. As in many societies, South Asian marriage was a social contract used by families to create alliances and maintain their coffers. Married couples were not necessarily expected to experience love. Love was understood as a disruptive force, threatening the foundations of society. In this normative scheme, love was appropriate only to the temple and the brothel. Artists naturally conflated temple-love and brothel-love, and poems and songs became simultaneously erotic and devotional. This ever-present tension between the carnal and the divine is one of the invigorating and turbulent undercurrents in the ocean of South Asian aesthetics.

There is the separate tradition of the poetess-saint epitomized in North India by Mîrâbâ’î (ca. 1498–ca. 1547), who, while certainly not a courtesan, has a hagiography that centers on the radical rejection of social norms and family restraints. Mîrâbâ’î’s poetry, which is erotically charged with the torment of longing for God and the ecstasy of union with God, shares many tropes with that of courtesan poetry.

Since many of the early Indian sound films have been lost, it is difficult to identify the first courtesan film. We can say, at least, that P.C. Barua’s 1935 film *Devdas* (made in both Bengali and Hindi) was one of the first Hindi films in which a major character was a courtesan. Based on the 1917 Bengali novel by Saratchandra Chattopadhyay, *Devdas* concerns a love triangle in which two women (the devoted but caste-incompatible girl-next-door and the courtesan with a heart of gold) love the eponymous hero, an irascible scion of the upper class with an Oedipus complex. In this film the heroine Paro sings no songs at all, while Chandramukhi the courtesan, played by Rajkumari, sings two.¹ The hero, played by India’s first great singing star, K.L. Saigal, performs most of the film’s songs.
After independence, India’s film industry participated whole-heartedly in the project of socialist nation-building. Women were portrayed as virtuous village belles or as symbols of long-suffering “Mother India.” The preservation of a woman’s honor and social respectability became paramount, and most of the era’s film plots hinged on the attempt to avert disgrace when a young lady’s love threatened to transgress familial bounds. In such stories, female characters were naturally given a limited range of song numbers: the blossoming of innocent affection, the lament for an absent beloved, the duet of happy union. These characters never danced or expressed themselves sexually; to do so would have been unseemly. The musical sequences tended to be static: the camera shot the heroine’s face in tight close-up, or shot her in the middle-distance leaning against a tree, railing, or window sill.

The absence of dancing (at least by the heroine and hero) in early films is significant when we consider that dancing was an integral part of South Asian theatrical culture from the Sanskrit drama to the Parsi theater. The very word for drama in Hindi (नाटक) is derived from the Sanskrit word for dance (नृत्य). The Parsi theater industry, which had merged with the movie industry after the advent of sound technology, was overwhelmingly based on dance and song. Audiences expected several dance numbers in each film. One solution was to insert a staged musical number featuring a corps de ballet in the style of Cecil B. DeMille; this was ultimately unsatisfying, however, since such songs were usually unrelated to the plot of the film.

If the post-independence film heroine sang rooted to the spot, who could provide the requisite fancy footwork? The answer of course was the courtesan. The courtesan has had many celluloid incarnations. She was sometimes a hereditary member of the profession or a girl from a respectable family who has “fallen” through an unfortunate series of events. She was sometimes the divine nymph (अप्सरा) of Hindu legend or the Persian fairy (پاری). In the 1960s, she was a cabaret dancer, and in the 1980s a disco queen. In the “social” genre of Hindi film, which is concerned with modern life and social problems, the courtesan allows the filmmaker to present a woman singing and dancing on screen. She further allows the director to incorporate themes of love, sexuality, and passion. Eventually, many films came to feature the courtesan as the main character and established the courtesan genre as a sub-genre of the social film.²

This is an appropriate place to describe the mujrā and its trappings. A mujrā is a performance or recital by a courtesan. She performs before an assembled audience whose members have paid for the entertainment. Her singing and dancing is normally accompanied by musicians playing rhythmic instruments (tabla or pakhāvaj), drone instruments (taṇpurā), and melodic instruments (sārangi, sitār, etc.). The mujrā takes place in a pleasure
palace (kothā कोठा), public space, or private home to which the courtesan has been invited to perform. In the case of the mujrā in the kothā, a junior tawaifi might be obligated to spend the night with the highest bidder; a more powerful or talented courtesan in the kothā hierarchy might have a long-term lover-patron and function solely as a performer. In either case, the mistress of the kothā receives a large cut of the “box-office” receipts as well as the individual tawaifi’s fees to support the overhead. In recent years, with the ascendance of street prostitution, the term mujrā has acquired a vulgar connotation. In modern South Asian stage shows and music videos, mujrās feature lascivious gyrations and openly suggestive lyrics and are far removed from the subtle poetry and sophisticated flirtations of the past.

In Hindi films, the mujrā performance is the primary vehicle by which the courtesan develops her character and expresses her innermost feelings. Ironically, these feelings are not conveyed directly, but indirectly through the convoluted and multi-leveled resonances of the Urdu ghazal (غزل), a genre of poetry and art song that goes hand-in-hand with the mujrā scenario. Throughout most of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, the ghazal-mujrā was associated with courtesan culture. Ghazals were written by all the great Urdu poets and recited by their authors in poetry conventions (mushā’irah مشاعره), but the ghazal truly came to life only when it became a hit among the courtesans. Although the historical evidence is flimsy, there were certainly courtesan-poets: the semi-legendary Umrao Jān “Adā” امراؤ جان ادا was immortalized in a late nineteenth-century novel by Mirzā Muhammad Ḥādī Ruswā مرزا محمد بادی رسوا. I’ll say more about Umrao Jān and her celluloid incarnations later.

To understand how the mujrā functions in the context of Hindi-Urdu film, let me consider two representative courtesan films. These are Pakeezah (Kamal Amrohi, 1972) and Umrao Jaan (Muzaffar Ali, 1981). It is interesting to note that while not all courtesans were Muslim, in Bollywood’s treatment almost all of them are. There are several possible explanations for this. First, the popular culture associated the whole courtesan ethos with a nostalgic appeal to the early nineteenth-century Muslim nawabī tradition. The courtesan capital was considered to be Lucknow, the most important North Indian successor state to the Mughal Empire. Courtesan films were often classified as “Muslim socials” since they strove to evoke Muslim culture and the vanishing lifestyle of the nawabs. A second explanation is that the filmmakers could best exploit the fascinations of courtesan culture by “othering” it, making it a feature of the minority Muslim community and its decadent past. Surprisingly, in an era that saw the birth of numerous Islamic orthodox reform movements, popular culture persisted in attributing to Muslims all the major vices: prostitution, alcoholism, and idleness.

Pakeezah’s plot centers on the fictional courtesan Sāhibjān (played by Meena Kumari), who plies her trade as one of the most famous courtesans
in the region. Her mother was likewise a courtesan but her father was a \textit{nawab}. Her father’s young nephew – her first cousin – unknowingly enters the sleeping Sâhibjân’s compartment in a train and falls in love with her exposed feet. He leaves a love letter for her and departs before she awakens. She develops an obsessive love for her unseen admirer and dreams of escaping with him from the grind of the courtesan life. Eventually, coincidence conspires to unite them, but society and the \textit{nawab’s} family are determined to keep them apart. The film features a number of exquisite \textit{mujrâs}, including “Inhin logon ne,” “Thâde rahiyo,” and “Chalte chalte.”

In “Inhin logon ne” (“These are the people who have stolen my scarf”), the young Sâhibjân blames various people for her shame. Although flirtatious and playful, the song issues a harsh indictment of a society that simultaneously enjoys the favors of courtesans and denies them its respect. In “Thâde rahiyo” (“Keep standing”), Sâhibjân performs a \textit{mujrâ} for her gathered customers, and the lyrics of her song describe a seduction in the most erotic terms. During the performance, she favors a customer who has prof- fered a bulging purse. An uncouth latecomer slides his own purse across the floor, and it collides with the first. The first customer angrily shoots a second purse out of the upstart’s hand, ending the performance abruptly in a shower of blood and coins.

Sâhibjân has never met her mysterious and ardent admirer from the train. The trigger-happy customer inadvertently reminds her of her secret admirer when the next day he sends her a lavish carpet. His explicit reason for the gift is his wish that her delicate feet not touch the ground (calling to mind the love note she found in the train), but his ulterior motive is to avoid the sliding purse problem in the future.

Soon thereafter, Sâhibjân performs the greatest \textit{mujrâ} in the film, “Chalte chalte” (“As I was Traveling”), as a private command performance for the donor of the carpet. In this song, she slowly reveals the story of her innermost heart. The \textit{mise-en-scène} is director Kamal Amrohi’s masterpiece. Sâhibjân and her would-be lover seem to be alone in an open pillared hall: she sits clothed in red in the middle of the vast red carpet; he sits facing her at the back of the hall. The circular drive and its central fountain, plashing in the moonlight, are beyond the pillars. With the musical introduction (\textit{a\l\l\p} \textit{\ul\a\n\p}), two white-garbed dancers spin slowly into the frame behind Sâhibjân. As the rhythm increases, they begin to clap and dance in perfect unison. Their presence throughout the first half of the song provides a beautiful counterpoint to the stationary Sâhibjân, emphasizing the strange duality of the singer’s soul. The music itself, with its steady walking rhythm and the repeated rhymes (“chalte chalte, dhalte dhalte, jalte jalte”), emphasizes both the yearning of unfulfilled love and the transience of happiness.

In the second stanza, the sequence takes a turn: leaving her admirer, Sâhibjân strolls onto the veranda facing the fountain. As she sings the
words “This night of waiting will also come to an end; the lamps are going out . . . ,” she gestures toward the moon sinking in the sky behind the clouds. As she repeats this line, she returns to the main hall and watches as the lamps go out one by one, reflected in her eyes and extinguished as she lowers her gaze. Then she completes the line of poetry “. . . burning along with me.” We understand that while she is ostensibly talking to her present admirer, she is really singing about the unseen lover she encountered on the train. To clinch the allusion, the camera pans up to show the chandelier overheard spontaneously extinguished, and a train whistle intrudes abruptly into the texture of the song. Sāhibjān disappears below the bottom of the frame; the two dancers pirouette away, symmetrically right and left. After the chandelier goes dark, the camera pans down to show a suddenly empty stage, and then zooms in to show the fountain, which suddenly ceases, with the last jets of water falling in perfect unison with the dying note of the train’s whistle.

Throughout Pakeezah, the train, as the site where Sāhibjān first experienced love, represents her escape from the courtesan’s lot. She fantasizes about the unknown lover who will someday take her away from her profession. This is one of the most important recurring themes in the courtesan genre: the yearning of the courtesan for love, the love that brings freedom and escape. Courtesans rarely long for the role of wifehood and respectability; they have tasted independence and power and are unwilling to relinquish it.

The second film I wish to consider is Muzaffar Ali’s low-budget film Umrao Jaan (1981). Based on Ruswā’s 1895 novel, Umrao Jaan is the story of a young girl who is kidnapped and sold into a brothel by one of her father’s enemies. She grows up to be one of the most famous courtesans and poets of her age. Like Sāhibjān, Umrā’o Jān (played by Rekha) longs for a lover to take her away from the “business.” After several attempts fail, she finally escapes and sets up independently in a different city until her old madam tracks her down and tricks her into returning. The “Mutiny” of 1857 intervenes and in the chaos she becomes a wanderer, finally returning to her childhood home only to be brutally rejected by the younger brother who was once devoted to her. This version of the film dispenses with Ruswā’s framing device of writing Umrā’o Jān’s story as an interview with the author at the end of her life. J.P. Dutta’s 2006 version of the story restores the interview device and is generally more faithful to the novel. Unfortunately, the 2006 version is fatally marred by misguided casting, faulty pronunciation, and a surfeit of weepiness. By the way, if the plot sounds familiar, it is because Arthur Golden’s 1997 novel Memoirs of a Geisha and Rob Marshall’s 2005 film are drawn almost scene by scene from Ruswā and Muzaffar Ali.
Umrao Jaan contains several mujrās. The first, “In ankhon ki masti mein” (“In the excitement of these eyes),” is sung at Umra’o’s debut. The second, “Dil cheez kya hai” (“What’s my heart?”), marks Umra’o’s premiere as a poet following a sequence in which she has received poetic correction (islāḥ اصلاح) from a Maulvi. These are traditional mujrās in every sense: Umra’o is courting the interest – and money – of potential customers. “Dil cheez kya hai” has a deeper layer of meaning (lost when the song is extracted as a music video). It asserts Umra’o’s ascendance as an independent poetic voice, while showing how the young nawāb, who is to be her first love, is captivated by her poetic skill. The central theme of the film and novel, the capriciousness of fate and fortune, emerges only later in the story when Umra’o re-encounters the girl kidnapped with her. The girl had been sold as a servant and has achieved respectability by marrying a nawāb, while Umra’o was sold as a tawaif. In the final mujrā of the film, “Yeh kya jagah hai dosto” (“Friends, what place is this?”), Umra’o has returned to her native town and is performing at a local gathering. She subconsciously recognizes her childhood neighborhood and, in a shot reminiscent of Pakeezah, slowly emerges from the “stage” and approaches her old house, leaving the wondering audience behind. The song sequence brings together the several themes of the courtesan genre: the courtesan’s agony at being separated forever from family and society, the painful price of independence, the yearning for love and escape, and the caprice of fate, which selects certain women for courtesanship and others for respectability.

The mujrā-ghazal, the courtesan’s song, has been a stock set-piece of Hindi films since the 1930s. In the 1960s, the more overtly titillating cabaret dance partially replaced the courtesan number, using Westernized music and featuring particular type-cast actress-dancers like Helen and Bindu. In the cabaret songs, the performer was not usually a courtesan, but a “vamp” or morally dubious female character. The vamp’s open sexuality and wild gyrations marked her as a “bad girl” who either perished or reformed in the final sequence of the film. The setting for the cabaret was typically a bar or club, often located explicitly in a foreign country, but sometimes in India.

In recent decades the courtesan has tended to appear in historical films and in a variety of new incarnations. She may be a performer in a village folk theater (nautanki नौटंकी), for example, as in the wonderful mujrā titled “Beedi jalay le” (“Light your Cigarette”) from the 2006 film Omkara, or she may appear as an urban call-girl, struggling to make ends meet in the big city, like Rani Mukherjee in the film Laaga chunari mein daagh: Journey of a Woman. Even more common in the past decade is the so-called item number, the descendant of the cabaret dance, in which an “item girl” appears for a single number, usually performing in a crowded disco. The actresses who play item girls often aspire to roles as heroines, but most become type-
cast and live out their brief careers doing a single number per film. These characters have even smaller roles than the cabaret dancers of the 1960s did. In many cases they have no relation to the plot and merely serve as a mercetricious backdrop to some intrigue transpiring in the club, quick glimpses of which are included in the song and dance sequence.

Of course, the original logic for the courtesan role has by now disappeared: the heroine – and indeed the hero – can and do dance, while the taboos against on-screen sexuality have been overturned. The courtesan is a relic of the past, and her domain is the historical film. With the success of blockbusters like Devdas (2004) and even Umrao Jaan (2006), we can hope that the courtesan film and the ghazal-mujra song-genre will not completely vanish from the stage of South Asian popular culture.

Notes

1Devdas was remade in 1955 and then again in 2002. In the successive retellings, the heroine Paro is given more songs, but the show is repeatedly stolen by the Chandramukhi character. In the 2002 version Paro actually dances in the opening number, “Silsilâ yeh châhat kâ,” and again in an incredible, manic duet with Chandramukhi, “Dolâ re dolâ.” But Chandramukhi has her own solo items, or mujrâs, in which all of the conventions of the courtesan’s milieu are presented.

2I should note that in addition to the “social” genre in Hindi film, there were other genres that provided more scope for female characters and dance numbers. Among these were the mythologicals and fantasies, the former drawn from both Hindu and Muslim epic and legend, the latter set in a vaguely medieval, fantastic past. These often included dance numbers for women, while the films set in the present day or recent historical past did not.

References


Zhang Yimou’s Dance of the Red Lantern

On a dimly lit stage, an old man lifts a cane and lights the red lanterns. Accompanied by the spare sound of ringing bells, the lanterns gradually rise like an ascending curtain and reveal a stage space for the dance of red lanterns performed by a corps de ballet dressed in blue. A female voice, singing in the style of the Peking opera, gradually becomes audible. This prelude opens Dahong denglong gaogao gua 大红灯笼高高挂 or, as it is better known in the West, Raise the Red Lantern. The performance combines elements of ballet, modern dance, and Peking opera. The conflation of East and West governs every creative aspect of the ballet, which explains why it has been acclaimed equally in China and throughout the world.

The ballet is the brainchild of Zhang Yimou 张艺谋 (b. 1951), who made his name in the West as the director of the renowned Chinese film Raise the Red Lantern (1991). Zhang won the best director award at the Venice International Film Festival in 1991, and the film received an Academy Award nomination as best foreign film in 1992. Subsequent films like Shanghai Triad (1995), Hero (2002), House of Flying Daggers (2004), and Curse of the Golden Flower (2005) sealed Zhang’s reputation as a giant of world cinema, while his direction of the extravagant opening ceremony of the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing made him an international celebrity. Given his penchant for stunning visual pattern, Zhang’s interest in the highly stylized media of opera and ballet is hardly surprising. The ballet – his first – premiered in Beijing in 2001 and has since played in Europe and America. A revised version of the ballet, featuring the National Ballet of China, with music by Chen Qigang 陈其刚 and choreography by Wang
Xinpeng 王新鹏 and Wang Yuanyuan 王媛媛, appeared on video in 2005, encouraging an assessment of what Zhang has both achieved and failed to achieve.

A Plot for All Media

The story of the *Red Lantern* originates in a novella titled *Wife and Concubines* 妻妾成群 by Su Tong 苏童 (b. 1963) published in 1990. Su Tong’s novella tells the story of a nineteen-year-old college student, Songlian 颂莲, who marries into a rich household and becomes the fourth concubine of the much older master. The novella centers on the vicious competition and relentless jealousy governing the household world of the wives, concubines and maids, and on the friendship that develops between Songlian and the elder son of the master, Feipu 飞浦, which verges on transgression. As these two plot lines progress, Songlian increasingly withdraws into solitude and self-confinement, while the abandoned well in which several concubines have died looms threateningly outside her room. Her attempt to distance herself from the intrigues of the household, however, does not prevent her from striking back after being slandered, resulting in the death of her maid and the loss of her master’s favor. After witnessing the adulterous third wife’s death by drowning in the well, Songlian loses her mind and becomes an invalid inmate of the household.

Zhang Yimou’s film brings a stunning visual aestheticism to Su’s story, while engaging in a significant plot revision. In the novella, Songlian attempts to remain above the petty intrigues of the household, but in the film she quickly succumbs to something devious and dark in her own nature and becomes as fully Machiavellian as the other women. The film thus assumes a moral and dramatic weight missing from the novella: Zhang’s Songlian is no mere innocent victim of circumstance, but a complex moral agent whose downfall is largely her own doing. In both novella and film, Songlian is the unintentional victimizer of the maid, but in the film she is the effective murderer of the third wife, whose infidelity she reports to the treacherous second wife, knowing, in some recess of her mind, that her tale is the death warrant of a competitor. Significantly, the novella envisions Songlian crazed by circumstance, while the film envisions her crazed by guilt. Zhang thus reconceives the story as a parable of the self caught in the fate it has created, and the film becomes a Shakespearean tragedy played out in a Chinese social context. The ingénue of the novella is no more; she has been replaced by the tragic heroine.

Zhang also accentuates the story’s symbolic elements, bringing a new complexity and intensity to the story. Most significantly, the film elevates the lantern, which the novella mentions only peripherally, as a crucial leitmotif. In Zhang’s film, the lantern hangs in the courtyard of the lady with
whom the master intends to spend the night. Fantasizing about being a wife or concubine, the maid, Yaner 雁儿, raises her own red lantern, which provides Songlian with an excuse to mete out harsh punishment and unleash her own frustrations. She forces Yaner to kneel in the courtyard until the maid dies in the snow. Thus, the red lantern, an auspicious symbol, becomes a symbol of illicit desire and ambition as well as a morally ambiguous marker of the master’s favor. Zhang also makes an important symbol of the small hammers used to massage the feet of the wives and concubines. The massage, like the lantern, is a symbol of privilege, and the clicking sound of the hammer echoes throughout both the household and film, indicating the constant competition for favor. The sound of the hammer likewise has erotic connotations, suggesting the physical ministrations enjoyed by some but denied to others. Zhang brilliantly utilizes the symbolic elements to underscore the silent drama that plays out within the household; the symbolism allows Zhang to explore the intricacies of his domestic drama without impinging on the silence and the isolation that is its subtext. Finally, Zhang shifts symbolic emphasis from the well (a crucial motif of the novella) to a small stone room on the roof of the compound. Both symbolize the tragic fate of unfaithful women, but the room, situated above, suggests a totalitarian world of observation and control, and represents the panoptic eye of the master and his minions. Zhang achieves this effect by frequently adopting a rooftop perspective on the action below, taking in the stone room in what seems an incidental fashion. Visually, Zhang implants the room as a subconscious consideration and thereby prepares for
its powerful revelation as a place of execution when the third wife is carried there, as if in funeral procession, at the end of the film. Zhang thus makes clever use of his actual location, the Qiao Compound 乔家 in Pingyang 平阳, Shanxi Province 山西, and turns an accidental feature of the structure – perhaps a harmless storage shed or recreational pavilion – into a haunting symbol of power and the dread of power.

In its emphasis on color and pattern, the ballet attempts to replicate the film; however, the ballet struggles to capture the plot intricacies and the moral nuances of the film, and tells a simpler story of tragic love involving Songlian (played by the prima ballerina), Songlian’s lover (a plot addition), two older wives, and the master. Songlian and her lover (played in the style of the male protagonist or xiaosheng 小生 of Peking Opera) engage in a clandestine affair, which the second wife discovers and reports. The master orders the execution of the couple, as well as the second wife, the latter in apparent punishment for being the bearer of bad news. In its de-emphasis of the political struggles among the women of the household, the ballet is closer to the novella, which hints at a romance between Songlian and Feipu without suggesting actual infidelity. Like the film, the ballet adopts the lan-

Figure 2. The new bride, Songlian, dances under the red lanterns after exiting the bridal sedan chair, in the ballet Raise the Red Lantern.
tern as its center, but removed from the context of the film’s symbolic system, the lantern becomes merely decorative. The lantern is lit at the beginning of the performance and again when Songlian steps from the bridal sedan chair while surrounded by the corps de ballet. The symbolic meaning of the lantern is not clearly introduced, and the viewer naturally assumes the red lantern means no more than it usually does when lit as part of the marriage ceremony. The second wife lights her own lanterns after losing the master’s favor (a deviation from the film, which assigns this audacity to the maid), but the scene seems to presuppose a symbolic meaning that has not been established, and the scene seems arbitrary and even confusing.

Zhang seems to realize that ballet is about the elaborate ornamentation of a simple plot line, but he appears to be caught up in his own visual extravaganza to the detriment of what should be his primary emphasis: the expressive potential of dance. There is an instructive contrast with Lin Hwai-min 林懷民 (b. 1947), director of Taiwan’s Cloudgate Dance Company 雲門舞集. No less than Zhang, Lin is a master of visual spectacle, but his elaborate lighting and flowing silks accentuate, rather than distract from or compete with, the expressive effort of the dance itself. In general, Zhang remains too much the filmmaker. He seems unsure how to make dance serve his purposes. Lacking Lin’s intimate understanding of the body and the body’s unconscious symbol-language, he conceives the dance as a mere component in a multimedia spectacle, not realizing that the moving body is intrinsically privileged and inescapably central. Ironically, Gong Li’s 巩俐 performance as Songlian in the film is brilliantly bodily, while the ballet tends to be physically inert.

**The Fusion of Ballet & Peking Opera**

*Raise the Red Lantern* tells a thoroughly traditional Chinese tale, recalling, for example, the famous Ming novel *Jin Ping Mei* 金瓶梅 (*The Plum and the Golden Vase*, seventeenth century). Zhang’s archaic instinct for repetitive pattern and sumptuous color is well suited to this material, as the film demonstrates. The ballet preserves traditional Chinese elements in its costumes and set design, but the conventions of the ballet necessarily introduce a Western element that can be discordant. The score, for example, is an experimental fusion of Western and Chinese music. Some of the music derives directly from the Peking Opera, but much of the music combines Chinese melody and instrumentation with the dissonant effects of Western modernism. The most successful musical interlude occurs during the dance that narrates the jealous reaction to the arrival of the new bride and the introduction of the master. The females are accompanied by Chinese music heavy with percussion, while the master and his servants are accompanied by jagged shards of sound that recall Stravinsky’s *Rites of Spring*. Here, the
music is not attempting to define the mood, but to function as the rhythm of the dance; moreover, the music underscores the distinction between male and female so essential to the basic idea of the story. Here the music and the dance work together to tell the story, while they otherwise tend to compete or simply to misunderstand one another. Once again, Zhang is too much the filmmaker, lacking an instinctive feel for the requirements of successful ballet; sensorily, he is all eye and not enough ear.

The props and the costumes are mostly Chinese. The qipao 旗袍 (the Chinese dress popularized in Shanghai during the 1930s) defines the natural line of the upright body rather nicely, but the qipao's elegance derives from its form-hugging constriction, which works against the expressive movement of ballet and modern dance. Whether the dancers' movements are actually hindered, the dress gives the impression that they are hindered and leaves the viewer cringing in expectation of split seams and bared bottoms — the balletic equivalent of Janet Jackson's infamous "wardrobe malfunction." Moreover, the stiffness of the dresses cannot accommodate the shifting lines of the dancers' bodies; the precise outlines are obscured, and the fabric tends to bunch rather than flow. In order to accommodate leg movement, the dresses have an unusually high slit, revealing a good deal of hip and buttock and contradicting the erotic logic of the qipao, which is to suggest the contours of the body while keeping it carefully concealed.

The choreography goes a step farther in the attempt to produce a hybridity of Chinese and Western dance. Its basic point of reference is the Western ballet, but it incorporates the shenduan 身段, or stylized gestures, of the Peking Opera. The ambition is bold and admirable, but the result leaves something to be desired. Following the classical ballet, the choreography features a number of pas de deux involving the prima ballerina and the male lead. The first occurs in the first scene, in which Songlian journeys to her new home and meets her lover on the way. The male lead is costumed in full military armor. He wears high-heeled shoes in the manner of the Peking opera, and six pennants rise from his backplate. According to the conventions of Peking opera, these pennants signify a soldier in the midst of battle. Burdened with all of this paraphernalia, the dancer can perform only the simple, stylized shenduan of the Peking opera even as he attempts to fulfill the usual partnering duties of the male ballet dancer (lifting, supporting, etc.). The pairing of the clunky male and the fluid female seems odd and uncoordinated, as if the dancers had accidentally wandered onto the same stage.

The second scene features a meta-performance that embeds a Peking opera performance within the ballet to celebrate the master's birthday, which is central in the novella but marginalized in the film. An operatic performance is appropriate to such a celebration and does not seem gimmicky. In the second scene, the operatic performance forms the backdrop
for the prima ballerina’s solo and the pas de deux of the ballerina and her lover. The two dances simultaneously narrate the same drama of forbidden love, creating an obviously meaningful juxtaposition and, perhaps, symbolizing the aesthetic aspiration of the ballet itself. The skill of the operatic performers, however, clearly contrasts with the laborious exertions and relatively poor coordination of the dancers. The operatic performers who fight with lances in the second scene are likewise models of impeccable stylization, at odds with the rest of the program. These painful contrasts underscore that the Western element remains a stubbornly foreign element and that Chinese ballet cannot, for the moment, compete with the ancient and culturally central traditions of Peking opera.

In the climax of the ballet, the two wives and the lover are caned to death. The domestics who perform the execution are, oddly enough, dressed as soldiers, their uniforms recalling those in the Zhang’s acclaimed film Hero. Zhang may want to associate their cruelty with the brutality of the Qin (third century B.C.) army and the murder of the three innocents with the political oppression perpetrated by the Qin dynasty, but this over-the-top anachronism seems radically at odds with the subtle suggestions of dance and furthermore overturns the secrecy and mystery surrounding the punishment meted out to the unfaithful wives. In this scene, the body’s power to imply pain and anguish through subtle inflection is completely overshadowed as the soldiers smash the canvas backcloth with seven-foot rods while the three dancers writhe in the foreground. The scene is frenzied, ungainly, and loud, and Zhang may believe that this is entirely to the point, but a more knowing student of the classical ballet would understand that the dance must suggest inelegance while itself remaining scrupulously elegant. This climax may have an internal logic in theory, but from the perspective of the disgruntled viewer it comes to seem a weirdly symbolic attack on dance as an expressive medium and a frustrated acknowledgment that the performance has failed.

The fusion of Eastern and Western is far from impossible, as demonstrated by the painting of Lin Fengmian 林風眠 (1900–91) and the dance of Lin Hwai-min, on the one hand, and by the art of James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903) and the poetry of Ezra Pound (1885–1972), on the other. Zhang himself successfully weds East and West in his films, most especially in Shanghai Triad, which begins as homage to the American gangster film but gives way to a mood of bitter lyricism that is entirely Chinese. In all cases, however, this marriage depends on a mastery of the medium, a control firm enough to accommodate the foreign element. Zhang is a supremely gifted film director who has trespassed on a discipline that is not his own; like Songlian, he attempts to maneuver in a world he only partially understands, with similarly unfortunate results.
Notes

1 Bie Songmei extols the conflation of traditional Chinese opera and ballet. See Bie (2009).
3 For a discussion of the women’s vicious struggle, see Wang Lanlan (2008).
4 Kevin Ng wrote a mixed review of the debut at the Sadler’s Wells Theater in London in November 2003. He approves of Zhang’s direction but disapproves of the choreography: “The choreography overall is sound though not particularly inspired or inventive.” See Ng (2004).
5 The mahjong player’s dance, by contrast, is rather gimmicky. Ng calls the dance “ridiculous” (2004).

References

Taking Pains to Explain Li Keran’s
*The Pain of Composition*

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Li-ling Hsiao and David A. Ross explore the intricacies of Li Keran’s 李可染 *The Pain of Composition*, which appears on the cover of this volume of *SERA*S, as well as below. They argue that the painting’s surface charm conceals an underlying sophistication and complexity and that the painting is nothing less than an intellectual *tour de force*.

Our *SERA*S cover art is carefully selected: we know that pose, those knitted brows. The artist is Li Keran 李可染 (1907–89), one of twentieth-century China’s artistic titans and the last great practitioner in the *guohua* 國畫 or traditional ink brush style. The painting, which belongs to a private collection and probably dates from the 1980s, is titled *Kuyin tu* 苦吟圖 or *The Pain of Composition* (fig. 1). The work plainly effuses charm and humor; it less obviously frames an involved aesthetic and metaphysical debate with the poetic voices of the past, and demonstrates the polyphony of colophon, seal, and image that defines Chinese painting at its most subtle and cohesive.

The painter or poet at his table was one of Li’s favorite motifs. He painted the scene repeatedly, invariably inscribing lines that he attributed, not quite accurately, to the famous Tang poet Jia Dao 賈島 (779–843):

I compose through the night and into the dawn,
My toil would exhaust even gods and ghosts.
Three years yield two lines.
Two tears celebrate the finished work.
The last two lines indeed derive from Jia’s four-line “Tishi hou” (An Epilogue to a Poem), but the first two lines derive from Meng Jiao’s (751–814) four-line “Yegan ziqian” (Nocturnes to Wile away my Leisure). Meng’s alternate title “Kuxue yin” (Poem on the Pains of Study) presumably inspired the title of Li’s painting. Li’s commentary on these lines varies only slightly from painting to painting. In this instance he comments:

These are Jia Dao’s words.
I’ve always been a dimwit — what do I know about cleverness?
All my life, though, I’ve revered the ancients’ spirit of diligence.
— Keran, self-encouragingly.

[夜吟曉不休 / 苦吟神鬼愁 / 兩句三年得 / 一吟雙淚流 / 此賈島句也，余性愚鈍不識機巧，生平從先賢勤學精神。可染自勉。]

Li may have amalgamated the two poems for reasons of mistaken scholarship or errant memory, but more likely he sought to intensify the theme of
scholarly martyrdom, as the excluded lines tend to question whether such labor is ultimately justified (“Why not release oneself / From the war of mind and body,” writes Meng).

Li’s brief commentary revealingly misreads the Jia-Meng poem. The cobbled lines exalt poetry by emphasizing its tormenting, inhuman difficulty (in Yeats’ version of the sentiment: “Better go down upon your marrowbones / And scrub a kitchen pavement, or break stones / Like an old pauper, in all kinds of weather”). Li, however, reads the lines as a panegyric on diligence, interpreting consistent effort as a compensatory posture — as the necessary mode of the tortoise that competes with the hare. In keeping with this emphasis, Li punningly transforms Meng’s allusion to “shen” (“god” or “spirit”) into the more mundane “kuxue jingshen” (“spirit of diligence”). What does this misreading imply about Li Keran? Nearly everything, one is tempted to answer. His art does not attempt godlike or ghost-like exertion, nor does it even recognize a transcendent order that would make sense of this exertion. The subject of his art is the given world in all its immediacy and charm; his guiding notion is the amiability of the actual. He is best known for his depictions of peasant boys herding buffalo, not wearily or discontentedly (which would suggest an order of value or meaning beyond the herding of buffalo), but casually, habitually, and unmindfully (fig. 2). One feels the afternoon heat, the buzzing flies, the boys’ lazy camaraderie and long silences. This artistic mode has nothing to do with the kind of superhuman labor Jia describes (“Three years yield two lines”), though it requires a certain resistance to its own mood and attention to the subtle inflection of line and form. Li’s art is sometimes loftier and more ambitious, but even his black mountainscape, which soar and plunge magisterially, have a roughness of line that acknowledges the scruffiness of the earth.

The painter-poet of The Pains of Composition is far more in Li’s spirit than Jia’s or Meng’s. The figure toils “through the night and into the dawn,” but his struggle is not exactly sublime. Li represents the “war of mind and body” as a grimacing, almost literal constipation. The muddy tones, the heavily planted feet, and the hunched shoulders indicate the inescapability of the mundane, with the suggestion that the poet is just as implicated and compromised as the rest of us. The brush is optimistically cocked skyward, but the angle is off-kilter, and in any case the brush merely pokes from the grounded slump of the figure. In Li’s interpretation, Jia-Meng’s perplexity is not a tragedy of incomplete transcendence, but a comedy of thwarted pretence, welcoming us with its implicit fellow-feeling: we may not know the exquisite spiritual torment of the poet, but we know the frustration of a brain that won’t solve a problem. In this respect, Li, for all the humility of his colophon, assimilates the great poets within his own unpretentious conception of the world and makes light of the painter-poet’s
drama of creation. In this respect also, Li’s conceptualization of the poetic enterprise rejects the most obvious precedents in Chinese art tradition, as exemplified by Liang Kai’s 梁楷 (active in thirteenth century) portrait of Li Bai 李白 (701–62). This arch-canonical work depicts the great poet gazing heavenward in solitary contemplation, an Eastern version of the rarefied hero in Caspar David Friedrich’s Wanderer above the Sea of Fog (1818).

Li’s deflation of Jia-Meng conceivably has a political dimension. It was Li’s genius to devise an aesthetic that both served and transcended political exigencies. Julia F. Andrews, the leading scholar of the post-Revolutionary politics of Chinese art, characterizes Li’s balancing act:

He managed to bring into existence a new style that satisfied both his own artistic aims and those of the Chinese system, while largely protecting his art from the vagaries of politics... As a result, he was rewarded for aspects of his art that harmonized with party policy and, except for the early years of the Cultural Revolution, rarely punished for those that might not. (402–3)

Li’s famous red landscapes, which illustrate Mao’s poetic allusion to “ten thousand red mountains,” are a signal instance of Li’s gift for serving two masters; these beautiful paintings are at once orthodox and aesthetically justified in every detail. As at least a nominal communist, Li may have unconsciously reacted against the elite sentiment implicit in the Jia-Meng poem and attempted to deflate the lines upon the point of his own wry humor. The Cultural Revolutionaries trafficked in mockery, of course — the de-legitimation of public laughter and ridicule. The Pain of Composition seems to adopt a related strategy of subversion, though it possesses an entirely different order of sophistication, humanity, and wit. Nothing in this requires forgiveness. The painting is not a Maoist rectification, but a wry retort, even if it serves or respects underlying ideological considerations.

The Pain of Composition displays five seals, two of which give Li’s name, three of which function as implicit commentary on the image. The three editorial seals are “Fenggao wu tantu” 峰高無坦途 (“No flat road to high peaks”), “Baifa xuetong” 白髮學童 (“White-haired student”), and “Shiniu Tang” 師牛堂 (“Hall of Ox Teachings”). “No flat road” clearly indicates the transcendental and high-aesthetic aspiration of the Jia-Meng poem. As if metaphorizing Jia-Meng’s lofty solitude, it occupies an isolated position in the lower right-hand corner of the painting; at the same time, its grounded position suggests the inescapable weight of being and signifies Li’s insistent humanism or anti-transcendentalism. “White-haired student” seems to mediate between the other two seals. On the one hand, it suggests the transcendental exertion that turns youth to premature age (Shelley, in “Alastor,” describes his poet’s thinning hair as “sere’d by the autumn of strange suffering”; George Sand, in Lélia, has her poet exclaim, “Look at these grey hairs around a face where the beard has not yet grown”); on the other hand,
the seal suggests the lifelong project of learning. The former implication comports with the Jia-Meng poem; the latter with Li’s own ethic of diligence (interpreted this way, the seal echoes “No flat road,” the low position of which suggests the long journey of learning ahead). In addition to recalling Li’s signature motif of the herd-boys at work, “Hall of Ox Teachings” echoes Li’s allusion to his own plodding intellect (“dimwit”) and epitomizes his general doctrine of consistency, determination, and practicality. By associating this doctrine with the august context of the “hall,” Li humorously dignifies and sanctifies it; by placing the ox seal in the upper right-hand corner next to the painting’s title, he privileges it. In conjunction, then, the seals reiterate the painting’s insistence on its own homely wisdom.

If it takes an unorthodox view of the poetic spirit, *The Pains of Composition* is fully orthodox in the cohesive unity of its poetry, calligraphy, and image. This cohesion and unity had been an artistic ideal since the eleventh
century, when literati theorists grasped an analogy between calligraphy and painting and hypothesized a shared origin, as enshrined in the adage “shuhua tong yuan” (calligraphy and painting flow from the same spring). The literati complemented the theory of shared origin with a theory of shared principles, as expressed in the adage “shihua ben yi lü” (poetry and painting abide the same law). There emerged an almost mystical conflation of poetry, calligraphy, and painting (the so-called three perfections) indicated in the common dicta “shizhong youhua” (painting within poetry) and “huazhong youshi” (poetry within painting) — phrases Su Shi (1037–1101) used in praise of Wang Wei’s poetry.

According to literati aesthetic principle, each medium should reflect the spirit of the other, and each painting should enact their interplay. Some painters – Zhao Mengfu (1254–1322) and Wu Chuangshuo (1844–1927), for example – went so far as to incorporate specific calligraphic strokes in their art. This ancient body of theory explains why literati tended to function as both painters and poet-calligraphers, and why they considered these functions inseparable.

In numerous ways, The Pain of Composition conforms to traditional ideals of technical excellence and philosophical subtlety by intertwining poetry, calligraphy, and image. In the most obvious example, Li renders both his calligraphy and image in the same heavy, broken line. The calligraphic strokes exemplify the celebrated style called feibai (flying-white), the hallmark of which is the thick, ragged line streaked with white. The streaks give the impression of spontaneity, accident, and informality, as if the artist had taken no particular pains and the brush had moved lightly and carelessly over the paper. The same technique is employed to render the figure, the table, the candle, the writing paper, the ink stick, and the ink stone (for grinding the stick). The analogy between the calligraphy and image suggests the more basic analogy between the poet and the painter, while the feibai style impishly subverts the Jia-Meng poem’s tenets of concentration and deliberation and instantiates the more casual principles of Li’s aesthetic. The painting’s more esoteric humor involves the incompatibility between the spirit of the poem and the spirit of the brushwork.

In addition, numerous congruities associate the calligraphy and the image. The red seals echo the red candle and the red flame. The water radical (氵) in the character lei (tear) echoes the painter-poet’s left sleeve, as well as the self-under-looping line of his right sleeve. Not incidentally, the painter-poet’s brush points toward this character and toward the character of liu (flow) just below it, as if wryly emphasizing that the literary enterprise yields more tears than text. In Jia’s poem, the tears celebrate the completion of two lines; here – in humorous self-deprecation – the tears fall on a maddeningly empty page. There is arguably an additional congruity be-
tween the candle flame and the character shen 神 (god or spirit) above the painter-poet’s left shoulder, the latter resembling an upside-down version of the former. The parallelism ascribes a certain ritual aspect to the aesthetic implement of the candle and analogizes the artistic and religious mindsets. Furthermore, the character and candle nicely frame the upper body of the painter-poet, implying the complementarity of spirit and body and reversing the implication of Meng Jiao’s lines (“Why not release oneself / From the war of mind and body”). Meng’s lines assert a transcendental dialectic, a tension whose ultimate intensification yields the work of art. By contrast, Li’s configuration of character and candle asserts a certain symmetry and fraternity between the poles of experience (“mind and body”), though this fraternity by no means ensures human achievement. If the Jia-Meng poem suggests that poetry requires a certain unnatural concentration, Li suggests that our normal human balance and sense of proportion is the mode of art as well as life, though it may not be sufficient for all our purposes.

The figure of the painter-poet is ambiguous; it may represent the generic literati or Jia or Li himself. The latter interpretation is perhaps the most plausible, as the empty page is consistent with Li’s self-deprecation and his emphasis on effort rather than achievement. The painting’s title employs the character ku 苦 (bitterness, pain) to characterize the anguish of the painter-poet’s mental block, and the figure’s expression – the glory of the painting – marvelously illustrates the sensation of ku. Moreover, the face clearly – almost explicitly – mimics the strokes of the character ku 苦 in the upper-right corner of the painting (the first character of the colophon). The eyebrows correspond to the “grass” radical (艸); the nose and closed eyes correspond to the “ten” character (十); and the moustache and beard correspond to the “mouth” character (口). The closed eyes suggest grunting, clenched effort, and the painful, difficult reversion to inner resources; they also enhance the visual echo of the “ten” character (十). This cross-media punning is a display of literati cleverness, but it also has a doctrinal point, privileging ku 苦 (pain) over yin (composition), the other word in the title. Once again, Li underscores his moral commitment to the pains of diligence, irrespective of aesthetic achievement. Finally, the figure’s dark, clay-like pallor, which differs from other versions of the image, suggests the flush of almost physical effort and underscores the context of the earth.

Several versions of The Pains of Composition have surfaced in recent years, differing from our cover image only in the wording of their signature lines (“Li-Keran, self-encouragingly,” etc.) and in their combinations of seals. Christie’s auctioned versions on October 30, 2000 ($11,351), and May 28, 2007 ($61,618), while Sotheby’s auctioned versions on October 7, 2006 ($245,443), and April 5, 2009 ($149,677). All four paintings are notably inferior to the version on our cover in terms of execution, which probably
explains why in two of four cases they fetched such modest prices. *Li Keran Huaji* (The Collected Paintings of Li Keran) includes another version of the scene (Li 2003, 2: 307; fig. 3). As it belongs to the Li family collection, this painting, unlike those auctioned by Christie’s and Sotheby’s, is presumably exempt from the usual debates about authenticity. What this version of the scene lacks, most obviously, is the sense of a cohesive system of meaning. The parallelism between the calligraphy and image is spotty at best (notice for example the incongruency between the candle and the “shen” character), and the visage has little expressive personality: the nose and chin are plainly botched, and face has none of our cover painting’s psychological precision or humor. The upper-right seal (“shen gui chou” 神鬼愁) merely repeats lines from the Jia-Meng poem (“exhaust even gods and ghosts”) without adding either commentary or complication. The mediocre execution dulls or obscures the nimble interplay detailed above, and the image never quite coalesces as the eloquent voice of a philosophical position.

In their imperfection, these paintings embody the tireless, thwarted effort to get things right, and exemplify Li’s philosophical point. The page remains blank though the teachings of the ox have been heeded and the hair has turned white. The spirit of diligence continues to ply its way by trial and error; the flat road continues flat. Our cover image philosophizes but does not exemplify the problem. It belies Li’s dimwittedness and justifies the tears of joy.
Notes

1The whole poem reads: “Three years yield two lines. / Done at last, two tears flow. / If friends don’t approve / I will return and repose in the autumn of my home mountains.” The poem is appended to the end of the third couplet of Jia’s eight-line poem “Song Wuke shangren” 送無可上人 (“For Monk Wuke”) (Peng 1960, 6692).

2The whole poems reads: “I compose through the night and into the dawn, / My exertion would exhaust even gods and ghosts. / Why not release oneself / From the war of mind and body. / The humiliation of death is only a moment’s pain. / The humiliation of life is enduring shame. / Pure cassia has no straight branch, / Thinking of old friends on the green river” (Peng 1960, 4203).

3See Su Shi 蘇軾, “Shu Yanling Wang Zhubu Suohua Zhezhi Ershou” 書鄢陵王主簿所畫折枝二首 (“Two Poems on a Flower Painting by Wang Zhubu of Yanling”) (Su Shi 1982, 5: 1525–6). The first of the two poems elaborates Su Shi’s famous painting theory: “If one is going to discuss a painting in terms of likeness, / One might as well parade it for the neighbors’ children. / To insist that poetry must be definite, / Is to know nothing about poetry.”

4In his comments titled “Shu Mojie Lantian Yanyu Tu” 書摩詰藍田烟雨圖 (“On Wang Wei’s Picture of Mist and Rain over Blue Fields”), Su Shi writes: “Savoring Wang Wei’s poem, I discern the painting; viewing Wang Wei’s painting, I discern the poetry” (Su Shi 1971, 5.1a).


References


Across the Borders: Hip Hop’s Influence on Chinese Youth Culture

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Extending research on the global influence and impact of American hip hop culture, Xuexin Liu describes the hip hop phenomenon in China and explores its social and cultural implications.

Hip Hop as a Cross-cultural Phenomenon

Since Mainland China launched its social and economic reforms under the rubric of the “four modernizations” in 1978, China’s nationwide “open-door” policy has allowed Chinese young people to experience the global influence of hip hop culture through direct and indirect contact with the Western world, especially the United States and neighboring countries like South Korea and Japan. Furthermore, recent technological innovations – the Internet being the most obvious – have offered everyone easy and fast access to hip hop culture in its different national manifestations. In China, hip hop is a relatively new phenomenon that has emerged mainly in metropolitan areas like Beijing and Shanghai. It has greatly influenced the Chinese youth culture and become a fascinating part of Chinese music, arts, and fashion. Hip hop-style music, dancing, and fashion are not only appreciated and embraced by young Chinese artists but also by the general youth population. Some urban young people wear loose trousers, colorful tee-shirts with dramatic images, headbands, necklaces, and metal chains, and there are newly established hip hop night clubs. Some universities offer “jiewu” 街舞 (hip hop dance classes) and promote research about the American hip hop culture, including its historical background, its social and cultural significance, and its global influence and impact (Wilbekin 1999).

Building on research concerning the global influence and impact of the American hip hop culture on the Japanese youth culture (Liu 2005) and certain comments (Liu 2009) on Hip Hop Japan (Condry 2006), this scholarly note addresses several questions.

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What drives hip hop's influence across the globe?

A dynamically expressive verbal art form known as rap music first appeared in the inner city streets of New York in the early 1970s and has become the most prominent genre of music in America today (Rose 1994). Smitherman points out that with a “blend of reality and fiction, rap is a contemporary response to the pleasures and problems of black urban life in contemporary America” (1997, 1), one deeply rooted in the rich African-American socio-cultural continuum. It was initially a verbal expression of African-American youth culture, voicing the experience of African-Americans who were largely oppressed and confined to urban ghettos. It perpetuated the African-American oral tradition and reintroduced the importance of music with something to say. Hip hop culture consists of rap music, graffiti art, break dancing, and “B-boy” fashion, all of which is informed by a rebellious attitude. Marriot (1990) emphasizes that oppressed African Americans used rap music to make their voices heard and to change the status quo.

With its powerful socio-cultural message, hip hop culture has had a major impact not only on the African-American community, but also on America as a whole. Hip hop’s national (and now global) appeal is explained by its amalgam of self-expression, verbal dexterity, emotionally involving and explicit content, and outward physical expressions or body language (Mitchell 2001). As has often been observed, hip hop’s influence has continuously increased and its reach has continuously expanded. Today, young people throughout the world participate in hip hop culture and make idols of rap artists in order to express themselves and make their voices heard.

What makes hip hop’s influence possible in today’s China?

After thirty year period of “closed-doorism” since the Chinese Communist Party rose to power in 1949, the Chinese government’s social and economic reforms have opened China’s door to the world. The Chinese now have more freedom of choice and better opportunities than ever before. There has been much foreign influence on various spheres of Chinese society, and hip hop has exerted a significant influence of its own. The unprecedented explosion in worldwide communication, technology, and migration drove hip hop’s influence and expansion. Internet technology has enabled the rapid transmission of movies, music, literature, and ideas, helping Chinese hip hop fans and artists access and share information and experience. The significant population of Westerners in cities like Beijing and Shanghai facilitated the adoption and development of rap music and hip hop culture. All of these forces helped catalyze the emergence of a substantial hip hop culture in China in 2000.
Why do Chinese youth imitate & adopt hip hop culture?

The adoption and development of hip hop in China is driven by the same social and cultural factors that drove the emergence of hip hop in the African-American community and in countries like South Korea and Japan. In the past, the Chinese political and educational systems did not encourage people to express themselves but fed them state rules derived from long-standing political traditions. There was not much opportunity for personal expression or thought; difference was discouraged. The social and economic reforms launched in 1978 have dramatically changed Chinese society as a whole. So-called *you zhongguo tese de shehuizhuyi* 有中國特色的社會主義 ("socialism with Chinese characteristics") has created a competitive society. In today’s China, the market-based economy is the norm, people are free to find jobs based on their qualifications, personal ownership of property is allowed and encouraged, social status is based on wealth, and people are free to make their own choices, but promising opportunities are limited to those belonging to particular social and/or political networks, and there is a huge gap between the rich and the poor. All of this puts people, especially young people, under tremendous social and economic pressure.

Hip hop has emerged in China as an artistic and cultural phenomenon, as well as a source of social identity and cultural capital for young people. Hip hop in China has generated new forms of self-expression and cultivated new templates for identity. Rap, as the language of hip hop culture, has become a powerful tool for self-expression with its significant socio-cultural and socio-psychological emphases and implications. Chinese young people, especially those with lower social status and those ignored by society, use rap and hip hop as an artistic form to express their personal struggles, their attitudes toward other people and society, their failures and anger, their aspirations, and their dreams of money, love, and fame. In other words, rap and hip hop have become a popular and effective means for Chinese young people to express themselves and to express their social identity (Steele 2006).

What are the special characteristics of Chinese hip hop music & performance?

The recent development of hip hop in China is an example of “cultural adoption” or “cultural translation.” The idea of “keeping it real” pervades hip hop, implying that true hip hop artists represent the depth and complexity of life in their current social, political, economic, geographic, and cultural climates in a meaningful, expressive, and explicit way. Hip hop in China, however, has its unique characteristics: (1) When hip hop first became popular in China, most rappers rapped in English. Over the years, the
use of English began to fade and the Chinese language started to infiltrate hip hop performance. Different Chinese dialects are now being used. (2) American values are not accepted wholesale. Chinese hip hop has rather different lyrical themes. Chinese hip hop artists rap about their native culture, love, personal struggles, and even food (Fackler 2002), rather than about democracy, human rights, alienation, “gangster” violence, guns, and women as in Western hip hop (Kitawana 1994). (3) Chinese have adopted American hip hop and has transformed it into a new form of musical expression. Chinese rapping has its own special rhythmic structure. This is because Chinese is a language with lexical tones, that is, meaning changes with different inflections of the same syllable. (4) Chinese hip hop dancing is deeply rooted in American break dancing (or “B-boy”). As in the United States, where each regional B-boy scene is slightly different, Chinese B-boy style is full of variation. In general, it is strongly influenced by the South Korean B-boy scene. (5) Chinese hip hop is mainly a pop cultural phenomenon of the clubs and radio. It is comfortable in its role as a commodity and conceives its audience as consumers of its production.

What are the most significant social & cultural impacts of the hip hop phenomenon in today’s China?

Hip hop culture has been a strong force shaping Chinese popular culture, popular music, youth fashion, entertainment culture, and corporate marketing. To better understand the influence and effects of the hip hop scene, it is imperative that we consider the social and economic conditions in today’s China. The origin of the cultural expression known as hip hop is rooted in the civil discontent of a marginalized group. As an art form, American hip hop is usually saturated with lyrics and visual depictions that expressively and explicitly emphasize the struggle of the minority group. When exported to other counties, hip hop must obviously adapt to the local social reality. In China, for example, race has a different meaning than it does in American race discourse, and issues pertaining to African-American racial experience do not necessarily have Chinese analogues. In spite of these differences, today’s China exhibits enormous social and economic inequality. Lee (1995) observes that contemporary China faces more and more social and economic problems; though such problems were once associated with traditional capitalist economic systems, they have become obvious and serious in China.

If it exhibits certain social and economic conditions that explain its embrace of hip hop, China has not adopted the kind of aggressive, subversive hip hop popular in the United States. Hip hop has become a positive, unifying force centered on themes and values in line with Chinese culture. Chinese hip hop aims to serve China’s own interests and needs. Chinese hip
hop often expresses love and intimate emotion. Take for example the Chinese rap group Longmen zhen 龍門陣 (Dragon Tongue), whose members have been called “polite rappers.” The group looks to inject Chinese culture into Western musical styles. They rap about love, peace, daily life, and everyday struggles, rather than about the more familiar Western gangster themes. Unlike American hip hop, which is infused with rebellious lyrics and images, Chinese artists champion love, peace, and emotional sincerity. At the same time, Chinese hip hop often functions as a critique of stagnant tradition and the monotony of everyday life. Although very much alive, Chinese traditional culture is stagnant in the sense that it has not adapted to changing circumstances. As Kristof (1989) writes, “Chinese civilization is stagnant and needs to be refreshed by foreign influences.” Chinese hip hop artists challenge or even discard certain values and symbols of the nation’s past, recognizing diversity, celebrating differences, and resisting conformity and uniformity.

Like American hip hop, Chinese hip hop is very much a form of social and political commentary. Some Chinese rappers address what they see as the country’s most glaring injustices. As Wang Li 王力 declares in one of his freestyle raps:

If you don’t have a nice car or cash
You won’t get no honeys
Don’t you know China is only a heaven for rich old men
You know this world is full of corruption
Babies die from drinking milk (Wang 2009)

Wang Li is one of the millions left behind by China’s economic reform and one of those dealing with bitterness and the struggle of daily life. Yin Tsar 隱藏 (“The Three Shadows”), one of the hip hop scene’s biggest acts, recently had a hit song called “Hello Teacher” that rails against the authority of unfair teachers: “You’re supposed to be a role model, but I’ve seen you spit in public.” Other Chinese rappers use Chinese proverbs in their lyrics to express their attitudes toward social realities (Wang 2009).

Hip hop dance in China functions as a sport much like Chinese Tai Qi, and it is credited with being good for physical and mental health. Information about various hip hop dance classes (Li 2003; Song 2007; Yan and Xia 2008) can be found online. Hip hop dancing in gyms and in nightclubs has also become very popular. Nightclubs like Tanghui and MIX in Beijing and Shanghai are often crowded with young people learning and practicing hip hop dancing. Hip hop dance as a sport is also enjoyed by older women. Over the years, the Hip Hop Grannies (Mong 2008; Hip Hop Grannies 2008), a senior dancing team, has attracted at least 1,000 women ranging in age from forty-five to seventy-four.
The importation of hip hop music to China has also provided young people with new and attractive fashions. In cities like Beijing and Shanghai, Chinese young people wear the loose and colorful garb of hip hop (Willekens 1999). Hip hop hair styles, including dyed hair, are increasingly popular with young people. The fashion sensibility of hip hop lets Chinese young people express themselves physically and visually.

Hip hop culture has now become an important form of popular culture with a widespread appeal among Chinese young people. Hip hop music CDs (Shanghai RAP 2005–2009; Pan 2003, 2006, 2007; Li 2008), hip hop performance DVDs, hip hop fashion magazines, and brochures advertising hip hop clubs and performance events are readily available in most bookstores and audio and video shops and can even be found in supermarkets. Taobao ("Search for the Very Best") and other online companies, make it easy to find Chinese hip hop products and information about activities, such as the Chinese Hip Hop Culture Festival (2009), Hip Hop Awards China (2007), Hip Hop Dance Competition (2008), Slimming Hip Hop 嘻哈瘦身街舞 (Song 2007), and Hip Hop Dance Class in China (Li 2003).

In today’s China there are only pockets of freedom. Rap and hip hop are not sanctioned by broadcast media producers or state censors if it is insulting to the Chinese Communist Party or to the Chinese government. The Chinese government seeks to control popular music through censorship, but hip hop artists negotiate censorship in order to make their work socially relevant and to attract a grass-roots fan base.

**Implications of Hip Hop Culture in China**

The social and cultural implications of the globalized hip hop culture and the impact of this culture in China include the following: (1) The American hip hop culture exerts global influence because of its artistic form and ability to express the experience of oppressed socioeconomic classes, which exist in all societies where inequality is a social reality. It is for this fundamental reason that hip hop has been appreciated and adopted across the globe. (2) China’s recent social and economic reforms and the Chinese government’s “open-door” policy have created tremendous and unprecedented changes in various spheres of Chinese life, including an expansion of personal freedom, but these reforms have also created social and economic inequality and injustice. Today’s worldwide communication technology has helped hip hop move across cultural borders easily and quickly. (3) Young Chinese artists have adopted hip hop as a powerful communicative tool of self-expression and social identity. Young people with lower socioeconomic status appreciate rap and hip hop because it expresses their feelings, emotions, and attitudes, and, more importantly, it helps make their voices heard. (4) Chinese hip hop is not simply a wholesale importation of American hip
hop or hip hop as practiced in other countries, but a form of expression adapted to Chinese needs and conditions. This adoption through adaptation touches especially on language and rhythm, emotional orientation, and dancing style. (5) Hip hop culture in China has become not only a new artistic form but also a strong force shaping Chinese popular culture, popular music, popular mass media, popular youth fashion, and popular sport. Chinese hip hop plays a role similar to American hip hop or hip hop in other countries in expressing the civil discontent of a particular socioeconomic class, and yet differs from any other form of hip hop throughout the world. Chinese hip hop has been adapted to meet the Chinese public’s interests and needs.

As long as political liberalization continues, hip hop will undoubtedly develop and expand its reach and become part of Chinese mainstream culture. In the foreseeable future, hip hop will no longer be an exclusively American phenomenon, but a truly global artistic form.

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The Futenma Issue and the Future of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty

DANIEL A. MÉTRAUX
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Daniel A. Métraux considers the challenges facing Japan and the United States as they reconsider the future of their military alliance and tackle the thorny problem of relocating the U.S. military base in Futenma.

During the early part of April 2010, ten large Chinese warships passed between the Japanese islands of Okinawa and Miyakojima. This raw display of Chinese confidence and strength in a major military exercise clearly signaled Beijing’s growing military power and its willingness to flaunt its might before its neighbors and the United States. This incident was also a reminder to Japanese political and military leaders that they must seriously reconsider the future of their military alliance with the United States. While some Japanese are demanding an end to their subservient political and military relationship with the United States, many wonder whether Japan has both the will and the money to replace the military muscle of the U.S. if its forces were to leave Japan.

Former Prime Minister Hatoyama Yukio† and his Democratic Party trounced the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in the general election in the fall of 2009. Part of their election platform was the declared but unspecified aim of asserting Japan’s authority in its relationships with the United States. A key point was Japan’s military relationship with the U.S. and the future of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, which came into effect in 1952. The reality of this relationship is that Japan is a junior partner, protected by both the American nuclear umbrella and American troops stationed in Asia, but paying for it through a contribution of US$2 billion per year and the presence of 47,000 U.S. troops — half of them stationed in Okinawa and the other half elsewhere across Japan.

The debate over Japan’s current and future military relationship with the United States came to a head in 2010 when the sides failed to reach agreement over the future of the Marine Corps’ busy Futenma air station on Okinawa Island. Ironically, the only thing that all parties agree on is
that it is time to close this base. A large modern urban area has grown up around the base and a major accident could well lead to huge and potentially very ugly anti-American demonstrations both in Okinawa and on mainland Japan. The United States and Japan did in fact reach a deal in 2006 after fifteen years of intense negotiations whereby the U.S. would close the base, send eight thousand of the U.S. marines to Guam, and send the rest to a new marine base to be built elsewhere on Okinawa Island. Japan would pay more than 60 percent of the US$10 billion relocation costs (Rafferty 2010).

Hatoyama and his party, however, campaigned on the promise that the new base replacing Futenma should be built not only outside of Okinawa, but also outside of Japan (Japan Times 2010b). Hatoyama’s victory, however, put him and his government in a very difficult position. To reject any new base at all would endanger the Security Treaty with the United States. Strong reprimands from the United States and harsh criticism from political opponents within Japan have forced the Hatoyama administration to backpeddle and to dither about where the new base should go — on Okinawa or elsewhere.

It is a no-win situation for the Japanese government. If the American troops remain as is, Okinawan protests will continue and rifts within the Cabinet will continue. If the troops are moved elsewhere in Japan, excessive media attention will follow and will generate more anti-government and anti-U.S. sentiment. If the troops leave Japan entirely, locals will grumble about the loss of American money (Japan Times 2010d).

One problem is finding somewhere else on Okinawa Island to locate the new base. The search for a new location has aroused a chorus of demands not to place the base “in my back yard.” The government itself encouraged this response when it initially agreed that the base could be built in a pristine rural beach area near the small city of Nago on Okinawa. There were immediate protests from the residents of Nago as well as from environmentalists across Japan. The Hatoyama cabinet then stood behind the candidacy of a mayoral candidate who ran on a pledge to say “NO” to the Americans. The candidate’s victory and Hatoyama’s acceptance that this victory ruled out building the base at Nago have encouraged other districts both in and beyond Okinawa to assert that they want nothing to do with a base.

The governor of Okinawa spoke for many of his constituents when he demanded that all of the Futenma troops should be relocated outside of Japan. Painful memories of accidents and crimes involving U.S. military personnel have haunted Okinawans for decades. Okinawa, which makes up just 0.6 percent of Japan’s land area but is home to nearly three-quarters of America’s military installations in Japan, has endured the largest share of the danger and tragedies. The rape of a twelve-year-old girl and a helicopter crash remain vivid memories for many Okinawans. Japanese Defense Min-
istry data show that 7,277 accidents and criminal cases involving U.S. military personnel occurred in the five years between March 2005 and 2010. One Japanese, Yamazaki Yasanori, whose fiancée was robbed and killed by an off-duty American sailor in 2006, noted: “I thought U.S. military people were here to protect Japanese citizens. . . . I feel like I’ve been betrayed. Some U.S. servicemen don’t treat us as humans and their mindsets could be the same as those of some of the people who once were in Japan as part of the U.S. Occupation army” (Japan Times 2010b).

Kina Shokichi, a famous singer and an Upper House lawmaker from Okinawa belonging to Hatoyama’s own party, wants the full termination of American bases in Okinawa. “Okinawa is like a trash box” for Japan, she says. “All the risks are dumped there, and then the country claims it has maintained security under the pacifist Constitution. That’s hypocrisy! Okinawa is still being treated as a half colony. The Futenma issue is a real test for Japan. It’s just one base, but could be a giant leap for us” (Japan Times 2010c).

Okinawa and its tiny electorate, however, are dwarfed by the tens of millions of Japanese who live in the country’s other forty-six prefectures. In March 2010, the Chunichi Shimbun published a survey of Japanese attitudes toward the U.S.-Japan defense alliance. The result was further confusion. One the one hand, 78 percent of those Japanese polled said that they thought the alliance was either important or at least very necessary. On the other hand, they overwhelmingly felt that the base should not be located elsewhere in Japan and certainly did not want the base built near their own homes (Japan Times 2010a; Daily Yomiuri 2010).

These results point to a major problem facing Prime Minister Hatoyama and his ruling party. Hatoyama campaigned on a more nationalist plank than most Japanese are willing to accept and the Futenma problem has forced him to decide whether he wants to weaken or abandon the security treaty with the United States or whether he wants to retreat from his campaign pledge and keep the treaty arrangement as is. The result is Hatoyama’s inability to make up his mind, which has encouraged one journalist to call him “ditherer-in-chief” (Rafferty 2010). Some exasperated Americans say, meanwhile, that it is time for the U.S. to leave Japan once and for all and that Japan should grow up and defend itself.

Other politicians in Japan strongly favor a continuation of the U.S. Japanese relationship on something like its present terms, especially members of the opposition Liberal Democratic Party and Komeito. One Komeito leader, Representative Endo Otohiko, former senior vice-minister of finance, told this writer that the base issue must be resolved quickly for the sake of maintaining close U.S.–Japanese relations. “The treaty is necessary for the stability of Asia. Unfortunately, many in Japan don’t understand the importance of the current treaty for the security of Japan and Asia. Any
reduction or elimination of the treaty would send the wrong signal to other
countries in Asia like China and North Korea. At the very least Japan
would have to replace both American soldiers and military facilities, which
in turn might spark fears of a return to Japanese militarism.” Endo also said
that another factor is whether a Japan that is already deeply in debt could
afford to rearm significantly and build up its own army (2010). These sen-
timents are shared by a good number of Japanese politicians.

The Futenma question has opened debate on the whole matter of U.S.-
Japanese relations. Hatoyama’s criticism of the treaty followed by his many
months of indecision have exasperated both the Obama administration as
well as the foreign policy establishment in Washington. They not only want
Japan to make up its mind on the Futenma base question, but also to decide
where it stands on the question of the U.S.–Japan Security Treaty. A dither-
ing and indecisive Hatoyama represents the worst of all worlds. Representa-
tive Endo is certainly right when he accuses the Hatoyama administration
for being weak, indecisive, and unwilling to fulfill its campaign pledges.

Kevin Rafferty, a specialist in Japanese-American relations and Japa-
nese politics, is correct when he writes: “Hatoyama could have chosen the
more constructive approach of asking the U.S. to consider consolidating
and improving existing bases, with emphasis on those outside of Okinawa;
questioning how many troops America really needs in Japan, especially
given that some of the bases are staging posts for deployment to Afghani-
stan and elsewhere; and asking if the demand for a new marine facility was
really necessary, or whether it stems from rivalry between the Marines and
other U.S. troops” (2010).

Whatever decision Hatoyama’s successor, Kan Naoto, makes will de-
termine the future of American relations with Japan. Hatoyama and Kan
are neither strongly anti-American nor anti-treaty, but their careless com-
ments during the 2009 campaign and their unwillingness to take a stand
only create nervousness and anger.

Note

†Hatoyama resigned as prime minister on June 8, 2010, and was replaced by Kan
Naoto.

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Daniel A. Métraux conducts a walking tour of Chinese Camp, California. Once a nineteenth-century mining settlement populated by Chinese immigrants, it is now a ghost town with a fascinating story to tell.

Ghost towns have always fascinated me. They provide windows on the past. Visiting my daughter in the foothills of the Sierras not far from Lake Tahoe, I find many deserted settlements such as Bodie, which dates from the mid-1800s when tens of thousands of prospectors came here searching for gold. When I stumbled across the largely deserted village called Chinese Camp deep in the heart of Gold Rush country in northern California, I decided to do some exploring and research.

Chinese Camp is not a “ghost town” in the classic sense like nearby Bodie. The old Chinese core of the town, Main Street, is almost completely abandoned, but there are a few homes on the periphery as well as a modern elementary school and a functioning post office. A few residents share the town with the many Chinese ghosts that are said to linger there even now. Nevertheless, as a scholar and teacher of Asian history, I was particularly excited by the idea of a Chinese ghost town in California. It was thus with great anticipation that I spent the better part of a day in May 2007 exploring the remains of Chinese Camp (fig. 1).

A return visit in May 2010 permitted deeper insights into the lives of the thousands of Chinese who once sought their fortunes there. The ordinary passerby today would notice only decaying and deserted buildings at the center of town, especially along what was once Main Street. It is not a place of beauty, but if you look at the old iron doors on what used to be Chinese stores, it is possible to travel back in history to a time when the village was humming with several thousand Chinese.

Today any casual motorist driving through Tuolumne County in western California on their way to nearby Yosemite National Park would hardly recognize the clump of abandoned buildings as one of the biggest and most
significant early settlements of Chinese in the United States. It was a placer-mining center settled by Chinese miners in 1849. Much work was done in the 1850s, and the piles of soil and gravel turned over in the search for gold can still be seen in nearly every gulch. The area’s placer-mines are credited with producing $2.5 million in gold. Today the town consists of numerous Gold Rush-era buildings, most of them abandoned. Several ramshackle dwellings on the outskirts of town house the few remaining residents, but there are no Chinese left and one cannot even buy a dish of chow mein. The last of the Chinese left in the 1920s leaving behind one of the most significant Chinese ghost towns in the United States (Pfaelzer 2007, 34).

The late 1840s was a period of growing desperation for many Chinese. Widespread starvation accompanied domestic rebellions and further incursions by the West in the wake of the Opium War (1839–42). In 1849 there were only fifty-four Chinese in California. As news of gold spread throughout the world, a steady immigration commenced. It continued through the 1870s and early 1880s, during which time an average of 4,000 Chinese per year immigrated to the United States. By the time the United States halted Chinese immigration in 1882, over 300,000 Chinese had entered the United States, most of them living in California (“Chinese Immigrants”). This increase in the Chinese population, rapid even in comparison with the general increase in population, was largely due to the fact that prior to 1869, when it became possible to travel across the U.S by rail, China was effectively nearer to the shores of California than was the eastern portion of the United States. Another circumstance that contributed to the
heavy influx of Chinese was the fact that news of the gold discovery reached southeastern China when it was suffering from the poverty and ruin caused by the Taiping rebellion of the 1850s and early 1860s (Sheafer 2001, 1).

When news of the California Gold Rush reached Canton in 1848, many thousands of Chinese boarded boats to “Gum Shan,” or “Gold Mountain,” as the United States was known during that era. Many of the Chinese made their way to Tuolumne County to such towns as Sonora, Fiddletown, Bodie, Columbia, Jamestown, and Chinese Camp where they staked their claims and built significant Chinese communities. The vast majority of Chinese were young men looking for a quick strike so that they could return to China, buy a plot of land, and start their own families. The few women who came were mainly prostitutes – virtual slaves – although a few Chinese merchants brought their wives. In large part, this was a man’s world, lonely and isolated amid a surrounding population of hostile Caucasians, but the dream of wealth and memories of the misery of life in China gave the immigrants incentives to stay (“Chinese Immigrants”).

The first settlement in what is now Chinese Camp was named Camp Salvado after a group of Salvadorians who worked as miners, but a group of three dozen Cantonese miners arrived at the camp in 1849 and began prospecting. Who they were, why they came, and where they came from remains a mystery. Some accounts imply that a sea captain abandoned his ship in San Francisco and brought his entire crew with him. Another version has it that the Chinese were employed by a group of English speculators. What is known is that the mining brought in large amounts of gold, which in turn brought thousands of additional miners, including hundreds and later thousands of Chinese. Miners, including Chinese miners, developed a number of towns, but the Chinese largely settled in what became known as “Chinese Camp.”

Facing virulent discrimination in other areas and having just arrived in the country, the Chinese miners gravitated there, feeling safe and comfortable among others of their nationality. There were some Caucasian miners present, but by the mid-1850s the Chinese residents of the settlement vastly outnumbered the Caucasians (Putnam). At first the streets of Chinese camp were solidly settled with store tents, built mostly of pine boughs with canvas stretched over the top and with no better foundation than dirt floors. Others were built of pine boughs topped with brush. The first substantial building was an adobe structure completed in 1851, which served as a store. A Catholic church, St. Xavier, was constructed in 1854, and still stands today — in good shape, but clearly abandoned, sitting forlornly on a hill outside the town. The Chinese later built several distinctively Chinese buildings, including three Joss houses, traditional places for worshipping a variety of indigenous Chinese deities. By 1859 Chinese Camp had settled into what contemporary accounts say was a “law-abiding and respectable
community.” At its peak, perhaps 5,000 Chinese resided here. Even as late as the 1880s, patient Chinese miners were still eking out a living here mining gold (Sheafer 2001, 1–5).

The camp continued to grow. Due to the large number of Chinese inhabitants, it became known as “Chinee,” “Chinese Diggins,” and “Chinese Camp.” When the post office was established on April 18, 1854, the town became officially known as Chinese Camp. The only reminder of its earlier cognomen, Camp Washington, is the road named Washington Street. The town’s location made Chinese Camp the center of transportation for a large area, and several stage and freight lines made daily stops there on their way to other destinations. Today a plaque on the tumble-down and long-deserted Wells Fargo office honors a stage coach driver who connected the town by coach to such distant points as Sacramento, Carson City, and Salt Lake City.

Most of the Chinese who came to California were unskilled and uneducated laborers. Many received assistance from the “Six Companies,” Chinese benevolent associations that helped Chinese survive in an alien environment. The companies contracted for large bodies of laborers and acted as clearing-houses for all sorts of transactions among the Chinese. Four of these “companies” were represented in Chinese Camp.

Life could be rough for the Chinese in the early days. In 1856, Chinese Camp was the site of one of the earliest violent struggles between rival tongs in the gold fields, when members of the Tan Woo Tong faced off against Sam Yap Tong members. About one thousand men scuffled as the two tongs fought for control of the village. Fortunately, casualties were light due to the preferred choice of weapons — swords. When American lawmen finally intervened to halt the bloodshed, there were four dead and several more wounded (Pryor 1999, 199).

When the gold mines in the area petered out after the Gold Rush, many of the Chinese miners moved on, but a few brave Chinese hung on until the last two departed by train for Chinatown in San Francisco in the 1920s. They left behind a remarkably preserved ghost town and, one presumes, the ghosts of many of the lonely Chinese miners who died there, their dreams of returning to China with pockets full of gold permanently thwarted.

Today one can walk the streets of the old town. A few residents live on the outskirts, but most of the buildings standing in the blazing sun are empty save for the ghosts of the original miners who gave life to the town. Main Street is an oddity — it must have been the heart of the Chinese community, but all of the buildings including the old Wells Fargo office stand empty and in a state of virtual collapse. Many decades have passed since anybody lived there; however, a stone and brick post office dating from 1854 still serves the area’s residents and St. Francis Xavier is still maintained by the townspeople.
Fittingly, the town’s modern school is built in the shape of an old Chinese pagoda with a gaily painted Chinese-style roof. It seems that the area’s largely white residents enjoy this quaint reminder of the village’s lively past. Chinese Camp’s one tiny general store and saloon sell large blankets and rugs festooned with Chinese-looking tigers. California has many incredible ghost towns, but Chinese Camp is the only one that reflects the Chinese mining heritage of the 1849 Gold Rush. It is well worth a visit.

Notes

1Placer mining is the mining of alluvial for minerals. It may be done by open-pit mining or by various forms of tunneling into ancient riverbeds.

2The first Chinese who came to America often banded together in mutual support secret societies called tongs. Each tong provided a degree of protection and support for members. There were frequent, often violent showdowns among the tong for power and influence in Chinatowns across the West. These organizations sometimes engaged in activities that flouted the law, notably feuding with other tongs, gambling, and importing women from China to serve as prostitutes.

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Huang Binhong’s Unruly Pastoral

DAVID A. ROSS
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David A. Ross ponders the power and peculiarity of Huang Binhong 黄宾虹, one of twentieth-century China’s preeminent painters.

Assessing an Unusual Master

No modern Chinese painter was more rigorously traditional than Huang Binhong 黄宾虹 (1865–1955) but his art perplexes nonetheless. The Western viewer, standing at the desolate end of the lineage that begins with Theocritus, will find Huang’s pastoral mode familiar enough, but he may wonder at the unruliness of this pastoral, the paradoxical vision of the hermitic bower that heaves and writhes with the rough energy of nature. Samuel Palmer’s early landscapes are a plausible if imperfect comparison – Van Gogh’s landscapes another – though it may be hard to reconcile the sense of fundamental similarity with so much superficial difference. The Chinese viewer may be similarly perplexed by Huang’s unruliness, remembering the landscapes of Ni Zan 倪瓚 (1301–74), with their filaments of weightless line and almost dissolving delicacy. On the other hand, he may remember Wang Wei’s 王維 poem “Luzhai” 鹿柴 (“Deer Enclosure,” eighth century), which goes in my own translation:

    The mountain emptiness
    Pounds with speech;
    Far within the wood, recurrences
    Illumine the green moss.

This is very close to the spirit of Huang’s art. Indeed, his entire career may be considered an epic gloss on the vision of the empty mountains pounding with speech. Huang’s paintings leave us pondering the same questions as Wang’s poem: What is the manner of this speech? How does it inhere in silence?
These are difficult questions, but they became somewhat more answerable with the publication in 2006 of *Huang Binhong quan ji* (The Complete Work of Huang Binhong). Like the edition of Fu Baoshi’s paintings recently published by Guangxi Meishu Chubanshe (see my review in the 2009 issue of SERAS), *The Complete Work* is a multi-volume monument that promises to transform the critical field. The edition includes enlightening essays about Huang’s technique and philosophy, excerpts from his writings and letters, a chronology of his life, a partial seal catalogue, and brief descriptions of each painting (dimensions, location, year, transcription of both calligraphy and seal), but these are incidental; the emphasis lies with the images themselves. The edition’s beautiful color plates reproduce 3,000 paintings spanning the years 1893 to 1955. Though not as complete as its title implies – some 13,000 paintings were photographed for possible inclusion, according to the editors – the edition is as complete as any we are ever likely to get, and any scholarly consideration of Huang must, from this point forward, begin with these volumes. Certain warnings are in order, however. First, the edition is thronged with paintings that Huang’s family donated to the Zhejiang Provincial Museum in 1958. While instructive in terms of technique and experiment, these paintings presumably represent the sweepings of the studio floor (note the lack of seal and inscription) and should not factor into a final assessment of Huang’s achievement. Second, Huang’s paintings teem with visual data and require patient contemplation as their profusion and seeming disarray resolves into order. Assembling them by the thousands runs the risk of numbing us to their individuality and turning us into mere skimmers of their complexity. We must pace ourselves, resisting the temptation of aesthetic gluttony.

Huang was born in 1865 in the village of Tandu, Shexian County, Anhui Province. The son of a businessman, he was raised in a milieu of Confucian cultivation and trained in all the traditional branches of art and literature with the expectation that he would eventually take the civil service exam and become a government official (Yang et al. 1997, 313). The literati culture in its last moment of coherence made an enormous impression on Huang and all his permanent values and commitments seem to spring from an imaginative identification with it; undoubtedly it was even more poignant in retrospect, after the centrifugal force of the twentieth-century had torn it to pieces. In the event, Huang failed the county-level administrative exam and had no choice but to apply his education as a writer and painter. He wrote prolifically on art and culture, taught at numerous schools and universities, and produced an enormous body of artwork, all of which has the strength and exactitude of one whose training has become bone-deep instinct. A fierce traditionalist, Huang rejected the Western and modern influence and yet arrived in late middle age at a fully
modern style that transformed the past without compromising or altering its spirit. He accomplished all of this, moreover, without the flustered experiment and ungainly rebellion – the crisis of identity – that was the twentieth-century hallmark.

Huang’s lifelong mode was the landscape in the literati tradition, and he turned out thousands of paintings showing mountains, lake, and boat. Our power of discrimination overwhelmed by the sheer abundance of The Complete Work, we may be tempted to conclude that these landscapes are “all the same.” This is true only in the sense that Rembrandt’s portraits, with their parade of eye, nose, and mouth, are all the same. If Huang’s paintings are not merely repetitious, what distinguishes them? With the help of The Complete Work, we can propose some cursory notions. The most obvious point is that Huang’s style developed slowly, indicating a process of self-conscious and enormously patient education. In the paintings of his young manhood and middle age, Huang works comfortably within a range of deliberately antiquarian styles inspired by the giants of the Song, Yuan, Ming, and early Qing dynasties, with the art of Wang Meng 王蒙 (ca. 1308–85) perhaps the dominant influence. These paintings have a scholarly sensitivity and innate instinct for rhythm and composition, but they lack the muscularity and spontaneity – the opened floodgate of personality – that is Huang’s genius. Only in the 1930s did Huang complete his apprenticeship and develop the freer, more ardent style for which he is famous, and only in the 1940s did he bring this stylistic development to fruition. Even more than Huang’s earlier paintings, these paintings are essentially rhythmic, deriving their character and their originality not from scenic or symbolic considerations, but from the flow of qi 氣 or “energy” that is unique to each. They do not attempt to depict but to demonstrate or enact their own energy and thus belong to the same genus as calligraphy and the abstract expressionism of the New York school.² Huang is most interesting when truest to this impulse. In these instances, he seems to give himself over to an impetus internal to the painting and become a medium of the painting’s latent ontogeny. In at least one fascinating exception to the rule, Huang crosses the line into complete abstraction: an aborted mountain accidentally becomes an experiment in pure form and rhythm, anticipating – very closely – a painting like Jackson Pollock’s Yellow Islands (1952), which resides in the Tate Gallery, London (see Huang 2006, 2: 246; Varnedoe 1998, 300).

If these roiling, swarming scenes are abstract, what, if any, philosophical understanding do they suggest? Where Lu Yanshao 陆俨少 envisions the earth evaporating into the ether and drifting into nothingness, Huang envisions the earth hunched in what seems a losing struggle against gravity. The impression is one of weight, fixity, and geological tension, all of which seems to take the earth seriously as our limiting context and to foreswear the kind of airy transcendentalism that Lu specializes in. Huang’s earth,
however, is very much alive with its own energies, an impression created by Huang’s stabbing, semi-pointillist brushwork and the swaying, jutting outline of his masses. While not exactly dark or menacing, these energies are untamed and powerfully masculine, and the effect is pulsing and kinetic. Huang usually places in the folds of his mountains a simple dell of hermitic seclusion — a waterside pavilion with perhaps the merest sketch of a figure floating in a skiff or crossing a footbridge. The human element is serene, leaving the viewer to make sense of the contradiction between the rioting land and the tranquil human nook. On one reading – which incidentally implies an entire theory of literati creativity – the literati-hermit is serene only outwardly; his inner reality is turbulent and passionate and compressed to the point of violent displacement. The landscape is an actualization of the literati-hermit’s interiority, either as metaphor or mystical reification; properly speaking, it is not a landscape but a mindscape borrowing the tropes of landscape. This dynamic plays out in a paradox: the emblems of exteriority (pavilion, figure, boat) are embedded within the emblem of interiority (the landscape) as if human consciousness has been turned inside out for inspection. Again, Samuel Palmer comes to mind. Do his rustic swains, like Huang’s literati, dream the ecstasy of the land? Perhaps they do.
Huang’s late paintings – his so-called “black Binhongs” in contrast to the “white Binhongs” of his earlier years – have a further philosophical implication. Seeking to express the Daoist paradox of an infinitely full emptiness, artists since the Song era had adopted an extreme minimalism that used empty space, subtle tensions, and attenuated forms to achieve a powerful disproportion of effect. Ma Lin’s 马驌 famous Xiyang shanshui tu 夕陽山水圖 (Sunset Landscape, 1254) typifies this aesthetic (see Yang et al. 1997, 132). Opposing this school, Huang aimed to express not the fullness of emptiness but the emptiness of fullness and to this end evolved a style that was just the opposite of minimalist: dense, layered, self-impacted, “black” in the literal sense. Shi Tao 石濤 (1642–1718) had articulated a related conception: “A density of black within a density of black, the heavens and earth are wide within the density of black” (Huang 2006, 1:7). The notion that density is an inversion of emptiness, with a purity of its own, has notable and instructive corollaries in the modern art of the West. One thinks of Pollock’s drip paintings or the “sheets of sound” employed by John Coltrane or the feedback squalls of Jimi Hendrix (on the opposite end of the Daoist spectrum is John Cage’s piece 4’33”, which calls for a pianist to remain seated at the keyboard without playing a note). We can only speculate why Huang felt compelled to reverse the traditional Daoist formula. It may be that the demurral of emptiness was simply beyond his personality, that his expressive impulse was too imperative and immediate to be contained by an aesthetic of the slight. He had no choice, then, but to push his art to the opposite extreme in a roundabout quest for what remains Daoist self-negation or self-transcendence.

Metaphysical motive aside, the famous “black Binhongs” are at once thoroughly traditional and improbably original — traditional in their calligraphic spontaneity and devotion to the image of literati retirement, original in their indifference to surface niceties and in their general air of “old man’s frenzy.” After fifty-odd years of daily toil, Huang had finally absorbed his forebears to the extent that he could transcend them and contribute something new to the tradition that meant everything to him. Though it was slow to coalesce, this novelty is dramatic; it is not a matter of subtle variation or slight divergence. Indeed, the black Binhongs are a bit scandalous in their uncompromising autonomy. Dramatically coiling mountainscapes like Zaochun 早春 (Early Spring, 1072) by Guo Xi 郭熙 (ca. 1001–ca. 1090) and Fuchun shanju tu 富春山居圖 (Dwelling in the Qingbian Mountains, 1366) by Wang Meng may have lingered and fermented in Huang’s mind, but these revel in just the facility that Huang had abandoned for the beggar’s bowl of a deeper instinct. In turn, the “black Binhongs” may have fermented in the mind of Li Keran 李可染 (1907–89), who studied under Huang (Yang et al. 1997, 340). Li’s black landscapes seem to remember the “black Binhongs,” though their usual sheen of black
basalt has nothing to do with the rough, spontaneous energy of Huang’s paintings. A painting like Li’s *Light Rain Over the River Li* (1977), however, maintains a certain dryness of finish and scruffiness of edge and seems to circle the example of the black Binhongs (see Yang et al. 1997, 342). The mountains to the rear – jutting masses rendered in thick black strokes – particularly recall the mountainous far background of Huang’s later paintings, though Huang’s peaks sometimes have an adventurous overlay of cerulean or cobalt blue.

Though primarily famous for landscape, Huang had a surprising feel for flowers, as the seventh and eighth volumes of *The Complete Work*, entirely devoted to flower paintings, make clear. If Huang’s landscapes are an acquired taste, his flower paintings are a delight at first glance. Reversing the masculine force of the landscapes, the flower paintings – graceful suspensions of slender line and translucent washes of color – seem entirely feminine. Huang may have conceived his flower paintings as a deliberate antithesis to his landscapes, a deferential bow to yin after so much yang. Huang’s is the femininity of purity and innocence, the femininity of the traditionalist. It reflects a fading world of walled gardens and bound feet and has the poignancy of beauty whose time is passing. Younger artists would soon suggest new modes of femininity, imaged by the dark and seductive lotuses of Zhang Daqian 張大千 (1899–1983), by the fiercely interior heroines of Fu Baoshi (1904–65), by the inscrutable, self-enwound courtesans of Lin Fengmian 林風眠 (1900–91). It is unclear why Huang never made flower painting more than a side-line. Perhaps he sensed that geology, in all its haphazard fury of shape and pattern, is the natural metaphor of human consciousness, while botany, minutely obedient to an inherited scheme, is not quite to the point.

Among all those artists who had to navigate the convulsions of twentieth-century China and the perilous engagement with modernity, Huang Binhong had perhaps the least to apologize for. He achieved a style all of his own while remaining true to inherited tradition, setting an example of dignity, integrity, and imperturbable confidence in the verities of the culture. His fidelity to a stern and ancient muse was never slavish, never wavering. Young artists take heed — this is how it’s done.

Notes

1 According to the museum’s website, the family donated a total of 16,000 items.

2 Note Jackson Pollock’s comment: “My concern is with the rhythms of nature. . . . I work inside out, like nature” (Emmerling 2003, 48).

3 Pollock and Huang have only coincidental or indirect commonalities, but Pollock, whose aesthetic had so much in common with the Chinese aesthetic and with the traditions of calligraphy, inevitably emerged as a direct influence on the younger generation of Chinese painters, most notably on Wu Guanzhong (see Clarke 2000, 42, 46).
In “An Acre of Grass,” (1938), Yeats, age seventy-two, prays to whatever power he recognized: “Grant me an old man's frenzy, / Myself must I remake / Till I am Timon and Lear / Or that William Blake / Who beat upon the wall / Till Truth obeyed his call . . . .” Yeats and Huang turn out to be comparable in a number of respects. Both were born in 1865; both were fierce reactionaries who wound up in the vanguard of the modern movement; both enjoyed a geriatric explosion of creativity.

According to Lang Shaojun, “Li adopted Huang Binhong’s layered-ink technique, but with a difference. Huang used very little water; his largely gray paintings impart a sensation of dryness and merely hint at moisture. Because Li used more water, his paintings appear much more moist . . . .” (Yang et al. 1997, 343).

References

Musings on Miyazaki, Early and Late

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Hayao Miyazaki’s films have transformed Japanese animated cinema into a universally beloved art form, and Miyazaki himself has emerged as a sage of environmental consciousness. David A. Ross assesses Miyazaki’s films and recently published early writings. He argues that Miyazaki is both more problematic and more intriguing than the usual adulation implies.

Hayao Miyazaki (b. 1941) is to world animation what Bergman and Fellini were to film proper: a Mosaic figure leading his medium out of the desert of popular culture and into the promised land of incontestable art. The Internet Movie Database’s user rankings – which are the closest thing we have to a court of world opinion – place six Miyazaki films among the top twenty animated films of all time, and place Spirited Away fifty-seventh among the greatest films of all time, well ahead of Bergman’s Wild Strawberries (155th) and Fellini’s 8½ (179th). Among Asian films, only Kurosawa’s Seven Samurai ranks higher (15th). “Genius” is a promiscuous term these days (v. Christopher Nolan, Spike Jonze, etc.), but nobody particularly laughs when it is affixed to Miyazaki, whose Shinto-inspired environmental message speaks to the Al Gore within each of us.

There’s no denying that Lupin the Third: The Castle of Cagliostro (1979), Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind (1984), Castle in the Sky (1986), My Neighbor Totoro (1988), Kiki’s Delivery Service (1989), and Porco Rosso (1992) are splendid inventions. Dodging nearly all visual cliché (except the saucer eyes of their waif-heroines), these films introduce the rudiments of Miyazaki’s art: numinous animism, Baroque architectural whimsy, and quasi-Victorian mechanical excrescence – with a particular penchant for flying machines of all shapes, sizes, and principles. Lupin (James Bond meets The Prisoner of Zenda), Kiki (the coming-of-age tale of a witch), and Porco Rosso (the adventures of a WWI flying ace turned pig) will delight both children and adults, but Totoro, Miyazaki’s simplest and most perfect creation, is something else entirely: a film worth letting sink into a child’s mind or even more deeply into the unconscious dark where our sense of the world
coalesces (fig. 1). The story concerns a little girl who moves to the countryside and befriends the spirit of the forest, an inscrutable ten-foot feline (now the mascot of Miyazaki’s Studio Ghibli). In his 1986 “project plan,” Miyazaki envisioned the film as an attempt to discover “what we have forgotten, what we don’t notice, what we are convinced we have lost” (Miyazaki 2009, 255). To a remarkable extent, the film realizes this unusual aspiration: it sees the world through the awakened eyes of childhood as if with a sixth-sense for the numinousness of reality. *A Charlie Brown Christmas* (1965) and *Totoro* – the one explicitly Christian, the other explicitly animist – are the only cartoons I would call beautiful in their spiritual vision.

Miyazaki has lost his way since, in my minority opinion. With their pushy messages and dense narratives, *Nausicaä* and *Castle in the Sky* contain the germ of what went wrong. *Princess Mononoke* (1997), *Spirited Away* (2001), and *Howl’s Moving Castle* (2004) are fully problematic: overwrought, sprawling, sermonizing, and woolly (even Miyazaki’s most ardent supporters must acknowledge the latter’s drift into incoherence), with little interest in the kind of sturdy simplicities that make for enduring fairy tales. Miyazaki’s cosmology has become as baroque as his architecture, and his worlds seem increasingly estranged from our world, stretching the necessary teth-
ers of metaphor and memory to the breaking point. In this sense, Miyazaki has not understood what Tarkovsky’s *Solaris* (1972) understands so thoroughly: our farthest journeys of imagination must be journeys into the core of our own world, into the essence of our own minds. Furthermore, it is unclear whether these films remain children’s films. My five-year-old daughter sat through three hours of Bergman’s *Fanny and Alexander* and five hours of the BBC’s *Pride and Prejudice* (1995), but *Howl’s Moving Castle* mystified her and *Spirited Away* terrified her. When I asked which part she found particularly scary, she shot back, “Every part!” There is no obligation to cater to the youngest tastes, of course, but Miyazaki speaks the language of childhood so eloquently and fluently that to speak otherwise is to waste his peculiar gift.

Miyazaki’s latest, *Ponyo* (2008), begins in a spirit of *Totoro*-esque simplicity, and it has much to recommend it initially. Ponyo is the pollywog-like daughter of a human sea-wizard whose disgust with the polluting ways of men has made him stern and misanthropic. Ponyo flees her father’s underwater castle. She winds up stuck in a bottle and bobs to the shore of a Japanese port town, where gentle-hearted Sosuke lives with his mother. Sosuke smashes the bottle, and Ponyo licks a droplet of blood from his finger, initiating her gradual transformation into a girl. The waters become surging fish-shaped waves and bear Ponyo back to her father’s castle, but she soon escapes again, determined to return to her adored Sosuke.

The ensuing twenty-minute sequence is a masterpiece of invention, observation, rhythm, and energy, as remarkable in its way as the seven dwarves discovering Snow White or the birds and mice assembling Cinderella’s ball gown. As Sosuke and his mother drive home at the end of the day, an uncanny storm brews and breaks to the strains of a pseudo Wagnerian score (fig. 2). Riding the crest of a tsunami, amid towering walls of Hokusai-inspired waves, Ponyo chases Sosuke and his mother as they race for the safety of their cliff-top house (“very scary” according to my daughter, whose cinematic opinions tend to be binary: scary/not scary). Ponyo emerges from the waves in human form and charges into Sosuke’s arms. Miyazaki then performs a pirouette: the storm diminishes and Ponyo, adorable in her addled excitement, learns the pleasures of a human home as Sosuke’s mother dries her and serves her honey tea and a steaming bowl of instant noodles (“It takes three minutes,” crows Sosuke). These scenes celebrate the domestic miracles of light, water, warmth, food, and love, and represent Miyazaki at his most delightful and humane.

Needless to say, there are metaphysical complications. During her second escape from her father’s castle, Ponyo accidentally releases a magic elixir, inducing an apocalypse of rising waters and evolutionary regression (the ocean suddenly swims with creatures of the Devonian age). As her father tells her mother – no less a personage than the goddess of the oceans –
“She’s become so powerful that she’s opened up a hole in the fabric of reality. . . . She’s now a little girl, and she loves a little boy, and the whole world is out of balance. Please remove the human in her or the planet is doomed. Already the earth is pulling satellites from the sky and the moon pulls the sea closer!” (My credo is: beware of films involving holes in the fabric of anything — the real hole is usually in the plot). Sosuke’s love for Ponyo restores the balance of nature, and the film’s eco-Götterdämmerung predictably ends in annunciations and ascensions worthy of Tiepolo.

*Ponyo*, like so many Miyazaki films, is a shimmering fairytale turned to stone by the Medusa of its social message. In *Nausicaä* and *Castle in the Sky*, the offending message is at least coherent; in *Ponyo*, it seems utterly inchoate. What is Ponyo’s father doing at the bottom of the sea? For that matter, how does he couple with a fifty-foot sea goddess? How did Ponyo become so powerful? Why does Ponyo’s love for Sosuke throw the world out of balance? Is the problem her transformation into a girl or her release of the elixirs? Why and how does Sosuke’s love for Ponyo restore this balance? None of these questions have ready answers. Man and nature (or is it land and ocean?) are inferably the elements in need of balance, though it is hard to conceive why these two hemispheres of reality should be in thrall to little Ponyo. There is the usual suggestion that humans are lousing up the environment and that the animist spirit is struggling to preserve it, but Miyazaki is unwilling to entrust his story to traditional forms. Like William

![Figure 2](image-url)
Blake, though on a much lesser scale, he insists on chicken-wiring his own mythic superstructures. The logic of this tendency is not clear, though it is possible that Miyazaki associates this kind of cosmic myth-making with the Western intellectual and cultural tradition, which he admires enormously (Nausicaä’s Homeric name is telling).

Given these perplexities – the stalemate between canonizers and devil’s advocates – Starting Point, a collection of Miyazaki’s writings first published in 1997 but appearing in English for the first time, could not be timelier (a second volume, Turning Point: 1997–2008, was published in 2008, but has not yet been translated). A hefty five hundred pages, Starting Point includes essays, speeches, interviews, and miscellaneous memoranda, all of which chip away at the mystery of Miyazaki himself, a man so soft-spoken and seemingly unassuming and yet so prepared to turn his cartoons into lectures and to philosophize the problems of the world.

The most striking thing about the volume is its miscellaneousness. Miyazaki makes no effort to cobble his fragments into unity and cohesive philosophy. The book includes addresses to elementary school classes, proposals to acquire film rights to comic books, and everything in between, as if Miyazaki dumped the contents of his desk drawer into a cardboard box and shipped the jumble to his publisher. As a writer, Miyazaki similarly lacks the sculptural instinct — to say the least. His primary tropes are wandering anecdote and baffling non sequitur. A passage like this one gives the sense of Miyazaki’s strange arcs:

The problems in Yugoslavia are a manifestation of the competing layers of history of different ethnic groups, but the underlying cause is the barrenness of the soil. During the Roman Empire, civilization caused the extermination of a great amount of vegetation. The mountains were stripped bare, not only in Italy, but also in southern France and across Spain. The areas where civilization had been most advanced – where so many people lived comfortably – were turned into barren mountains and hills. All the trees were cut down.

When thinking about such problems, it’s probably inevitable that we be most concerned about our fellow men. It feels good. It’s frankly like the J-League soccer matches. If all we have in Japan is the J-League the only thing left for us will be to become completely Latin in our orientation. From the perspective of spectators, soccer is the epitome of living for the moment.

Of course, Japan also has professional baseball teams. Unlike professional baseball in the United States, though, our baseball style is a bit piddling, sort of like having coach Nomura in command. But this is more likely to result in a restoration of the ecosystem. No proof of this, of course.

Earth’s population could reach ten billion in the future, but of course with humans we also have to consider the possibility that it could decrease to 200 million. (170–1)

One might infer something important about Miyazaki. His is neither an orderly nor an ordering mind. Might his films, which strive to make overarching statements and systematize alternate universes, labor against the
natural grain of his personality? Could his truer temperamental impulse be piecemeal, impressionistic, whimsical, childlike — closer to the spirit of his masterpiece *Totoro*? This may be, in which case Miyazaki joins any number of artists who have misunderstood, mistrusted, or fled their own temperaments.

Read cover to cover, *Starting Point* is tedious and finally numbing; much better to dip into its hodgepodge and hope for the best (the lack of index is catastrophic). As a rule, Miyazaki’s interviews are more focused and articulate than his essays and speeches (truly he is not a writer), while his production notes merit attention from anyone with a scholarly interest in the films. The most valuable piece in the volume is the extensive 1988 interview titled “Totoro Was Not Made as a Nostalgia Piece,” in which Miyazaki speaks movingly and probingly about his best film. Discussing the film’s understated environmental message, Miyazaki achieves an uncharacteristic eloquence: “I am concerned, because for me the deep forest is connected in some way to the darkness deep in my heart. I feel that if it is erased, then the darkness deep inside my heart would also disappear, and my existence would grow shallow” (360). He is eloquent, too, about his own intentions:

I do want to state clearly that I didn’t make this film out of personal nostalgia [for the pre-modern world]. I made it hoping that children would see it and then go out to run around the fields or pick up acorns. Or, though we only have a few such spaces left, that they would play in the thickets behind shrines, or become excited while peeking in the crawl spaces under their houses. That’s why I made this film. (355–6)

Academic readers in search of juicy ambiguities will find plenty to exploit, like Miyazaki’s definition of the totoro as “goblins of the transitional phase when Japan hasn’t become entirely modernized” (355). The article – let’s call it “Goblins of Globalization: Marx, Miyazaki, and Modernity” – practically writes itself.

Amid nearly five hundred pages of Miyazakian miscellany, readers are sure to happen on little nodes of private illumination. In the end, these justify a book otherwise so shaggy and unwieldy. This comment, for example, stopped me short:

To confess, I can praise Andrei Tarkovsky’s *Stalker* to the heavens, but I haven’t actually seen the whole film. I probably only saw the last third, and then just happened to see it on television. But that was enough for me. I was overwhelmed and had no desire to see more. This sometimes happens out of laziness. I know that if I were to watch films all the way through, their emotional impact would be greater. . . . But with *Stalker*, I was thrilled to the bottom of my heart. To watch any more would have been too much. (159–60)
Stalker (1979) surely sets the precedent for the ruined gardens of Laputa in Castle in the Sky and more generally for Miyazaki’s veneration of the inscrutable imminences of nature. That Miyazaki did not bother to watch the whole film is so like him: so concerned with immediacy of feeling, so indifferent to the kind of rigor that undermines immediacy of feeling but generates intellect. “We murder to dissect,” opines Wordsworth — not so Miyazaki. Those with a psychological bent will seize on Miyazaki’s reminiscences of his father and his account of his family life (“You want me to talk about my family? That’s a problem for me. I’m hardly ever home”); those with a political bent will find much to mine in Miyazaki’s countless pronouncements on the environmental crisis and his occasional comments redolent of what I would call a lightweight leftism; those with an obsessive fanboy interest in the history of anime will revel in Miyazaki’s recollections of the 60s and 70s, when young artists slept on couches, lived on ramen noodles, and dreamed of redrawing the world, frame by frame.

What manner of artist, in the end, is Miyazaki? He is an image-maker who does not trust his own images to speak for themselves, a meditative man who makes increasingly noisy, argumentative movies. A Miyazaki film should sink into silence and stillness, become a limpid pool in which a totoro might see its own reflection. Riotously mechanical submarines and antediluvian creatures may ply the depths, but they must not disturb the surface.

Reference

Afroz Taj examines the text of Saghar Nizami’s play *Anarkali* and compares it to the earlier play of the same name by Imtiyaz Ali Taj. He describes how Saghar’s play engages Imtiyaz Ali Taj’s text while reworking the Anarkali legend in light of the utopian project of the young Indian republic. A close reading of Saghar’s text reveals several linguistic devices metaphorizing Indian linguistic and cultural diversity.

After Independence and Partition in 1947, there was a new blossoming of Urdu dramatic literature in both Pakistan and India. The divergent development of these two national literatures is beyond the scope of this article, but in each country Urdu dramatists encountered different opportunities. In Pakistan, Syed Imtiyaz Ali Taj (1900–70), whose 1922 drama *Anarkali* was the epitome of the late Parsi theater, became a leading figure as a radio scriptwriter as well as a writer of children’s books and editor of women’s magazines. In India, a new generation of poets and writers was emerging, flush with the exhilaration of newfound artistic and political freedoms and armed with a progressive utopian vision. Among these was Saghar Nizami (1905–84).

In this period we see for the first time a marked bifurcation in the Urdu-language performing arts. One branch, the mainstream cinema industry, was driven by economic forces and dependent on box office success. As a general rule, it had no pretensions to literary quality or stylistic innovation; it was based rather on the continual reworking of the standard formulas, albeit with a distinct infusion of Nehruvian socialism.

The other branch, championed by a new generation of intellectuals, strove to find a new voice through formal experimentation and a rejection of the old. It was only a matter of time before this new generation of writers would try its hand at drama; the fashion of the times dictated that they would gravitate toward socialist realism, which invested every drama with a
social conscience and a political agenda. Many such dramas were written originally for radio broadcast.\footnote{1}

Some of these writers discovered that poetic drama, with its emphasis on beautiful language and aesthetic delight, could function as a sugar-coated pill for the moral, political, and educational messages they wanted to convey. In the days of colonial censorship, poetry had been the medium of choice when one’s message was potentially provocative, but in the mid-twentieth century, the ornateness and indirectness of poetry had fallen out of fashion. After Independence, playwrights could express their concerns openly, in blunt and homely prose. The era of the \textit{ghazal} غزل (thematically unrelated couplets sharing a single rhyme scheme and meter) and the \textit{masnavi} مسناوی (a long poem in rhyming couplets on a unified theme) seemed to be receding.

The power of poetry is so great, however, and its place so firmly established in India’s cultural matrix that even the most avant-garde writers could not reject it entirely. From the earliest days of South Asian drama, verse had been the mode of choice for the expression of emotion, as it allowed characters to compress vast meanings in a few words. Poetry allowed the dramatist to use allegory, metaphor, allusion, and simile to build a web of correspondences that infinitely enriched the dramatic text. Since the dramatist must efficiently capture a character’s whole emotional life, poetry was seen as a more effective vehicle than prose.

Poetry has other advantages for drama as well. It is uniquely descriptive and evocative, and it is meant to be spoken and to be recited on stage. In the South Asian context, for full effect, poetry must be heard aloud, as for example in a \textit{musha’ira} مشاعره (a poetry recital in which multiple poets participate). When characters on stage speak in verse, the rhythms and rhymes quickly draw the listener into the action and convey the feelings of the dramatist.

Poetry was not without pitfalls, however. It was easy to get caught up in verse spinning. This was the chief fault of the Parsi theater dramatists who packed their dramas with poetry and song at the expense of plot. Likewise, the dramatist might be seduced by ostentatious language and lose sight of the need to further the plot. In drama, poetry must be the means to an end rather than the end itself. The most effective poetic dramas were those that struck a balance between form and content: they neither obscured their message with overwrought poetic language nor allowed their moral agenda to compromise their quality as works of literature. In the mid-twentieth century, South Asian Urdu dramatists were searching for just such a balance.

The result was a new kind of poetic drama, one which simultaneously pursued formal experimentation and explored new themes and messages. Eventually the poetic dramatists came full circle; Saghar Nizami and others
would return to the old tales and the old characters, and breathe new life into them. They could survey the rich and gaudy tradition of the Parsi theater, borrow select elements, and assemble these into something altogether original and revolutionary.

**Saghar Nizami**

Saghar Nizami was one of the main Urdu writers responsible for the revival of the Urdu poetic drama. Born on December 21, 1905, in Aligarh, his full name was Sardar Muhammad Samad Yaar Khan. He used the pen-name *Saghar*. He was educated in Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit, in addition to Urdu and Hindi. He began publishing collections of poetry in the late 1920s; his early collections and books include *Tehzeeb-e Sarguzisht* (The Refinement of History, 1927), *Suboohi* (Morning Draught of Wine, 1932), *Kehkashan* (Galaxy, 1934), and *Badah-e Mashriq* (Eastern Wine, 1935). His first drama, published in 1960, was a 356-page reworking in modern Urdu of Kalidas’s *Shakuntala* (ca. fifth century). This work was an enormous critical success, and the quality of Saghar’s poetry was praised throughout the Urdu-reading world. In 1969, on the eve of the Ghalib centenary, Saghar was awarded the Padma Bhushan Award, one of India’s highest civilian honors.

Saghar’s great poetic drama *Anarkali* first appeared in the form of a radio script that was broadcast in 1958 on All India Radio. It was subsequently rewritten and published in 1963. At some point Saghar had been invited to help write the screenplay for K. Asif’s 1960 film *Mughal-e Azam* (The Great Mughal) based on Intiyaz Ali Taj’s play *Anarkali*. Although his name does not appear in the credits of the film, we can hypothesize that Saghar was inspired to write his own drama while associated with this project.

After *Anarkali*, Saghar wrote *Nehru Namah* (Nehru Tameem, 1967) on the life of Nehru; *Samandar ki devi* (Sea Goddess, 1972), at the request of Indira Gandhi; and *Mash’al-e Azadi* (Torch of Freedom, 1980), a long poem on the Indian Mutiny and the subsequent freedom struggle, for which he received the Urdu Academy Award in 1981. While often drawing upon well-known stories from history or legend, Saghar’s poetry and dramas are generally political and often evoke a utopian vision of a reformed society.

Throughout his life, Saghar was involved in the film industry, working as a poet, lyricist, and screenwriter. In addition to *Mughal-e Azam*, he was associated with *Mirea Ghalib* (dir. Sohrab Modi, 1954), *Jhansi ki Rani* (Queen of Jhansi, dir. Sohrab Modi, 1952), and Shalimar Pictures’ *Man ki Jeet* (Victory of the Heart, dir. W. Z. Ahmed, 1944). He was also affiliated with All India Radio and wrote many radio features. Saghar died on February 27, 1984.
Saghar’s dramas speak to both the past and the future of Urdu poetic drama. On the one hand, his reworkings of texts like *Shakuntala* and *Anarkali* link him to the Parsi theater tradition. On the other hand, his approach is novel, and his voice is fresh and unfettered by the overused formulas of the past. He was one of the first post-1947 Urdu writers to pursue literary experiments in dramatic form, and he set for himself the enormous challenge of investing the old stories with new themes, forms, and messages.

**Anarkali**

Saghar’s *Anarkali* is an entirely new breed of poetic drama. Where Taj wrote *Anarkali* in prose as a revolt against the Parsi theater song-sequence paradigm, Saghar’s play is an attempt to create a new dramatic texture based on a varied combination of traditional, blank, and free-verse forms. Using Taj’s drama as a subtext, Saghar creates an innovative and thoroughly modern poetic drama.

Saghar’s *Anarkali* is essentially a free-form dream sequence that assumes an intimate knowledge of Taj’s play and its source legend. In one sense the play depicts the aftermath of the events with which Taj’s play concludes: the execution of Anarkali and Salim’s psychological breakdown. But Saghar’s play is not a sequel. It is rather a reinterpretation or a reevaluation of the story told by Taj. This is not the same approach as that used by the older Parsi theater dramatists who in drawing upon earlier romances and masnavis freely omitted plot details that would be tedious or ineffective on stage and that were already familiar to their audiences. Saghar, by contrast, actively engages Taj in a kind of intertextual debate; Saghar relies on Taj to provide the backstory, but at the same time challenges the fundamental moral assumptions on which Taj’s play is based.

The action of Saghar’s play begins where Taj’s ends with prince Salim crying and mourning Anarkali in front of his mother, Jodhabai. Eventually he falls unconscious and begins to dream. He sees himself walking hand in hand in a garden with Anarkali, and the two reaffirm their love. Salim’s father, the Emperor Akbar, appears and exhorts Salim to renounce her. Anarkali’s rival and nemesis Gulandam (Taj’s Dilaram) then arrives and attempts to divide them. Gulandam fights with Anarkali and curses her. Salim cannot tolerate this; he draws his sword to strike Gulandam, but instead strikes a tree. The earth splits open and an ocean appears in the breach. Anarkali is on one side and Salim is on the other. He immediately jumps into the ocean — only to wake up on the other side of his life with Akbar and Jodhabai watching him scream for Anarkali. He says,

> Alas! It was such a beautiful dream,
> Make me sleep again, make me sleep again. (Saghar 1963, 200)
Jodhabai weeps in sympathy, while Akbar remains impassive. Excepting the first and last acts, all of the action takes place in the bright fog of Salim’s dream.

Let us look at the dramatic text in a little more detail. The play consists of eight short acts. Act I begins with Salim and Jodhabai reacting to Anarkali’s death. Akbar enters and Jodhabai reproaches him fiercely for his hypocrisy and lack of compassion. This immediately demonstrates the difference between Taj and Saghar: Taj’s Jodhabai is not nearly this bold and assertive.

In Act II, Saghar gives Anarkali stanzas that describe Salim’s dreamland. She describes the transfigured beauty of the world, the fragrances and colors, and the glorious light that steeps the valleys and mountains. This is an example of the device called *husn-e taleel* which invests the whole world with the lovers’ happiness. Her poem ends with the radiant lines:

At every step there is ecstasy and dance.
Into which world has my desire brought me?
Into which atmosphere is my life soaring? (Saghar 1963, 125)

Saghar paints the whole scene in the colors of wonder and ecstasy.

Saghar’s play is replete with similar images of transcendence and escape. Two passages in Taj’s drama particularly seem to prefigure this mood in Saghar’s drama and probably played a part in its conception. The first occurs in Taj’s Act I, Scene 3, in which Anarkali speaks to her sister: “I wish I was free, sitting in a boat, set adrift on the quiet waves of the Raavi, accompanied by fragrances and by the sound of flutes in the moonlit night. . . . Otherwise I would ride in a chariot drawn by two horses, restless like tongues of flame” (Taj 1987, 73). Saghar borrows the latter image when a supernatural chariot appears from the sky to carry the two lovers. Anarkali remarks: “Did you call down this chariot of Indra from the sky” (Saghar 1963, 126)? Both passages contain allusions to the episode in the Hindu epic *Mahabharata* in which the king-god Indra sends a chariot drawn by ten thousand golden horses to carry Arjun up into the heavens.

In another passage from Taj that may have inspired Saghar, Salim imagines himself and Anarkali in a state of perfect bliss: “We would embrace, there would be no fear. The sky would draw us and we would be raised up into new lights, the earth would slip from beneath our feet . . . .” (Taj 1987, 80). This passage anticipates the characteristic mood of Saghar’s drama; it captures the same transcendent emotion, the same feeling of wandering the heavens beyond the reach of death.

Act III is dedicated to the love of Salim and Anarkali. In this verse sequence they are essentially giving themselves to one other; the whole act is full of the radeef “mere liye hai” (for me) and “tere liye hai” (for you).
The act concludes with a divine blessing in the shape of a chorus sung by the hoor and ghalman, female and male attendants of the faithful in Paradise.

In Act IV, the lovers have passed beyond their initial ecstasy and are now confident and secure in each other’s love. The poetry is more relaxed as it describes the essential unity of the lovers’ souls. Anarkali realizes that without Salim, everything is useless. She says that all the stars, the galaxies, and the moon are meaningless in the absence of Salim:

If I do not receive the alms of light from Salim’s face,  
There will be no revelry and light left in the moon’s beauty.  
(Saghar 1963, 134)

Anarkali, bordering on idolatry, begins to refer to Salim as “devta” (deity) and “ma’bood” (god). Incidentally, this one of the play’s first examples of the technique I call “cross-etymology”: the juxtaposition of Sanskrit words with synonymous Arabic or Persian words. Salim is likewise idolatrous when he says:

The right to prostrate himself at your feet is Salim’s  
and only Salim’s.  
(Saghar 1963, 135)

This line interestingly contrasts with other passages in which Salim highlights Anarkali’s sensual attributes, such as her body, her fragrance, and her dancing and singing.

Act V introduces the first signs of trouble: the disembodied voice of Akbar and the appearance of the Jailor. Akbar cannot part the couple but Anarkali becomes disturbed. In Act VI, Akbar appears on stage to confront Salim directly. This is an example of the poetic debate, found in a less refined form in other Urdu plays like those of Agha Hashr Kashmiri (1879–1935). Akbar and Salim argue with equal confidence and conviction. Salim wins when Akbar flies into a rage and insults Anarkali, calling her “naachti titli” (“dancing butterfly”). Salim stands his ground and Akbar disappears. Taj’s Akbar never loses control or dignity, and his Salim is relatively ineffectual; Saghar has reversed their relations. In Saghar’s dramatic scheme, Anarkali’s death has simultaneously shaken Akbar’s confidence and given Salim a kind of tragic strength.

The scene raises issues that are the crux of the whole drama, and Saghar responds to them with elegant and powerful poetry. Akbar considers his son’s love a foolish sentiment that threatens to destroy Akbar’s carefully constructed civilization and empire. For Salim, Anarkali is the harbinger of a new world order, in which the two build an entirely new tradition
founded on love. Akbar repeatedly tries to ensnare Salim in the coils of fatherly concern and affection, but Salim knows that this is not love but bondage to the old tradition. Salim’s desire undermines Akbar’s will.

Act VI concerns the emperor’s fear for the future of India’s traditions and its throne. Several quotations indicate the thrust of his argument:

What were my dreams?
On this [Salim’s] shoulder, I wish! on this shoulder,
That the banner of Babur would shine more brightly.
(Saghar 1963, 156)

May you be the custodian of the glory of the race of Timur.
(Saghar 1963, 157)

You are playing with the word “religion.”
Do you know what religion is?
(Saghar 1963, 167)

Why does Akbar mention religion and his hopes for the empire? Does he have any reason to believe that Anarkali threatens these?

Saghar nicely brings out the inherent contradiction in Akbar’s attitude. The emperor refuses to let his son marry Anarkali because he does not want Salim’s love to interfere with his future career as ruler. Indeed, Akbar himself selected his own wife, Jodhabai, a Rajput princess, for primarily political reasons, not the least of which was to promote his policy of Hindu-Muslim coexistence. The pious Akbar, the founder of his own religion, Din-e Ilahi, rejects Salim and Anarkali’s love on the grounds of social inequality, Anarkali being a court dancer and unworthy of the throne. If both Islam and Akbar’s derivative Din-e Ilahi are founded on the concept of inherent human equality (masaavaat), how can Akbar simultaneously promote social equality and veto the marriage of Anarkali and Salim? For all his pretended piety, Akbar is a creature of political expedience and a hypocrite. What religion tolerates murdering the innocent? Jodhabai herself has accused Akbar of this crime in Act 1:

Where the message of the messenger of God gave the dignity of queens to maids,
Where he gave the highest dignity and respect to slaves, making world rulers ashamed,
There you have caused to be immured an innocent, naive girl.
Is this religion? Is this morality? Is this compassion for mankind? Is this the fear of God?
(Saghar 1963, 118)
The Hindu queen clearly understands the precepts of Islam better than Akbar. The struggle between humanism and bigotry disguised as religion was much in the forefront in the young Indian republic. It is ironic that Akbar, one of the most earnestly humanist rulers in Indian history, is immortalized in drama and film as an intolerant and jealous father, while Salim, the future Emperor Jahangir, is accorded the moral high ground.

The centerpiece of Saghar's play, beautiful in both conception and execution, is the Act VI poem in which Akbar compares ishq (love) and aqal (wisdom). This opposition between Salim's passion and Akbar's prudence is the driving conflict of the play, and Saghar sets up a marvelous series of comparisons between the two.

In Acts V and VI, Saghar avenges Akbar's triumph at the end of Taj's play. The audience can only watch Taj's play in despair as Akbar has Anarkali executed. In Saghar's play – at least for a while – Salim thwarts Akbar and all wrongs are righted. Even the Jailor does not escape; he appears dying of thirst.

By Act VII, which takes place in Salim's bedroom, doubts have arisen in Anarkali's mind. She has been affected by Akbar's arguments and accepts that she might endanger India's future. She reminds Salim of the importance of his father's love and urges him to consider the empire's future. She blames herself for everything and tries to convince Salim to leave her. She releases Salim from responsibility, saying: “Do not take my tears as someone's complaint” (Saghar 1963, 170). And later: “Remove me from your heart, forget me” (Saghar 1963, 187).

Act VIII begins as Salim searches for Anarkali. She appears suddenly. Then she dances while Akbar's voice echoes in Salim's mind. Again the whole scene of her arrest flashes before him to remind the audience of Taj's story. After Akbar's voice has ceased, Gulandam (Taj's Dilaram) appears and argues with Salim and Anarkali and succeeds in separating them. This act is a masterpiece of tension and suspense. Saghar is at once reminding us of the tragedy of the “real story” even as he changes it slightly. One of the frustrating things in Taj's drama is that we know that however strong Salim's love for Anarkali is, he will in six short years forget her and take up the reins of empire. We are deprived of the sort of “love-death” that we find in the stories of Laila Majnoon, Romeo and Juliet, or Tristan and Isolde. But Saghar gives us something else. Salim casts himself into the ocean crying: “I am with you till the limits of eternity” (Saghar 1963, 218). With these words still on his lips, Salim awakens in the “real world,” with Anarkali dead and gone. The audience now has an alternate reality to contrast with the historical fact portrayed in Taj's drama. We may prefer the dream world, where true love creates its own everlasting heaven even while we acknowledge the harsh victory of politics and tyranny. Saghar's drama is truly modern in the sense that it does not assert a single reality; rather it
admits that each person creates his or her own reality and that each person’s vision of reality is valid.

**Saghar’s Poetic Language**

Saghar’s verse is remarkably varied in meter, even from couplet to couplet, and occasionally within couplets themselves. In direct rebellion against the metrical strictures of nineteenth-century Urdu poetry, Saghar changes the meter continuously in order to modulate the tone according to the mood of the characters and in order to provide variety. The poetic forms in the play range from the *azad nazm* آزاد نظم, a form of free verse, to the traditional ghazal, with its highly formalized rhyme scheme and metrical consistency. Between these two poles, Saghar chooses his forms carefully to reflect the emotional and intellectual state of the characters. He himself described his rationale in an introduction to the play: “The meters of this drama are rooted in the sentiment [of the characters]. Some of these meters are known, some are unknown [new], and there are also some *azad nazms*” (Saghar 1963, 81).

Just as the story of Anarkali is traditional but told in a completely new way, so Saghar’s poetry has roots in tradition while its branches wave in the fresh air of imagination. One of his own couplets captures the essence of his approach: “To stitch a shroud in the style of a wedding gown” (Saghar 1963, 155). It should be noted that the term *azad nazm* was coined in the twentieth century and that this form of poetry, which has no regular rhyme or meter but which is nevertheless poetic, is in some ways an outgrowth of the medieval *dastan*-style (dastans داستان were long prose romances) and nineteenth century Parsi theater-style rhyming prose. The two idioms share the same features: internal rhymes, metrical regularity (but no strict meter), a preference for poetic vocabulary, and the use of poetic devices such as metaphor and simile. In his use of language, Saghar is thus not so far from the Parsi theater after all.

Saghar is truly at his best when describing the transfiguring power of love. An example of Saghar’s most singable poetry is found in Act VI when Salim describes how he imagines Anarkali breaking the chains of her prison, breaking out of the wall, emerging into light, starting to smile, and her appearance causes even the “stone faces to smile.” Salim’s song is full of Saghar’s utopian vision, and ends with the line: “The cup of happiness began to well from the earth” (Saghar 1963, 151–2).

Let’s look more closely at Saghar’s use of language. In general he writes in a highly refined Urdu, but his style is never pretentious or obscure. Occasionally he enriches his vocabulary with words from Sanskrit. This is especially apparent in the lines given to Jodhabai, who of course remained a Hindu even after her marriage to Akbar. In these passages Saghar creates a linguistic metaphor for the intermingling of the two cultures: the Hindi
words are set like jewels in the Urdu matrix, each complementing the other. He often conjoins Sanskritic and Perso-Arabic words in the same couplet, creating a parallelism of meaning and metaphorizing the intermingling of the cultures.

Jodhabai’s lines to Salim in Act I exemplify Saghar’s use of Sanskritic words. Note the parallelism between the Sanskritic (S) and Perso-Arabic (PA) vocabulary.

Meri shakti hai tu, meri himmat hai tu
Mera sammaan hai, meri izzat hai tu.

You are my power (S), you are my strength (PA)
You are my prestige (S), you are my respect (PA).
(Saghar 1963, 111)

Although this hybrid vocabulary is particularly appropriate for Jodhabai, the Hindu Rajput queen married to the Muslim emperor Akbar, she is by no means the only one endowed with this kind of language. Another example of the mixture of Hindi and Urdu occurs in the opening of Act VIII, when Anarkali has temporarily vanished and Salim is calling to her, bewailing her absence. Describing Anarkali, Saghar uses the same linguistic device to create a poetic counterpoint:

Sho’la-e tund (AP) kahaan, aur kahaan neel kanval (S)?

How far the fierce flame from the water lily!

Khaulia neer (S) kahaan, saaghar-e billor (AP) kahaan?
Phool kaisar ka (S) kahaan, aur kahaan paarah-e sang (AP)?

How far the boiling water from the goblet of crystal!
How far the marigold from the piece of stone! (Saghar 1963, 195)

Anarkali herself uses Hindi words, some of which have Hindu religious connotations. For example, she uses “akash” اکاش (sky), “Indra” اندر (Hindu deity), and “devta” دیوت (deity) in the same section of Act II (Saghar 1963, 126). Salim likewise uses the words “megh” میگھ (clouds) and “gagan” گگن (sky) (Saghar, 152).
One of Anarkali’s poems features a distinctly Hindi folk-song style and inscribes a Hindu theme. It contains words like “chundri” (scarf), “Jamuna” (the river by which Krishna used to play his flute), “aamon ke kunj” (mango groves), “madhur” (sweet), and “baansuri” (bamboo flute) (Saghar 1963, 178). The practice of including such folk songs in Urdu drama was of course well established by Amanat Lakhnavi’s (1815–58) opera Indar Sabha (The Court of Indra, 1853), but Saghar has endowed it with a new political significance, discernable in Salim’s answer:

Meri janambhoomi hai naghmon ki dharti
Meri janambhoomi kalaon ka gulshan.

My native land (S) is a land (S) of songs (AP),
My native land (S) is a garden (AP) of the arts (S).

(Saghar, 178)

Here Saghar, like his Urdu playwright predecessors, uses the diversity of India’s languages and song genres as a metaphor for the national diversity of India. Such songs are at heart a celebration of India’s variety and its differing flavors and colors.

Saghar’s eloquent use of ista’rah (metaphor) is exemplified in Act I. Jodhabai says to Akbar:

Just look at your own hands, the fresh blood of life is on them.
The pyre of a ray of light, the shroud of a flower bud. (Saghar, 120)

The metaphoric words “kiran” (ray) and “kali” (bud) are especially powerful because they are closely associated with Anarkali.

The Two Anarkalis

Saghar’s Anarkali is distinguished from the earlier version of the play in the following ways. First, Saghar is clearly conscious of recent Western literary trends. His play has affinities with the late nineteenth-century symbolist movement and the twentieth-century surrealist movement, set as it is in the world of Salim’s dreams. These movements shared a rejection of prosaic realism and a turn toward dreams, poetry, and imagination. This also explains Saghar’s use of poetry: he is describing a dream world, a world of imagination, a world where prose would seem inappropriately dull and ordinary.
Second, *Anarkali* is very difficult to stage, with its scenes of the earth splitting and an ocean appearing. Saghar seemingly intended his play as a radio script more than a stage script; Taj of course designed his play purely with the stage in mind. Saghar himself admits in his introduction to the play that he is no expert in the mechanics of the stage (Saghar 1963, 81). Saghar is primarily a poet, but a poet who ventured into drama, and perhaps for this reason his plays are vague about staging details. He writes that *Anarkali* can be presented as a poetic drama, as an opera, or as a ballet.

Third, whereas Taj felt compelled to reject the formal parameters of the Parsi theater tradition, Saghar is distanced enough to feel comfortable picking and choosing from the legacy of the Parsi theater. Taj, in a concession to realism, believed that poetry could not help but seem unnatural on stage since people do not actually speak that way. But Saghar’s priority is the exploration of his characters’ emotions rather than the creation of realistic dialogue.

The difference between the poetic and the prose approaches is demonstrated by a comparison between analogous scenes in Taj and Saghar. Saghar’s first act corresponds to Taj’s final scene. Indeed, Salim’s despairing request in Taj to “send me there” (i.e., to Anarkali) is the starting point of Saghar’s dramatic trajectory. In both dramas Salim’s lament before Jodhabai is moving. In Taj it is captured by the simple but poignant refrain “Amma Anarkali, Amma Anarkali” (Mother Anarkali, Mother Anarkali). In Saghar, Salim’s lament is set in elaborate poetry:

> Alas that image of the moon-brow  
> Alas that delicate face  
> Alas for my white rose  
> Alas for my jasmine. (Saghar 1963, 113)

Salim continues:

> A wave of fragrance has been sealed in the wall  
> The music of pleasure has been sealed in the wall  
> The dance and song has been sealed in the wall  
> The cup and the wine have been sealed in the wall. (Saghar 1963, 114)

The underlying philosophy of the two approaches is entirely different. Taj is striving for a realistic effect. He portrays a man in love who has just lost everything he held most dear, and his Salim can barely speak for grief. But grief gives Saghar’s Salim a tongue. Where Taj relies on the actor’s talent to convey this deep sorrow in few words, Saghar has endowed his character with an elaborate song of lament. Saghar seeks to draw out, intensify, and elaborate the emotion in the traditional Sanskrit dramatic fashion, so the
music and words unite in a tour de force of tragedy. In the wrong hands Taj’s scene could be flat or maudlin, while Saghar’s scene could degenerate into overacted melodrama. Both approaches have their merits.

It is interesting that Saghar’s Salim concentrates primarily on the physical attributes of Anarkali. As in the passage cited above, he consistently uses similes that emphasize her beauty, her dancing, and the solipsistic intoxication of the desire she evokes. In Taj, Salim respects Anarkali and even goes down on his knees before her. In Saghar, Salim’s love is if anything stronger, but its tone is slightly different.

Saghar also changed the personalities of the main characters. Both Salim and Anarkali are more aggressive, more self-assured, and more courageous in their defiance of authority, and this is the clearest evidence that the mood of Indian dramatic literature had changed. No more passive princes or trembling beloveds. Saghar’s Salim is defiant, strong, courageous, and idealistic. He acts impulsively and decisively in pursuit of Anarkali and he is not afraid to flout his father’s will, openly showing his love for Anarkali before Akbar. Likewise, Anarkali is bold enough to hold Salim’s hand and to make eye contact with him. She is thrilled by the prospect of becoming his queen. Even Jodhabai is more assertive in her relationship with Akbar, and Gulandam is blunter than Dilaram. Perhaps Saghar wants to suggest that in dreams we may be more aggressive than in our real lives, or perhaps he is allowing the poetry to embolden his characters’ expression and display of emotion.

In Taj’s play, Anarkali lives in constant terror; she wants her mother to take her far away from the palace and its intrigues into the trackless jungle. Taj’s Anarkali speaks very little and lives in constant fear. Saghar makes her a much more courageous character. In Saghar, she speaks, sings song after song, and is completely unafraid. In Act III she even stares into her lover’s eyes and holds his hands (Saghar 1963, 130). In Taj she is terrified of even associating with the royal family, but in Saghar she is charmed when Salim places a crown on her head and says:

Are this crown and this diamond-decorated throne for me?

What whatever is available in this world of possibilities
Is for me, for me, for me. (Saghar 1963, 131)

This passage is remarkable for casting Anarkali in an opportunistic light. Despite her assertiveness, she remains generous and compassionate, a true queen. When Salim and Anarkali share the vision of the Jailor dying of thirst, Anarkali is deeply concerned and wants to alleviate his sufferings (Saghar 1963, 143). Moreover, Saghar portrays Anarkali as wise and practical. She often speaks in aphorisms; the best examples occur in Act VIII,
just before Salim’s dream ends, when Anarkali is all courage and determina-
tion (Saghar 1963, 207–8). Anarkali shows her courage and her refusal to
regret the past especially in the exchange with Gulandam, saying proudly,
“I have shaken the foundations of the empire” (Saghar 1963, 210).

Utopian Vision

One of the most interesting aspects of Saghar’s drama is the completely new
political theme that is woven through the poetry. In the Urdu dramas writ-
ten before Indian independence, and even in Indar Sabha, as I have shown
elsewhere (see The Court of Indar and the Rebirth of North Indian Drama,
Delhi: Anjuman Taraqqi Urdu, 2006), the overall national mood was re-
lected in the choice of stories: tales of fantasy worlds, fairy kidnappings,
dethroned kings, and lovers who choose death instead of surrender. All of
these plots, though they may be escapist fantasies, revolve around the con-
flict between love and authority or the issue of might versus right. Even
dramas that were not based on such tales would often include themes of
self-determination and cultural pride, hinting at a nascent nationalism. In
Saghar, writing ten years after independence, an entirely new mood pre-
vails. A utopian spirit permeates the play, growing perhaps out of the ex-
hilaration of freedom. Dedicated to Jawaharlal Nehru, the play contains
numerous references to the evils of violence and the abuses of politics.
Salim and Anarkali together represent a visionary dream of peace, love, and
understanding. When Salim draws his sword, all is lost; he is drawn back
into the world of murder and intrigue where his beloved is no more.

Like his predecessors in the Parsi theater, Saghar has peppered his
drama with lines and couplets expressing political sentiments. In the Parsi
theater, such lines were mostly nationalist in nature with the beloved sym-
bolizing the Indian nation. In Saghar such lines tend to be more revolu-
tionary and utopian. Two examples may be cited, both spoken by Salim in
Act I: “Patience is the grave insult of the oppressed” and “The murder of
the innocent — is this politics?” (Saghar 1963, 112). Another example ap-
pears in Act V, in which Saghar portrays Salim and Anarkali’s utopian vi-
sion. Salim fantasizes about the world they will build in which “there is no
wall, no surrounding border” (Saggar 1963, 139). Anarkali answers, “Here
there is no limitation by race, no discrimination by color” (Saghar 1963,
140). Again, in Act VII, Saghar, perhaps recalling the Partition of India, has
Salim say to Anarkali, “It is not politics, to make rivers of blood flow, / It is
not politics, to burn towns and villages” (Saghar 1963, 173). Perhaps the
most explicit statement of Salim’s dream of world peace and social reform
occurs in his beautiful ghazal in Act VII. One couplet captures the mood of
the whole: “Let us sow the iron of the spear and dagger / And grow a new
rose of love” (Saghar, 177). Anarkali answers, with lines echoing the famous
ghazal by Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938) and sharing the same radeef-qaafiya:

* Sitaare falak aastaan aur bhi hain . . .
  ستارے فلک استل اور بھی بیں

There are ever more stars, skies, thresholds . . . . (Saghar 1963, 177)

Later in Act VII, Salim sings another ghazal, this time on the definition of love (*ishq*). For Saghar, love is the basis of all human activity; there can be no politics, no nationalism, no religion, unless it is first founded on love. This ghazal also demonstrates the breadth of Saghar’s poetic vocabulary:

* Ishq sayaasat ishq sayaadat isha hi vahadat ishq hi kasrat
  Isha hi naghma, ishq hi sargam, ishq hi naara, ishq hi parcham.

Love is politics, love is leadership, love is unity, love is abundance,
Love is song, love is music, love is [our] slogan, love is [our] flag.
(Saghar 1963, 181)

When asked about his *Anarkali*, Saghar Nizami said, “This dream, in which are visualized freedom of thoughts and speech, freedom of love and romance, social equality, joy of living and the complete freedom of the human spirit, will come true” (Saghar 1963, 145). Saghar has a definite vision to convey, and he has chosen to convey it through the powerful medium of drama. However, Saghar is first and foremost a poet. His emphasis is on poetry and language rather than on plot and action, and the play is perhaps more satisfying to read than to see performed on stage. His *Anarkali* is a masterpiece of poetic skill, but this very fact makes it far too difficult for the average audience. This is the modern dramatist’s dilemma: to use the full strength of his literary talents and risk losing sight of his play’s message or to convey the message clearly but compromise the integrity of his art. Saghar has chosen the former path, with the result that his message, which is directed at everyone, is beyond the reach of all but the most educated members of his audience.

Saghar Nizami is nevertheless one of the great lights of Urdu poetic drama. As a poet, he had the courage to work in a dramatic medium in a style that many critics considered obsolete. As a social visionary, he created an original forum for his ideas, even though he struck an imperfect balance between the form and content of his plays. Both his *Shakuntala* and his *Anarkali* are radical transformations of traditional, culturally central tales, and
Saghar has thus pointed the way toward a new poetic drama that retains its roots in the indigenous Indian traditions, but whose possibilities are limitless.

*Mitti yahaan ki hai mah-o-akhhtar liye hue;  
Khushki yahaan ki baadah-o-saghar liye hue.*

The soil of this land carries the moon and the stars;  
The drought of this land carries the wine and the goblet.

— Saghar Nizami [*Anarkali*, Act VII]

**Notes**

1. All India Radio was well established before Independence and its successors in both India and Pakistan broadcast radio plays regularly. The first television broadcasts from Lahore, Pakistan, did not begin until 1964. India’s national network, Doordarshan, came on the air in 1965.

2. The surname Nizami نیازمی reflects an association with the lineage of the thirteenth-century Sufi saint Nizamuddin Auliya نظام الدين اولیاء.

3. *Indra* is the Vedic king of the Gods; his heavenly court was the original locus of dramatic and musical entertainments.

4. In Urdu prosody, the *radeef* is a word or phrase that follows the rhyming word (qaafiya قافیہ).

5. Examples of ghazals in the traditional style occur, for example, in Act VII, on pp. 174–6.

**References**


Chiaki Takagi examines modern Japan’s cultural formation from a new theoretical perspective by applying postcolonial theories to modern Japan. The author’s goal is to rethink Japan’s modernity, including its long-lasting “sengo” 戦後 (postwar) period, by examining the works of Murakami Haruki 村上春樹. His works suggest that postwar Japanese society has been informed by a peculiar version of colonization. Takagi calls the application of postcolonial theories to Japanese society the “Japanization” of the postcolonial as well as of the postmodern.

**Introduction**

Postwar Japan’s cultural stance may be considered that of the postmodern. However, post-modernity in the Western sense does not always fit non-Western societies simply because their trajectories to modernity are not the same as those of the West. For this reason, localization of the modern as well as the postmodern in Japan’s cultural situation is necessary. In this paper I examine modern Japan’s cultural formation from a new theoretical location by applying postcolonial theories to Japan’s modernity. I am aware that Japan is not a postcolonial society in the usual sense, and therefore, my attempt challenges the historical and geographical particularity of postcolonialism. I recognize the postcolonial as a localized version of the postmodern and think that the application of postcolonial theories also localizes Japan’s cultural situation. My goal is to rethink Japan’s modernity including its long lasting “sengo” 戦後 (postwar) period through examination of works of Murakami Haruki 村上春樹, which represent post-war Japanese society as a peculiar example of colonization. Simultaneously, the application of postcolonial theories offers a more localized theoretical framework to read Murakami’s works than that of the postmodern. I call this process the “Japanization” of the postcolonial as well as the postmodern.
My discussion focuses on the formation of Tokyo because Tokyo symbolizes Japan’s modernity and postwar prosperity. I reconstruct this metropolis in the framework of the postcolonial based on the premise that postwar Japan has been colonized by its modern ideology. As the symbol of modern Japan, Tokyo has established not only economical but also cultural dominance through its center-periphery power structure. The formation of this power structure can be viewed as a version of colonization, although its material wealth keeps people from realizing their lack of subjectivity. In reality, what Tokyo represents is cultural and linguistic chaos that may be comparable to postcolonial situations. In order to explore the struggles of the individuals caught in the middle of Tokyo’s chaos, I examine Murakami’s representation of Tokyo in *Sekai no owari to hādōboirudo wandārando* 世界の終わりとハードボイルドワンダーワンド (*Hardboiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, 1985) and *Noruwei no mori* ノルウェーの森 (*Norwegian Wood*, 1989).

### Internal Colonization in Pre-modern Japan

Since Meiji ki 明治期 (the Meiji period 1868–1912), Japan has embraced the West, and, not surprisingly, modern Japan has become a hybrid cultural space the symbol of which is Tokyo. Tokyo is a simulated cultural “situation” in which materialistic wealth is identified as freedom of choice and American cultural icons and English loan words are confused with cultural sophistication. Simultaneously, the construction of Tokyo has produced center-periphery differences between the capital and the rest of the country. This centralism, however, is not spontaneous. It is a result of the premodern feudal society. Furthermore, I identify the formation of feudal Japan (the Tokugawa 徳川 period) with that of an empire in which Edo 江戸 (pre-modern Tokyo) colonizes the rest of the nation economically, culturally, and later linguistically.

The formation of Edo-centeredness is comparable to Michel Hechter’s model of “internal colonialism” or “the political integration of culturally distinct groups by the core” that concerns existing inequality between the center (the core) and peripheral regions (Hechter 1999, 32–3). Although Hechter’s discussion is based on national development in Ireland, his idea is highly applicable to that of feudal Japan, in which peripheries become internal colonies and are exploited by the center. In the Tokugawa period, each fief was called *han* 藩 (clan) and remained autonomous by having its own administrative unit modeled after the structure of the Shogunate in Edo; however, autonomy of a fief was strictly controlled by the central regime (Kitagawa 1990, 135–6). Urban culture (consumer culture) flourished in Edo, while its economy relied heavily on the tax yield of the peasants on the peripheries.
Edward Said defines imperialism as “the practice, the theory and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory” and colonialism as “the implanting of settlements on distant territory,” which is a consequence of imperialism (Said 1993, 9). If we regard Edo as one nation, it can be contended that Tokugawa’s feudalistic centralism is the formation of an empire whose internal colonization was operated by Japan’s indigenous imperialism. Simultaneously, this analysis confirms that Japan’s imperialism already existed prior to its exposure to Western imperialism, and in this regard, Japan was already modern before its interaction with the West. This also supports the idea that Japan’s post-modernity is a cultural situation that can be theorized in the context of the postcolonial.

**Birth of the Nation, Birth of Tokyo**

In this section I discuss Japan’s modernization/Westernization as symbolized by the transformation of Edo into Tokyo, grounding my argument in the idea that Japan’s modernization/Westernization was promoted by its indigenous imperialism. Tokyo is a Japanese version of the West, and its cultural dominance is produced through self-Westernization, which I regard as self-colonialism. The construction of Tokyo reflects Japan’s acceptance of both Orientalism and Occidentalism. Tokyo-centeredness has been simulated by the state-system’s modern ideology of “Wakon Yōsai” 和魂洋才 (Japanese Soul, Western Talent). Moreover, during Japan’s rapid Westernization, as the Japanese began competing with the West as one people, nationalism was mingled with its indigenous imperialism. It was expanded into the desire to colonize other countries and became identical to Western imperialism.

Postwar Tokyo is a contact zone between Japan and the West and it is still the space for the state-system to realize its modern ideology of “Wakon Yosai.” This also means that Japan’s imperial energy continues to “modernize” the space by importing the West, Japanizing it, and then, distributing the Japanized-West (J-West) to the rest of the nation (and now even to the world including the West) via Tokyo. In addition, Tokyo-centeredness is established all the more through the emergence of the Tokyo accent as the standard Japanese accent, while imagined cultural unity is distributed through the Tokyo-controlled mass media.

**Tokyo as the Third Space Wonderland**

Tokyo-centeredness is actually cultural de-centeredness, which is similar to a postmodern condition of schizophrenia. Murakami regards this cultural condition as sterile for individuality, and in his works his characters struggle to find an exit from the city. In *Hardboiled Wonderland and the End of the*
World, Tokyo (the “Hardboiled Wonderland”) is depicted as a place without human freedom and the walled town (the “End of the World”) as a utopia for identity-less people. Both places represent Tokyo and, in a broader sense, Japan. While people are given an illusion of living and choosing, they are actually “mind-less.” The walled town’s perfection represents the shrewd control of the state-system; however, Murakami does not let the protagonist live as a contented person in the walled town. In fact, he is going to live in the woods with other exiles who still control their own minds.

I contrast Murakami’s Tokyo with Homi Bhabha’s idea of the “third space of enunciation” in terms of identity formation. While Bhabha presents his third space as a site of new identity formation, Murakami thinks that Tokyo is the place where individuality is denied. Moreover, Murakami suggests that Tokyo-centeredness itself is a simulacrum that one must overcome in order to attain his/her subjectivity. I read this novel as Murakami’s attempt to change the J-West from a place of ready-made identity to a border space. In this way, he remakes Tokyo as a productive site of new identity construction for those who refuse a ready-made identity. Thus the novel ends on a note of hopefulness, though the protagonist’s life ends in Tokyo.

Lost in Norwegian Wood

In Hardboiled Wonderland and the End of the World, Murakami uses a futuristic plot and magical realism to depict the maze-like aspect of Tokyo. In his realist novel, Norwegian Wood, he continues to depict Tokyo as a maze, in which his characters experience “disorientation” and struggle to find the exit. The protagonist, Watanabe and his girlfriend, Naoko, were born in Kobe, and now both attend college in Tokyo. Naoko makes it a habit to walk around Tokyo without any specific destination. After she has a nervous breakdown, she retreats from Tokyo into the special treatment facility, Ami ryō 阿美寮 (the Ami Hostel), in the suburbs of Kyoto. The Ami Hostel is a sort of utopia for those who cannot adjust to society. There, people seek healing by honestly verbalizing their feelings. By this means, Naoko finds peace. Despite this temporary respite, she eventually kills herself. She is a victim of the cultural chaos of modern Japan, and she suffers from a feeling of disorientation, which is the side effect of the media controlled self-colonization of the Japanese language. Symbolically, the Ami Hostel has no TV or radio. Murakami apparently contrasts the ancient capital, Kyoto, with the urban city, Tokyo. Kyoto’s urban design is as simple as a chess board, in which one can easily find the exit.

The novel is largely concerned with language. Naoko is the colonized who does not possess a language of her own. While Naoko is dominated by the junction between language and what it represents, the Tokyo girl, Midori, challenges the fixed meaning of language. Midori’s attitude seems
identical to the native’s resistance to the colonizer’s language. Watanabe’s dorm mate, Nagasawa, who represents the colonial elite, is depicted as a master of language who uses his excellent speech skills to seduce women. Watanabe speaks like a translation (or dubbed version) of Humphrey Bogart, and his linguistic habit can be interpreted as colonial mimicry that parodies the colonizer. In other words, he represents cultural hybridity, which is, for Murakami, sterile. If Watanabe chooses to have real communication with others, he must lose his Americanism, which is represented by Tokyo. In the last scene, Watanabe is not able to tell Midori where he is. What is significant is the fact that he is not able to say the word “Tokyo” or any proper names to indicate places in Tokyo. This also means that he discards the cultural hybridity of Tokyo. The ending, then, is as hopeful as that of Hardboiled Wonderland and the End of the World. In these works, Murakami asserts postwar Japan is still controlled by its imperialistic state-system. Both novels celebrate individuals’ detachment from the state-system, including its symbol (Tokyo) and its language.

Conclusion

In Japan, the “newness” (the West) entering its cultural space does not open up new space for identity formation. In its long modernization period, Japan keeps Japanizing the newness, and the West remains a reward for giving up individuality. In his works, Murakami presents Tokyo as a sign of modernity; however, his Tokyo is not a productive site for identity construction or communication. He reveals the communication deficiency among postwar Japanese who are thrown into Tokyo’s cultural as well as linguistic chaos created by the modern ideology. His protagonists must detach themselves from Tokyo when they seek their own language.

Murakami’s novels can be read as a kind of ethnography of modern Japan. Considering his popularity in Japan and Asia, Murakami is himself the medium of Tokyo culture. Murakami is often called an Americanized writer because of his open devotion to American culture and his allusions to American cultural icons (mostly by their proper names). By using American cultural icons to depict Japan’s urban space, Murakami demonstrates not only the level of penetration of American culture in Japan but also the level of Japanization (or to be more specific, Tokyozation) of America. All the more, his novels of Tokyo hybridity can be read as his striking back at Japan’s long lasting “post-war empire.”

References

Book Reviews


A decade ago, while living in Cardiff, Wales, I could easily walk from my flat to more than half a dozen Indian grocers, takeaways, and cafés – just along a single stretch of Salisbury Road near the university. One of my first kitchen implements, in fact, was a mortar and pestle: in the markets, bags of dried cardamom pods, whole cloves, coriander seeds, cumin seeds, and whole peppercorns, all priced for a song, begged to be bought and used. At the time, I undoubtedly genericized the “curries” that I created with my aromatic haul; and I also failed to question the scale of and reasons behind the Indian (likely Bangladeshi or Pakistani) presence in Cardiff. Today, in fact, curry is purportedly more popular than fish and chips as a takeaway food in the United Kingdom. In 2001, a former foreign secretary dubbed chicken tikka masala “a true British national dish” (36). But how did curry become so popular around the world, and how have its manifestations changed over time? These issues – and more – are taken up by Colleen Taylor Sen, whose *Curry: A Global History* offers a fascinating look into the origins of curry and its ubiquity around the globe today.

This small but information-dense hardback is part of the recently launched *Edible* series, edited by Andrew Smith, well known for his work on *The Oxford Companion to American Food and Drink*. Each book in the growing series – current titles include *Cheese*, *Sandwich*, and *Whiskey* – explores the global history of a particular food or drink. All are lavishly illustrated (*Curry* includes 49 photographs and illustrations, most in color, plus a map of India), and all focus on the ways people and cultures have given life to food or drink over time. In a sense, then, the books in the *Edible* series are “biographies” of food. Readers need only be interested in food and history to appreciate and learn from these works.

Sen, a writer who specializes in the food and foodways of India, takes advantage of the flexibility of the series to provide a brief introduction, eight chapters (averaging thirteen pages apiece), an appendix of both historical and contemporary recipes, notes, a select bibliography, Internet resources, and an index. Most chapters open with a quotation, many from poetry or song, demonstrating the far-reaching influences of curry. (The most telling quotation is from “Vindaloo,” the unofficial song of the Eng-
lish national team during the 1998 World Cup.) Opening chapters introduce curry and its colonial origins; later chapters tour curries of the world by region, exploring the effects of trade, conquest, colonialism, and modern-day immigration policies. Insights having to do with the historic flow of individuals (and their cuisines) are among the book’s most savory contributions. Merchants, missionaries, colonial administrators and their wives, slaves, indentured laborers, and immigrants are all actors in Sen’s story of curry.

The opening and closing chapters emphasize the ubiquity of curry, “the global dish par excellence” (14, 117). Noting that use of the word “curry” itself is not traditional in India, where dishes have more specific names, Sen traces the term to southern Indian languages, “where karil or kari denoted a spiced dish of sautéed vegetables and meat” (9). For the sake of simplicity, she does not further problematize the term, which Jo Monroe has referred to as a “disputed and inadequate catch-all for a vast and varied cuisine” (2004, ix). Rather, Sen offers an ecumenical definition that reflects how curry is conceptualized and used in cuisines around the world today. Sen’s broad definition includes not only stews of meat, fish, or vegetables intended to be served with a starch such as rice or bread, but also any wet or dry dish flavored with the spice blend known as curry powder. She explores the late eighteenth-century origins of this blend, which some purists shun as “inauthentic.” Behind both the invention of curry powder and the introduction of curry in Britain were wealthy “nabobs” of the East India Company who “tried to recapture something of their life in India after returning home” (37). Turning to the present, Sen surveys curry powders sold in the United States and United Kingdom to determine their most common ingredients. She discovers the following (roughly in order of frequency of appearance): ground turmeric, cumin, fenugreek, coriander, cloves, fennel seeds, ginger, garlic, red pepper, black pepper, curry leaves, cardamom, cinnamon, nutmeg, white pepper, chili, mustard seeds, and poppy seeds. (Many of these spices and seasonings, Sen points out in her final chapter, are presently being studied for their impressive antioxidant properties.) Sen’s investigation supports food historian Waverley Root’s description of curry powder as a “mixture of spices of infinite variety” (1980, 99).

According to Sen, colonialism disseminated populations and the taste for curry around the world with lasting legacies: over 40 percent of the inhabitants of Guyana, Fiji, Mauritius, and Trinidad and Tobago, for example, are of Indian origin. Many of their ancestors arrived in the nineteenth century as indentured workers to toil on the sugar, coffee, tea, and palm oil plantations of the British Empire after passage of the Slave Trade Act (1807) and Slavery Abolition Act (1833). Terms ended with either free passage home or a parcel of land in the colony; most chose the latter. Earlier, the spice trade had brought Indians, Arabs, and eventually the Portuguese and Dutch into contact with the cultures of Southeast Asia, where many of
the spices used in curry are indigenous. European settlements along the coast of Africa resulted in additional East–West cultural exchange – including the exchange of curry ingredients and recipes.

In places, Sen’s presentation reads like a historiography of cookbooks or other food-related writings. Granted, one way of knowing what was popular (or at least known) in cuisines of the not-so-distant past – especially in much of the West – involves consulting the major cookery books of the times: in Victorian England, for example, the cookbooks of Eliza Acton (1845) and Isabella Beeton (1861) devoted entire chapters to curry. The earliest curry recipe Sen sites in the appendix comes from Abu al-Fazl ibn Mubarak (1551–1602), vizier of the Mughal emperor Akbar the Great (r. 1556–1605); it includes meat, onions, clarified butter, pepper, cumin seeds, coriander seeds, cardamom, cloves, and salt. Sen points out that this dish, a type of dopiaska (“[having] two onions”), remains a staple of north Indian cuisine.

The book’s brevity is both a strength and weakness. Portioned into easily digestible chapters, the book is a mere introduction to a complex topic; some readers will surely turn to works in the notes and bibliography for more detail. Sen often abridges history (though never fatally, at least as far as her main argument goes). The noble attempt to offer such a brief “global history” necessitates that some countries or regions receive only passing comment: China, for example, gets a mere three sentences; Scandinavia, two. Southeast Asia, though, has its own chapter; and the kare raisu (curry rice) of Japan receives due treatment as well. (But do not believe that tonkatsu – breaded, fried pork cutlet – is “often” served with kare raisu in Japan. Sometimes, yes. But that dish is usually referred to as kare katsu.) The brevity also makes spelling errors or inconsistencies more conspicuous (especially of Romanized words or names). Sen occasionally uses a term, such as rijstaffel, before defining it, and she also presumes readers will be familiar with the term memsahib. But these blemishes, like the errors in three of the eleven URLs presented in the book, are minor – and are likely of a kind to be noticed (and mentioned) only by a former editor.

In short, Sen’s introduction to the culture and history of curry is a tantalizing reminder that the roots of globalization lie deeper than we likely realize. Trade, conquest, colonialism, and migration have disseminated food cultures for centuries with the spices of curry – and the resultant curries – now appearing in cuisines around the world.

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Notes

1From a speech quoted in Monroe (2004, 136).
2I borrow this idea from Collingham (2005), also cited by Sen.
3See Gump (2006) for a review of Sen’s Food Culture in India (Westport, CT: Green-
4Curry leaves, an optional ingredient in curries and curry powder, come from a
small, fragrant shrub (Murraya koenigii) related to citrus that grows wild in South and
Southeast Asia.
5A rijstaffel is an Indonesian-style banquet still popular in the Netherlands – and al-
though four spelling permutations are allowed in English, the term is nevertheless mis-
spelled in the index. A mesasih, from Hindi, is a term of respect for a married Euro-
pean woman.

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237–41.
Wiley & Sons.


The search for good, authentic Chinese food is more challenging than ever
as Chinese buffets continue to replace more traditional eateries. The restau-
ranteurs whom I know believe that it is easier to run a Chinese restaurant
that caters to Americans than one that caters to Chinese-Americans, who
represent a smaller and pickier population. The latter naturally disdain
Chinese buffet fare, which does not remotely resemble the food they knew
in China or remember being served in their mothers’ kitchens. The popu-
ularity of the Chinese buffet is a mixed blessing: on the one hand, it brings
Chinese food to a wide and diverse audience, but on the other, it completely
misrepresents Chinese food, one of the oldest, most varied, and most so-
phisticated culinary traditions in the world.

Andrew Coe’s book Chop Suey presents a comprehensive account of
American’s fond and sometimes nervous relationship with Chinese food
and roots this evolving relationship in economic, cultural, and societal de-
velopments, as well as in the social history of Chinese immigrants. The
book begins with America’s first encounter with Chinese food all the way
back in the eighteenth century, when American sailors first arrived in
China. It then relates the story of the arrival of Chinese food in America in the nineteenth century, its migration from the West to the East coast in the early twentieth century, and its metamorphosis into the popular hybrid cuisine of Chinese-American franchises like P.F. Chang's in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The book is well written, lively, and frequently humorous. Social historians will be interested, but so will travelers stranded in airports. Coe’s is a rare book that functions as both serious scholarship and accessible entertainment.

The book opens with the voyage of the *Empress of China*, which set sail from New York in February 1784, hoping to trade silver and ginseng “for the tea, silks, and porcelain of China” (2). The “canny but narrow-minded New England traders” became, only in a certain sense, the first Americans to taste Chinese food: they primarily ate Western foods prepared by Chinese cooks (8). Samuel Shaw (1754–94), one of the ship’s passengers, had a chance to dine at the house of a local merchant, but the European guests wound up bringing their own food because, as Coe says, they “couldn’t stomach” the local menu (14). Over the next fifty years, visitors to China grew no more comfortable with the local cuisine. Coe quotes Samuel Wells Williams, a missionary whose remarks on Chinese food were published in the monthly journal *Chinese Repository* in 1835:

> The universal use of oil, not always the sweetest or purest, and of onions, in their dishes, together with the habitual neglect of their persons, causes an odor, almost insufferable to a European, and which is well characterized by Ellis [whoever he may be], as the “repose of putrefied garlic on a much used blanket.” The dishes, when brought on the table, are almost destitute of seasoning, taste, flavor, or anything else by which one can be distinguished from another; all are alike insipid and greasy to the palate of the foreigner.” (35)

These early globe trotters frequently mention, whether accurately or inaccurately, the eating of rats and dogs, which suggests their unease. “Birds nests” also figure largely in accounts, early and late, testifying to the ingredient’s endurance as a symbol of everything exotic and weird about Chinese food. Despite their politically incorrect disdain for Chinese food, these early accounts are filled with humor, personality, and detailed observation, and they provide some of the most amusing reading in the book.

Chapter three traces the development of Chinese food and its cultural meaning over a period of some three or four thousand years. This survey is succinct but clear and focused. The inexperienced will find it a good introduction to Chinese social history. Chapters four to seven – the core of the book – detail the development of Chinese food in America, beginning with the Chinese opportunists who arrived on the West coast in the mid-nineteenth century, drawn by the Gold Rush. The Chinese food they brought with them did not impress the American palette. “I went to the
restaurant weak and hungry; but I found the one universal odor and flavor soon destroyed all appetite...,” remarked newspaperman Samuel Bowles, after attending a banquet of between twelve and 136 courses (reports vary) that brought American officials and Chinese merchants together in San Francisco in 1865 (106). Dislike of the Chinese, not to mention their food, eventually led to discriminatory laws that expelled Chinese from West Coast cities in the late 1870s. These laws anticipated the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the Geary Act of 1892, which restricted Chinese immigration and curtailed Chinese residents’ recourse to the courts. This explains why Chinese food stagnated and then petered out on the West Coast, and why it wound up being reborn on the East Coast.

Chapters five and six trace the spread of Chinese food from New York throughout the East Coast and Mid-West from the 1880s to the 1940s, centering on the dish favored by New York bohemians, who were the first American devotees of Chinese food. The dish – alleged to be the national dish of China – was chop suey, “a toothsome stew, composed of bean sprouts, chicken’s gizzards and livers, calf’s tripe, dragon fish, dried and imported from China, pork, chicken, and various other ingredients which I was unable to make out,” in the description of journalist Allan Forman, who sampled the dish at a Chinese restaurant in Chatham Square, New York, in 1886 (158). The fame of chop suey was enhanced after Li Hongzhang 李鴻章, the viceroy of Zhili, Hebe province, and the “best hope for strengthening and modernizing China,” visited New York in 1896. He brought with him a retinue of imperial chefs; the newspapers particularly mentioned chop suey being served, perhaps because it was the only dish they knew (161). Chapter seven traces the development of Chinese food in America from World War II to the present and particularly dwells on Peking duck’s emergence as the new icon of Chinese cuisine, in place of chop suey. According to Coe, Peking duck, and Chinese food generally, received a boost in 1972, when President Nixon visited China. A live broadcast showed him managing to eat Peking duck with chopsticks with amazed commentary provided by Barbara Walters and Dan Rather. Nixon, unfortunately, was a meat and potatoes man – a cottage cheese man while dieting – and presumably failed to relish the experience.

Coe not only explains the rise of Chinese food in America by emphasizing its appeal as “cheap, filling, familiar, and bland,” but also dwells on the impact of economic, social, and political events — the voyage of the Empress of China; the imperial commissioner Qiyin’s 藁英 visit to Macau in 1844, in the wake of the Opium War; Li Hongzhang’s visit to America; the unsolved murder of Elsie Sigel by a Chinese man in 1909, sensationaly dubbed “Chinatown Trunk Mystery”; and President Nixon’s visit to China. This makes for entertainingly anecdotal reading and good social history, but in some cases one doubts the strict causation between public spectacle
and private consumption. By the time Nixon had his close encounter with Peking duck, Chinese food was presumably already on its way to becoming a national cuisine, and it would undoubtedly have maintained its trajectory with or without Nixon’s help. Do people really notice the menus that grease the gears of diplomacy? Do they care what politicians eat? George H.W. Bush made of show of relishing fried pork rinds, and yet these remain a stubbornly regional pleasure.

Perhaps distracted by his focus on high-profile encounters between East and West, Coe omits to mention several lower-profile phenomena of Chinese food in America — the inevitable after-dinner fortune cookie, the appearance of packaged Chinese foods in mainstream supermarkets, the popularity of dim sum, the decline of Cantonese cuisine as a dominant influence and point of reference, and the emergence of the omnipresent Chinese buffets that have become the public face and symbol of Chinese food over the last twenty years. The neglect of the buffet phenomenon, which has largely transformed Chinese food into a cheap and ubiquitous fast food to compete with burgers and pizza, is particularly striking. It represents a big hole in Coe’s cultural history, but it also creates a pretext for a welcome second edition.

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It was a stormy, windy night in early June 1993 when two National Parks policemen were patrolling a desolate beach in the Rockaway section of Queens, New York. They looked out over the pounding surf and saw what looked like a huge cargo ship that had run aground on a sandbar a few hundred yards from land. When they ran onto the beach, they saw dozens of people jumping off the ship and trying desperately to make it to shore. The policemen radioed for help and jumped into the water to save the evacuees, many of whom did not know how to swim and were drowning in the frigid surf. When the rescue operation was complete, it became clear that the ship, the Golden Venture, had transported 286 illegal Chinese immigrants with the goal of smuggling them into the United States. Ten died, while the survivors, malnourished, dehydrated, and penniless, were arrested and imprisoned.

Investigative reporter and Guggenheim Fellow Patrick Radden Keefe opens his recent book, The Snakehead, with this shocking event, which
made headlines throughout the world. Keefe starts with the incident because it cracked the lid on a huge Chinese human-smuggling network that has brought hundreds of thousands of illegal Chinese immigrants to the United States in recent decades.

The modern Chinese diaspora, which began in the mid-1800s, has seen tens of millions of Chinese emigrate to Southeast Asia, North and South America, and Europe. The most recent destination has been the United States. In 1960 there were only 236,000 Chinese in America, but by 1990 that number had swelled to 1.6 million — and is much higher two decades later. The United States received nearly three million immigrants since the 1970s, ten times the number received by the next twelve nations combined. Many of these immigrants, most of them illegal, are from China’s impoverished southern Fujian Province. The flow of illegal Chinese immigrants rose to as many as 50,000 per year during the 1980s and 1990s.

Keefe’s new book is a fascinating, detailed investigation into the world of “snakeheads,” Chinese organized-crime figures whose illicit operations sneak undocumented Chinese immigrants into the United States. We meet “snakeheads,” Chinese gang members and other underworld figures, the immigrants themselves, and the INS and FBI investigators whose job is to track them down. We are shocked to learn, however, that some of the American investigators have in fact made very profitable deals with the very crime figures they are trying to apprehend. There is a vast amount of profit to be made in this illicit trade since each illegal has to pay up to $30,000 for transit from China to the United States. Human smuggling ranks second only to heroin as a major international crime problem.

The book’s central character is Cheng Chui Ping (AKA Sister Ping), who has been the most successful snakehead for nearly two decades. Operating from her variety store and restaurant in New York City’s Chinatown, “Sister Ping” loans money to immigrants and sells money transfers. She has also smuggled thousands of Chinese into the U.S. at $18,000 to $30,000 each, turning human suffering and the lure of the American Dream into a multimillion-dollar empire. The Golden Venture tragedy was the beginning of Sister Ping’s downfall.

Keefe notes grudgingly that “Sister Ping” is regarded as a hero by many in Chinese communities in the United States and in her native land, having helped so many thousands of Chinese find their way to America. She is regarded as a latter-day Robin Hood or a modern Harriet Tubman “who risked imprisonment to shepherd her countrymen to freedom.” Keefe counters:

[T]he notion of Sister Ping as some sort of heroic figure is a disingenuous canard, and these accounts tend to elide the vast quantities of money Sister Ping charged for her services, the homicidal thugs she hired, and the many nameless dead who perished as a direct result of her reckless devotion to the econo-
mies of scale. There may be some respects in which Sister Ping is a morally complicated person. She may be a person who has managed, however incidentally, to do a lot of good. But she is not a good person. (326)

_The Snakehead_ is slightly marred by the occasional needless tangent and by deluges of information that distract from the main narrative. At the same time, it provides badly needed background information on the history of Chinese immigration in America. The writing is clear, the depth of research is commendable, and the pace is suited to a mystery thriller. All in all, Keefe maintains a commendable fairness and objectivity while telling a fascinating story which few people know anything about.

DANIEL A. MÉTRAUX
Mary Baldwin College


Chinese women enjoy considerable liberties today. They are educated, free to embark on their own careers, and may marry anyone they wish — or choose not to marry at all. Although there is evidence that many Chinese men receive preferential treatment in hiring and education, women in China have come a great distance over the past several generations. Gone are the days when the old custom of foot binding would condemn a woman, especially those from good families, to a painful, literally hobbled life. A woman’s status and beauty were often measured by the small size of her feet and only peasant girls who labored in the fields had normal-sized feet. The practice was outlawed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) over six decades ago when they defeated the Nationalists and created the People’s Republic of China.

The abolition of foot binding was one of several measures adopted by the new regime to enhance the status of Chinese women. While liberation for most Chinese women occurred only after the success of the Revolution, women played a major role within the CCP from its inception in the early 1920s. Their enhanced status is evident in the role that a group of thirty women played in the historic Long March of 1934 and 1935. Dean King’s recent book, _Unbound: A True Story of War, Love, and Survival_, tells their story: the story of women who joined the Communist crusade in the late 1920s and 1930s and who dedicated their lives to the early Communist revolution. King portrays not only their struggle to support the desperate attempt of the Chinese “Red” Army to escape Nationalist and other enemy forces, but also their former lives of servitude, poverty, arranged marriage, and bound feet.
The story of the Long March is well known. The 86,000-man Red Army, surrounded in southeastern China by perhaps as many as a million Nationalist troops, broke through enemy lines and began a heroic 4,000-mile march to the safety of northwestern China. Only a few thousand marchers survived the ordeal through treacherous terrain, constant attacks by Nationalist and other forces, and terrible weather. King’s focused account sees the march through the eyes of these women — a diverse group that included Ma Yixiang, 11, a peasant girl sold by her family; Jin “Ah Jin” Weiying, 30, a college-educated teacher who became active in the Chinese labor movement; and Zhou “Young Orchid” Shaolan, 17, a nurse who refused to be left behind when the army tried to send her home. We see the march from their perspective — their heroic work to nurse injured men back to health, their romantic attachments, their pregnancies, the several babies born on the march (whom they had to leave behind), and their later involvement in CCP politics. The women recall romantic attachments, political awakenings, and service in the army and later in Communist politics.

Dean King, who spent years researching this book and interviewed scores of Chinese historians and march survivors, presents a fascinating view not only of the Long March itself, but also of the role of women in the early years of the Communist movement. The author offers a very graphic picture of the day-to-day hardships and struggle to survive. We see thousands of marchers die either in battle or from illness and fatigue. We meet the various, often hostile, people the marchers encountered en route. King, more than any other writer, recaptures the drama and flavor of this momentous time in Chinese history. King concludes his work by describing the lives of the heroic women who survived and who ironically lost their status as heroes during the horrors of the Cultural Revolution of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Unbound is a must-read for any student of modern Chinese history and ranks with Edgar Snow’s Red Star Over China (1939) as one of the classic narratives of the early days of the CCP.

DANIEL A. MÉTRAUX
Mary Baldwin College


This co-authored book is a personal account of the life of one of the authors, San San Tin, in modern Burma. Her co-author, Carolyn Wakeman, was the director of the Asia Pacific Project and is a professor emerita at the Graduate School of Journalism at the University of California–Berkeley. She is
the co-author of *To the Storm: The Odyssey of a Revolutionary Chinese Woman* and *Bitter Winds: A Memoir of My Years in China’s Gulag*, as well as the co-editor of *Assignment Shanghai: Photographs on the Eve of Revolution*. The book balances accounts of Tin’s family life and her career as a journalist. She was greatly influenced by her father, Ba Tin, a successful businessman who rebelled against British colonialism and spent time in jail for his beliefs. Even as a little girl, she dreamed of being a journalist. She fulfilled this aspiration, finally becoming a broadcaster for Radio Free Asia, a published poet, and the author of *A Greener World: Introduction to the Environment* (in Burmese). She also served on the editorial staff of the *New Light of Burma* newspaper and as translator for several UNICEF projects in Rangoon. Finally, she was, for a short time, a businesswoman.

This personal account of one person’s life in Burma is written for anyone who is interested in how a journalist manages his/her role, particularly in an atmosphere of heavy censorship. Tin also shows how the challenges of being a writer in a repressive environment must be balanced with the need to protect one’s family and friends to the greatest extent possible. As we learn, Tin continued to write poetry for private journals while working as a full-time journalist. She balanced her desire to write freely with her need to remain employed in order to help support her family and avoid arrest. She talks about how she carefully tailored stories in order to slip them by the censoring committee yet still presented a point of view somewhat counter to the government’s position. Tin portrays the challenge inherent in working with various editors and how she navigated each of these relationships. She relates the challenges of taking on assignments that she knew would be heavily censored and would basically function as government propaganda, in order to keep her job and to continue to write. She describes how some of her associates appreciated the fact that she was working for “change from within,” while others could not understand how she maintained her sense of professional ethics. She struggled with different aspects of each of the challenges during the nearly forty years of her life covered in the book.

The authors weave politics and history into the narrative, but only as they affect one person’s life and career; there is no attempt at a careful analysis of Burmese affairs. The authors do describe the arrests, censorship, curfews, beatings, repeated closing of universities, and the punishment of those who participated in the political struggles of the day. Several of Tin’s acquaintances were arrested and jailed and she was very conscious of the imminent danger of arrest. The book also pays close attention to issues of gender. Tin speaks of her pay, marriage prospects, job assignments, and family support role often through a lens of gender, thereby illustrating the life of professional women during these four decades.

Tin’s account of her life is written against the backdrop of the story of Burma. The book contains colorful details about her family’s daily life in
Rangoon. She describes touching relationships within her circle of family and friends and the challenges of living under social, political, cultural, economic, gender, and religious pressures. She discusses how her mother attempted to save her children from the fate of their father; how she discouraged her children, for example, from involving themselves in demonstrations and urged them to keep their jobs. She relates how several of her fellow students and later her friends were arrested and sent to labor camps, and she recalls the periodic closing of the universities in response to political demonstrations and violence. Her interesting descriptions of the role of tea shops as places to meet with friends and colleagues contrast with the role of the tea shop as a place to gather information and discuss current events.

The co-author’s infusion of her poetry throughout the book lends an interesting flavor to the text. In one particularly poignant section, the authors allude to a Burmese saying that “describes someone with hidden strength or ability as an ash-covered cinder ready to ignite” (155). Tin had written a poem about this. The censoring board considered the poem revolutionary, and it was never published. The co-author includes this poem in the book (155–6):

```
unhappy
in this world
for a long time

people may say
an ash-covered spark
will flare again

but long buried embers
turn to cinders
as time passes

tomorrow is not
a fairytale
and waiting
to live brings
sharpening pain

before the blood dries
one longs
for happiness
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The poetry throughout the book exemplifies the need to continue to write in spite of circumstances and challenges. It also depicts the challenge of
writing poetry in a restrictive, censored environment while still attempting to capture the audience’s attention and say what needs to be said.

This book is a vivid description of Tin’s attempt to navigate a difficult professional and personal life in an environment that not only does not support her goals but also almost restricts her every move. Tin chose a career in journalism when it was not easy to be a journalist in Burma. In spite of the milieu in which she found herself, she continued to write however and wherever she could. She never abandoned her dream of being a journalist.

LINDA M. JOHNSTON
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Only a few years after the death of Soong Mayling 宋美齡 in 2003, two biographies appeared in English to chart her eventful life. These joined two recent biographies of her husband, Chiang Kai-shek. Laura Tyson Li’s 2006 Madame Chiang Kai-shek: China’s Eternal First Lady and Hannah Pakula’s 2009 The Last Empress: Madame Chiang Kai-shek and the Birth of Modern China both make the case for her pivotal role in the history of China in the twentieth century and in shaping the American perception of her homeland.

Neither author is an academic historian; each writes for a general audience. Pakula has written well-received biographies of Queen Marie of Romania and of Empress Frederick of Prussia, the mother of Kaiser Wilhelm. Li, a journalist fluent in Chinese, has lived in Asia, writing for the Economist, South China Morning Post, and Financial Times.

Perhaps because she herself is a newcomer to Chinese history, Pakula provides her reader with an extensive “back story,” beginning with the Opium Wars and ranging forward to the death of Chiang Kai-shek; the book could be described as a political history of modern China in which Soong makes frequent appearances but is offstage much of the time. Pakula includes a totally irrelevant but sensational description of the castration of eunuchs for service in the Forbidden City, complete with a full frontal nude photograph, and an account of the probable sexual encounter by which Cixi 慈禧, originally just another of the emperor’s many concubines, began her rise to the position of Empress Dowager and last effective ruler of the Qing dynasty. (This might have been relevant had Pakula ever com-
pared Soong to Cixi, but she does not make that comparison). Pakula also makes some factual errors. For instance, the popular writer Lu Xun was not buried alive by the Generalissimo’s men — he died of lung disease in 1936. (Pakula has misunderstood her source, a passage in Edgar Snow’s *Journey to the Beginning*, which would indeed be unclear to anyone unfamiliar with Lu Xun or the thirties in China.) Japanese assets in the U.S. were frozen in 1941, not 1940. Li, by contrast, is more familiar with modern Chinese history and keeps her narrative focused on Soong Mayling as events unfold in the over one hundred years of her life. As a result, Li’s book is considerably the shorter of the two.

Both biographies begin with the story of Charlie Soong, tracking his self-transformation from Chinese peasant boy to American-educated, Christian businessman living in Shanghai. Soong was successful enough to send his three daughters, including the future Madame Chiang, to the United States for their education. Both books depict Soong as somewhat at sea after graduating from Wellesley and returning to China. She sought some form of meaningful activity after the intellectual excitement of college and life in America. (The plight of college-educated, middle-class American women like Jane Addams a generation earlier comes to mind.) She found – or made – a career for herself by marrying Chiang Kai-shek in December, 1927, a marriage that endured through the Anti-Japanese War, the civil war between the Nationalists and Communists, and exile on Taiwan. As she remains focused on Soong, Li gives a clearer account of the personal life and career of Chiang Kai-shek. Li pays more heed to the personal relationship of the Chiangs and describes Soong as “blissfully happy and fulfilled” in the first years of her marriage. Pakula provides far more information on the career of Chiang Kai-shek, though her portrait of him is unsympathetic. Though he hardly comes off well in Li’s pages, Chiang does appear more human and thus Soong’s affection and devotion are more understandable. Neither Pakula nor Li reach any final conclusion in the matter of Chiang Kai-shek’s sterility, commonly rumored but confounded by the report of a miscarriage Soong may or may not have suffered. Pakula considers such a pregnancy unlikely; Li does not question it. Li, however, makes clear Soong’s love of children and the pain of her barrenness, detailing her work with “warphans” during the war and in Taiwan and her role as *mater familias* at extended family dinners in her later years. Li also takes more seriously both Soong’s Christianity and the sincerity of her husband’s conversion. In contrast, Pakula refers to a “Christian veneer” applied to a Confucian soul — but the two are scarcely incompatible.

Soong’s importance and visibility at the center of Nationalist politics began with her role in the resolution of the Xi’an Incident in December 1936. Military subordinates took Chiang Kai-shek hostage and refused to release him until he agreed to end his prosecution of “bandit suppression”
campaigns against the Communists and form a united front against further Japanese encroachment in North China. Soong’s importance in the negotiations emerges most clearly in Li’s pages. After the Marco Polo Bridge Incident of 1937, American aid became crucial. Both Pakula and Li make clear Soong’s importance as a translator and interpreter of things American to the generalissimo, and of things Chinese to the Americans. In Pakula’s opinion, she “rarely translated anything he said or was said to him without changing and/or softening both the words and their meaning.” Li notes that by early 1941, Soong was serving as a conduit of communication between Chiang Kai-shek and Roosevelt, thus bypassing the State Department. She was heavily involved in championing the “victory through air power” theories of Claire Chennault and also deeply involved in the complex personal politics of the Stilwell command in China and in the postwar Marshall Mission. Li’s accounts of these are clearer. Both books detail Soong’s triumphal visit to the United States during the war, when she became the embodiment of wartime China for Americans, as well as her role as his intermediary with the American government on that and subsequent visits. Li makes a strong case for Soong’s key role in igniting the anti-communist witch hunts of the McCarthy era by actively backing the China Lobby after the “loss” of China to Mao Zedong in 1949.

Both Pakula and Li describe the vast web of corruption in which the Soong-Kung clans were enmeshed during the war, when American aid presented large-scale opportunities. The eldest Soong sister Ai-ling 蔣藹齡, wife of H.H. Kung 孔祥熙, comes out the worst in both accounts. Both books describe Chiang Kai-shek living spartanly but turning a blind eye to his subordinates and in-laws, while Madame Chiang was living very well indeed, particularly on U.S. visits, and actively protecting her family, particularly her sister’s children. Li in particular stresses the strength of her unquestioning loyalty to her family and its cost to the Nationalist regime.

The years of exile in Taiwan saw Madame Chiang become increasingly out of touch with political reality. Both Pakula and Li report that in a meeting with Douglas MacArthur, visiting from Japan in 1950 just after the North Korean invasion of South Korea, the Chiangs floated the idea of Soong heading a guerrilla force to be sent back to the mainland. Her influence over her husband and her role in his government was considerably diminished in Taiwan as the role of her stepson Chiang Ching-kuo 蔣經 expanded and as her trips to the United States became more frequent. She was increasingly bitter over what she saw as America’s abandonment of its own interests by refusing to “unleash” the Nationalists to retake the mainland — an effort she seems to have believed might succeed, if only American aid were forthcoming. The ultimate betrayal was the opening of direct relations between the U.S. and the People’s Republic, beginning in 1972 (Et tu, Nixon!). Ironically, Jay Taylor’s recent biography of her hus-
band, *The Generalissimo* (2009), makes the case that the years in Taiwan were good ones for Chiang, at least while he remained in reasonable health. He created a disciplined military force, minimized corruption (it helped that his in-laws were in the U.S.), presided over a land reform program that jump-started Taiwan’s industrialization, and eased the transfer of power to his son, Chiang Ching-kuo. Chiang Kai-shek seemingly moved a bit to the center, while his wife moved to the right. A few years after Chiang’s death in 1975, she moved to the U.S., seeking the comfort of her family, which was no longer welcome in either Taiwan or the mainland.

Li and Pakula document the unending series of illnesses that plagued Soong throughout her life, including a painful and evidently hereditary skin condition (hence the genuine need for those infamous silk sheets at the White House), depression, serious automobile accident injuries, and various nervous ailments. Li concludes that she was an “episodic if not a chronic substance abuser.” And yet Soong managed to live and live quite well, to the age of 105, finally dying in 2003. Pakula ends her story with an account of a memorial service for Madame Chiang at a Park Avenue church. Li, for her part, provides a valuable epilogue with a thoughtful summary analysis of her career and historical significance. She considers her a tragic figure who “failed in the rare opportunity she was given to transform her country.”

Interestingly, neither Pakula nor Li draw attention to the traditional way in which Soong rose to power and operated as a string-puller “behind the throne.” Li and Pakula might have compared Madame Chiang to the Manchu Dowager Empress Cixi, though there is an important difference as well: unlike influential imperial wives and mothers in dynastic times, Madame Chiang thrust herself forward, even insisting on being included in group portraits with the Big Three at the Cairo Conference during World War II. Nor does either author compare her to Jiang Qing 江青, wife of Chiang’s rival Mao Zedong 毛泽东, who was prevented by the Politburo from playing a public role in the first decades of her marriage but who eventually used her status as wife of the chairman to play a key role in the Cultural Revolution, to China’s detriment.

*Madame Chiang Kai-shek* and *The Last Empress* are well-written, well-documented accounts of a woman who was a major and much-admired world figure, but Li’s book provides greater insight into Soong’s life and leaves the reader wishing it had been possible to know her. The general reader will find both books accessible, but Asianists will find Laura Tyson Li’s book the more rewarding.

Charlotte Beahan

*Murray State University*

Harriet Evans’ new book explores how the transformation of gender practices and representations over the past half century have shaped Chinese women’s lives and self-identifications. Evans studies the intimate aspects of their lives as daughters and mothers in their respective experiences of separation, communication, domestic and public worlds, difference and male privilege, the body and filiality. The author treats mothers and daughters as constructs within specific historical and discursive contexts. Her subjects are two cohorts of Beijing-based academic and professional women from different social and family backgrounds — those who grew up in the 1950s and 1960s and those who grew up in the economic reform era. Evans argues that gender difference and discrimination were constructed and performed in diverse forms across time and that Chinese women both sustained and contested gender discrimination in understanding themselves as gendered subjects.

Evans investigates how family separations of various forms – physical, spatial, temporal – imposed by the Communist party-state affected the lives of daughters and mothers in chapter two. She finds that women who grew up in the 1950s and 1960s had memories of their mothers absent from home due to work and political demands, as well as to their embracing the intellectual, social and travel opportunities offered them for self-fulfillment. Evans notes that daughters’ memories of separation from their mothers “speak of a yearning for a kind of attachment they had not experienced” (42). Their desire for recognition from their mothers is shown to be crucial to their self-identification. In doing what the state expected of them, their mothers were caught between their own aspirations for public achievement and the requirements of marriage and motherhood. Their exhaustion and frustrations made them “impatient, stern and difficult mothers unable to connect to their daughters” (50). Evans reports that daughters of the reform era found their mothers “figures of a comfortable dependability and support” (55), anticipating separation from the mother as a “feature of growing up as independent women” (56).

Evans explores daughters’ affective attachments to their mothers in chapter three by analyzing younger women’s desire to have a special bond of communication (*goutong* 沟通) with their mothers. She finds that such a communicative bond involves both a sense of connectedness to the mother and the desire for the mother to recognize the daughter. Evans notes that the discourse of individual expression and communicative intimacy that gained prominence throughout the late 1990s offered daughters the language to describe their changing relationships with their mothers. They described their growing emotional bonds with their mothers as “a source of
mutual recognition, difference, and attachment” (84). Mothers of the reform era also desired to establish a communicative relationship with their daughters “based on recognition of their independent views, desires, and choices” (90). The author also points out that daughters’ sense of connectedness to their mothers and the growing intimacy between mothers and daughters “derived from a notion of shared gender” (95).

In chapter four, the author studies how women’s perceptions of their mothers’ negotiation of the domestic/public (nei/\wai 内/外) boundaries influenced their own gendered aspirations. She finds that the domestic sphere remained a core element of Chinese women’s self-positioning, though the meaning and practices of the nei shifted across the political and social spheres during the past half century. She argues that the Communist government’s policies on gender equality and female employment in the 1950s were motivated by economic interests, which accorded women’s conventional domestic roles with ideological disdain and praised women’s productive roles in society. In this situation, women’s traditional identity was sustained, but these policies “denied recognition and appropriate support” to women who opted for householding (108). Women who grew up in the 1950s believed that a woman should be a wife and mother, and yet have an independent professional life. Evans notes that under the changed economic and cultural circumstances of the reform era, young urban women’s independence in professional life gave them the autonomy to make decisions about their personal lives. They explored pre-marital cohabitation and wrestled with whether to marry and have children, and they reconfigured their identification with the domestic sphere.

In chapter five, Evans analyzes how women conceptualized gender difference and gender discrimination through the mother-daughter relationship. She argues that mothers educated their daughters in inconsistent “gendered possibilities and expectations that reaffirmed male privileges at the same time as they contested it” (141). She finds that Chinese women grew up with a keen awareness of the different value placed on boys and girls, such that their independence was constrained by disadvantages in the home, school, workplace, and society. Some women learned to deal with such open disadvantages by insisting on their own self-worth and by considering themselves equal competitors with their male peers.

Evans investigates the gender differences in chapter six and finds that the tight regulation of sexuality in the 1950s led mothers to construct sex “as a source of anxiety, fear, and danger” (145). Those mothers educated their daughters on the moral purpose of their bodies, naturalized the biological body as the basis of gendered difference, and confirmed “their embedded status in the ‘natural order’ of sex and gender hierarchy” (146). Daughters challenged their mothers’ understandings about the natural vulnerabilities of the female body by reading banned novels and having secret
conversations. Evans notes that changing ideas about femininity and masculinity in the 1990s and emergent social and media spaces provided young women opportunities to redefine and explore their bodies. They experimented with different sexual relationships such as pre-marital cohabitation and lesbian relationships and questioned the status of the natural sexed body.

In chapter seven, Evans investigates the changes in the way daughters expressed their filiality. She defines filiality as “modes of caring, responsibility and affection as aspects of the ‘special bonds’ of recognition between daughters and mothers” (170). She notes that for older Chinese women, marriage was defined “as much as by reproduction and filiality as by conjugalcy” (179). Traditional filiality meant having a child in order to continue their husbands’ family lines and to fulfill their responsibilities to their in-laws. Evans argues that the contemporary Chinese culture understands marriage as a crucial means of personal and individual satisfaction, while the distinction between marriage and reproduction legitimizes young women’s aspirations and choices. While some young women decide not to marry or have children after they get married, most young women desire to have a child, at least in part to fulfill their mothers’ desire for a grandchild.

While The Subject of Gender tackles important issues in gender studies and demonstrates superb analytical skills, the work could benefit from the addition of illustrations and images from popular media since the topic of mother-daughter relationship remains a favorite topic and is constantly constructed by films, TV series, literature and popular songs in contemporary China.

Yuxin Ma
University of Louisville


If the Chinese government desires to engage the West by soft power, it could hardly do better than by turning to China’s own philosophical and religious traditions. The Daodejing (Taoteching) 道德經 has long been a repository of traditional Chinese values like deference, virtue, wisdom, peace, and efficacious governance, and it has provided a psychophysical practice designed to transform consciousness. Since the nineteenth century, the West has shown time and time again an avid interest in the Daodejing. It has been translated more than two hundred times, making it the most frequently translated text in Chinese literature. Red Pine’s revised edition of
this ancient Chinese classic is a welcome addition to our ongoing love affair with this extraordinary document.

Red Pine is the literary signature of Bill Porter, an Asian scholar who has translated Buddhist classics such as Pu Ming’s 普明 Oxherding Pictures and Verses (1983), The Zen Teaching of Bodhidharma (1987), The Diamond Sutra (2001), and The Heart Sutra (2004). He has also been a faithful translator of Chinese Buddhist poetry including The Zen Works of Stonehouse (1999), The Collected Songs of Cold Mountain (2000), and most recently In Such Hard Times: The Poetry of Wei Ying-wu (2009). Porter has more recently brought out a revised edition of his translation of Daodejing under the auspices of Copper Canyon Press. Not only does Copper Canyon Press produce handsome editions, but its pressmark is also the Chinese character for poetry, which Porter translates as “from the heart.”

The occasion for the revised edition was the discovery of the Guodian manuscripts in 1993. These three bundles “unearthed in a tomb near the village of Guodian in Hupei province . . . have been dated to 300 B.C.E.,” by far the earliest known copy of this seminal Daoist book. In personal correspondence with the author, Porter states that “The Kuotien [Guodian] texts simply gave me an excuse to revisit my translation. My previous publisher [Mercury House] had let the book go out of print, and my new publisher was willing to indulge a revised translation. That’s really the only reason [for this new edition]. The Kuotien texts did prompt me to make some changes, several of which were significant. But for the most part, it was remarkable how little variation there was with the previous editions, whether the Mawangdui 馬王堆 or Fuyi 傅奕 or the standard versions.”

The uniqueness of Porter’s edition, however, does not lie in comparisons between versions of the text but in Porter’s use of excerpts from China’s vast commentarial tradition. This is not a new move for Porter, who has included substantial amounts of commentary in his previously published translations of Buddhist texts. What is notable about this translation is the range, in terms of both historical era and perspective, of sources that Porter has culled from China’s rich history. He cites both well-known and lesser known figures spanning 2500 years. He includes Daoist figures such as Wenzi 文子, author of the Daoist text of the same name, who was reputed to have been a disciple of Laozi himself; Zhang Daoling 張道陵 (34–157), who was known as “Patriarch of the Way of the Celestial Masters,” that is, as the leader of the earliest known Daoist movement; Cheng Xuanying 成玄英 (Fl. 647–63), Daoist master of the seventh century; and Wang Bi 王弼 (226–49). In addition to these early Daoist commentators, Porter turns to later figures including Ming Taizu 明太祖, founder of the Ming Dynasty; Ma Xulun 马敘倫 (1884–1970), a nineteenth-century minister of education; and Chu Chianzhi 朱謙之 (1899–1972), a twentieth-
century classical scholar. His inclusion of non-Daoist figures such as Kumarajiva, Deqing 德清 (1546–1623), and Confucius not only encourages interesting comparative readings of the *Daodejing*, but also indicates the importance of this text to other Chinese traditions. It is a well-established fact that by the Song Dynasty one could hardly separate the various strands that today comprise Chinese culture: Daoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism.

Porter does not stop at textual commentaries. He also includes inscriptions from steles respectively carved in the second year of the Jingfu era 景福 (893) and in the second year of the Jinglong era 景龍 (708), both at Longxing Temple 龍興寺 in Yizhou 易州. Excerpts from well-known classical Daoist texts like *Zhuangzi* 莊子 and *Liezi* 列子 are also included, as are excerpts from lesser known texts such as the shamanic *Book of Mountains and Waters* (Shanhai jing 山海經) and the *Book of the Western Ascension* (Xisheng jing 西昇經). Porter also alludes to non-Daoist texts like the *Internal Treatise of the Yellow Emperor* (Huangdi neijing 黃帝內經), *Mozi* 墨子, *Mencius*, and the Confucian classic the *Great Learning* (Daxue 大學).

The commentaries themselves appear alongside each chapter of the *Daodejing*, and range from explanatory to exegetical. An example of the former is Deqing’s explanation of the opening storm imagery of chapter 23: “Lao-tzu [Laozi] uses wind and rainstorms as metaphors for the outbursts of those who love to argue” (47). An example of the latter is Wu Cheng’s 吳澄 interpretation of the Taoist emphasis on directing consciousness inward rather than outward: “Desiring external things harms our bodies. Sages nourish their breath by filling their stomach, not by chasing material objects to please their eyes. Hence, they choose internal reality over external illusion” (25). The inclusion of these excerpts deepens the reader’s understanding of both the exoteric and esoteric dimensions of this classic work of Chinese spirituality.

Translators and commentators in the West have particularly struggled to explicate the esoteric aspects of the text. Livia Kohn is an obvious exception, but the rule has been either to let the poems stand on their own (which is not in itself contrary to either the spirit of the text or to Daoism generally) or to gloss the texts with interesting, creative, and at times profound philosophical commentary, as in the case of Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall’s *Daodejing: Making this Life Significant* (2003). Porter sets about his translation by explicitly uncovering *Daodejing’s* spiritual depths.

*Daodejing’s* spiritual message largely concerns the “dark virtue” the sage keeps hidden. In bringing out this aspect of the text, Porter counters the notion that the emphasis on darkness is strictly a late Han interpretation that originates with the Daoist master Wang Bi. As chapter 51 suggests, Dark virtue is non-coercive action: the Way “doesn’t possess what it begets.
or depend on what it develops / or control what it raises” (102). Dark Virtue is the active dimension of life elicited by cultivating the primordial event that precedes discrimination between subject and object. Effectiveness in cultivation of the primordial unity, then, is Dark Union. Porter observes that “the Daodejing continues to inspire millions of Chinese as a spiritual text. And I have tried to present it in that dark light” (xiii). Part of the darkness, the hiddenness of Daodejing’s teachings, involves the incommunicability of deep forms of experience, of teachings that go beyond words, and of activity that eschews both direct and indirect forms of coercion.

Scholars have long associated this classical Daoist text with the older shamanic tradition(s) in southern China. Porter tries to bring this dimension of the document to light as well. In addition to the esoteric aspects of shamanism, including the efficacious uses of prophetic dreams, visions, and healing, Porter ties the shamanic dimensions of the text to yogic practices and the cultivation of vitality. Most translations tend to collapse vitality into “qi” 氣, but Porter allows for at least three aspects of vitality in his reading of the text. Wang Pang 王雱 (1044–76) notes in his commentary on chapter ten that “life requires three things: vital essence, breath, and spirit” (20). An interesting insight into the cultivation practices is revealed in chapter 32, in which Porter tells us that the phrase “sweet dew” (甘露) “refers to the saliva produced during meditation by pressing the tongue against the roof of the mouth” (65). Despite the emphases of Porter’s translation, we still do not have a Daodejing that reveals the various practices in an exoteric way. Perhaps this is due to Daoism’s emphasis on the student-teacher relationship. In this traditional complementarity, student and teacher develop technologies of transformation that serve the immediate needs of both. The text, in such a relationship, simply serves the student as a study resource and is not meant to encompass the entire practice.

The above emphases usefully expand our understanding of Daodejing as a spiritual text, but they do not overshadow the more traditional readings of the text as a depiction of what life can be as a counter-discourse to the extraordinary violence of the Warring States period from which the text emerged. On the contrary, excavating the spiritual layers of the text allows for a stronger reading of “governance” as referring not only to political governance by the emperor and his ministers, but also the governance of one’s own mind-body activities and one’s relationships generally across the spectrum of living things. Furthermore, there is much in Daodejing that bears on the questions of war and peace. Porter does not gloss over this important emphasis, going so far as to note, in his brief commentary on chapter 76, “How different our world would be if our leaders spent as much time in their gardens as they do in their war rooms” (153). Porter’s interpretations
do not conflict with established readings of Daodejing, but are a welcome addition to them.

While Porter’s revised version is exceptional in the above respects, there are some weaknesses. Porter’s inclusion of brief notes about each commentator is excellent, but we do not have a bibliography to help admirers of the text who would like to turn to the original sources, either in Chinese or English, for full commentaries. Also lacking, in contrast to Porter’s earlier translations and commentaries on Buddhist texts, is any sustained reading of the book’s chapters. Instead, he allows the vast weight of interpretation to rest on the selected commentaries. Given Porter’s deep readings of The Diamond Sutra and The Heart Sutra, it would be nice to hear what he has to say about this foundational Daoist text.

TOM PYNN
Kennesaw State University


The story of Chinese painting in the twentieth century has all the elements of a great tale. Unfortunately, the tale has been told only partially – very partially – in English. Even giants languish in low profile, receiving brief nods in dynasty-hopping surveys and fuller treatment only in obscure exhibition catalogues. Scholars like Michael Sullivan, Jerome Silbergeld, and Julia F. Andrews have done more than their share, but the usual army of academic exegetes has yet to muster.

Clarissa von Spee’s Wu Hufan: A Twentieth Century Art Connoisseur in Shanghai is a knowledgeable and useful contribution to the lacunae-riddled field. It is the first book in English to address the life and work of Wu Hufan 吳湖帆 (1894–1968), a painter, scholar, and collector of rare refinement who ran afoul of the twentieth century and wound up a suicide of the Cultural Revolution. The book includes a useful biographical sketch and a textual study of colophons that Wu and others added to eight celebrated works of art and calligraphy, but Spee does not quote satisfy the interest she piques at every turn. Too much the academic, she tends to work at the margins of the essential man, combing the literal marginalia of a life that seems to beg for more dramatic and emotionally engaged treatment.

Born during the waning years of dynastic China, Wu was the scion of a prominent Suzhou family. Generations had served as civil and military officials while heeding the more fundamental calling of an exquisite connoisseurship. Wu’s most prominent relation was his paternal grand-uncle, Wu Dacheng 吳大澂 (1835–1902), a Qing official and respected scholar of wide-
ranging artistic and historical interests. Childless and facing lineal extinction, the old man arranged to adopt his brother’s grandson. Wu was nurtured in all the literati graces and groomed to inherit – rather, to be worthy of inheriting – a pair of illustrious art collections. One belonged to his grand-uncle, the other to his maternal grandfather, Shen Shuyang 沈樹鏞 (1832–73), who had been grand secretary under the Tongzhi 同治 emperor. Wu added to his embarrassment of artistic riches in 1915, when he married Pan Jingshu 潘靜淑 (1892–1939), whose dowry included numerous important art works that had belonged to her uncle Pan Zuyin 潘祖蔭 (1830–90).

As it turned out, Wu was perfectly suited to his role as trustee of the family artistic tradition. Educated at his father’s school and tutored by family friends like Lu Hui 陸恢 (1851–1920) and Gu Linshi 顧麟士 (1865–1930), both important painters, Wu developed into an ambitious, shrewd collector, a formidable scholar, and an estimable painter in strictly traditional styles. His wife describes him at age twenty-one, bent day and night over his calligraphy and paintings, refusing to suspend his lucubrations even to sleep or eat.

Wu relocated to Shanghai in 1924 and became a leading figure in the city’s kaleidoscopic cultural renaissance. Thoroughly in his element amid the city’s hum of brainwork, Wu collected, inspected, consulted, painted, critiqued, organized, edited, and hobnobbed, earning his living, piecemeal, in the process. Particularly formative were his activities as a member of the committee that selected works from the imperial collection for exhibition in London in 1935 and 1936. Grueling months of microscopic inspection sharpened Wu’s already gimlet eye and solidified his reputation as an aesthetic authority. Further keeping himself busy, he mentored the young C.C. Wang (1906–2003), who became an influential painter, collector, and dealer after emigrating to New York in 1949; helped Wang and the German Sinologist Victoria Contag (1906–73) prepare their monumental encyclopedia of seals; and participated in several influential artistic societies, rubbing shoulders with luminaries like Zhang Daqian 張大千 (1899–1983) and Huang Binhong 黃賓虹 (see “Huang Binhong’s Unruly Pastoral,” pp. 164–70).

In 1949, the communist era arrived in all its flattening, erasing zeal. Despite the pleading of his close friend Zhang, who had escaped to Hong Kong, Wu remained in China for reasons that Spee does not detail. As one whose entire life was defined by the intrinsic elitism of connoisseurship, he became immediately suspect. Stripped of land and income, he spent the 1950s and 1960s discreetly peddling his scholarly and artistic services while attempting to find a place within the communist bureaucracy. In these dire straits, Wu had little choice but to liquidate his great collection; as Spee notes, he “gradually sold off works of art in order to support his family and pay taxes. Furthermore, museum officials and the Committee for Cultural Affairs . . . systematically approached private collectors and encouraged
them to give their art treasures to the public” (42). During these years, Wu’s fortunes rose and fell as the regime vacillated between liberalization and repression, but the Cultural Revolution was a minefield he had no chance of navigating. Nobody could have been a more perfect emblem of everything the revolution meant to expunge. The climax of indignity occurred in 1966, when Red Guards looted Wu’s house and carted off what was left of his property. The anguish of the scene is terrible to imagine: the great man an impotent, stunned witness; all his priceless things exposed to rough hands, perhaps laid on the dusty ground; all become a mere “post the passing dogs defile,” in Yeats’ words. His health already diminished by a stroke, Wu suffered a nervous breakdown. While hospitalized, he detached himself from his life-support system, ending a life that had distilled the transformations and cataclysms of an era.

Grafting so much private poignancy upon so much public calamity, Wu’s life deserves a nineteenth-century novel. Spee is regrettably untempted by this dramatic potential. She dispatches her biographical sketch and turns to the question of the colophon, conducting case studies of eight works, most of which were once part of Wu’s collection. Each study includes discussion of the artist, discussion of the work’s transmission, and both discussion and translation of colophons inscribed by Wu and other critic-collectors. The attempt is to show how Wu “challenged and extended the aesthetic and social dimension of the colophon genre” (14), but the execution tilts toward transcription and summary more than creative interpretation. If they do not much alter our conceptualization of the colophon, these case studies do translate and annotate texts that frame some very important paintings, including Whiling Away the Summer (Xiaoxia tu 銷夏圖) by Liu Guandao 劉貫道 (ca. 1279–1300) and Surviving Mountain (Shengshan tu 剩山圖) by Huang Gongwang 黃公望 (1268–1354). Spee’s research makes these paintings more accessible to the language-hampered student of Chinese art, while underscoring the crucial comprehension that Chinese painting is open ended, accretive, and collaborative, and only poorly understood by analogy to the static and self-contained monuments of Western art.

While conscientious and knowledgeable, Wu Hufan is likely to prompt certain quibbles. In terms of general approach, the book misses the opportunity of its own primacy — the opportunity to plunge headlong into a vast expanse of near-virgin intellectual territory. Without overly trespassing on the work of others, it might have immersed itself in the headiness of protomodern Shanghai and its vibrant artistic coteries; mulled the meaning of Wu’s lovely, defiantly belated painting; and eavesdropped on the literati mind as it contemplated its own extinction. Spee briefly touches on Wu’s 1965 painting Celebrating the Success of Our Atomic Explosion (Yuanzidan baozha 原子彈爆炸), for example, but declines to pursue the implications of this gorgeous, menacing, ambiguous, ironic, perverse, and anomalous mas-
terpiece (fig. 1). What combination of inspiration and desperation explains it, we wonder — with what wounds does it bleed? Spee likewise alludes to Wu’s professional partnership with his wife Pan Jingshu, a writer and artist in her own right. Again, we pine for elaboration. Certain feminist narratives might have been at once exemplified and complicated; a curious and moving love story might have been reanimated for posterity. Finally, Spee’s book regularly betrays its doctoral origin. This is discernible in a nervous self-explanatory tendency, a fussiness of section and sub-section that disrupts the flow of narrative, and a steady flow of typos, dangling modifiers, and idiomatic lapses (“Moreover, in the early 1930s the first director of the Palace Museum, Yi Peiqi, was accused to have exchanged original paintings of the imperial collection with copies”).

These quibbles, however, are merely quibbles. On its own terms, as written rather than as it might have been written, Wu Hufan: A Twentieth Century Art Connoisseur in Shanghai creates a foothold where there was none. Others, hopefully, will make use of it.

David A. Ross

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Program of the 49TH SEC/AAS Annual Meeting

Sponsored by the University of Louisville
Held at the Brown Hotel, Louisville, Kentucky
January 15–17, 2010

Friday, January 15

3:00 PM – 8:00 PM     Registration
4:00 PM – 6:00 PM     Executive Committee Meeting
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM     Reception & Keynote Speaker: “Confucian Holism and the Moral Imagination,” ROGER AMES (University of Hawai‘i)

Saturday, January 16

8:00 AM – 5:00 PM     Registration & Book Display
8:30 AM – 9:45 AM      Session I (Panels 1–4)
9:45 AM – 10:00 AM     Break
10:00 AM – 11:45 AM    Session II (Panels 5–8)
12:00 PM – 2:15 PM     Luncheon & Business Meeting, DANIEL A. MÉTRAUX (Mary Baldwin College), SEC/AAS president, presiding

2:15 PM – 2:30 PM     Break
2:30 PM – 4:15 PM      Session III (Panels 9–12)
4:15 PM – 4:30 PM      Break
4:30 PM – 5:45 PM      Presidential Address: “Religionization and the Reshaping of Asia’s Religious Pluralism,” ROBERT HEFNER (Boston University), president, Association for Asian Studies

Sunday, January 17

7:30 AM – 8:30 AM     Executive Committee Meeting
8:00 AM – 11:00 AM    Registration & Book Display
8:30 AM – 10:15 AM    Session IV (Panels 13–16)
10:15 AM – 10:30 AM    Break
10:30 AM – 12:15 PM    Session V (Panels 17–21)
Panels

1. **Chinese Political Culture**
   - CHARLOTTE BEAHAN (Murray State University), Chair
   - DANIEL COYLE (Birmingham-Southern College), “Revaluing the Zonghengjia 縦横家: Undercurrents in Chinese Thought”
   - SUZANNE RENEE SIMPSON (Eckerd College), “Seeds of Immortality: Daoist Use of Sesame in Early Medieval China”
   - YUXIN MA (University of Louisville), “Between the Banking Elite and the Socialist State: Ren Fengbao’s Family Letters”
   - JING JAY LI (Duquesne University), “Lin vs. Deng: Personal Outlooks and National Directions”

2. **Japanese Literature & Arts**
   - MASAMICHI INOUE (University of Kentucky), Chair
   - CHERYL CROWLEY (Emory University), “Blooming on the Wayside: Women and Poetry in Japan’s Early Modern Period”
   - MASAMICHI INOUE (University of Kentucky), “Beyond the Okinawa Initiative: Cocco’s Musical Intervention into the U.S. Base Problems”
   - TAKUSHI ODAGIRI (Stanford University), “Japanese Film”

3. **Roger Ames’s Work in Chinese Philosophy**
   - SHIPING HUA (University of Louisville), Chair
   - HUAIYU WANG (Georgia College & State University), “Poesy vs. Democracy: Reflections on Ames’s Pragmatic Interpretation of Confucianism”
   - STEVEN GEISZ (University of Tampa), “Confucian Role Ethics and Individualism”
   - TOM PYNN (Kennesaw State University), “Roger T. Ames’ Praxiology of Efficacy: Daoist Contributions toward a Comprehensive Philosophy of Peace”
   - ROGER AMES (University of Hawai‘i), “Response to the Three Scholars”

4. **Democratization of East Asia (I)**
   - DANIEL A. MÉTRAUX (Mary Baldwin College), Chair
   - SARAH DAVIS (University of Louisville), “Comparing the Democratization of East Asia and South Africa”
   - WENDY MATSUMURA (Furman University), “The Miyako Island Peasantry Movement and the Transformation of Okinawan Community”
   - JAMES MCKIERNAN III (University of Louisville), “China v. United States: Has Democratization and the 1982 Constitution Led to a Similar Court System?”
   - DANIEL A. MÉTRAUX (Mary Baldwin College), “The Nagayama Criteria for Assessing the Death Penalty in Japan; Reflections by one of the Suspects in the Case”

5. **Democratization of East Asia (II)**
   - JANET TAN (Taiwan National Chengchi University), Chair
   - JANET TAN (Taiwan National Chengchi University), “Democratization in East Asia: A Young Democracy in Taiwan”
CHIN-SHOU WANG (National Cheng Kung University), “Democratization and Judicial Independent Reform in Taiwan”

CATHERINE PHIPPS (University of Memphis), “Between Democracy and Imperialism: The Open Ports Movement, Treaty Revision, and Empire-Building, 1896–1899”


6. Asian Political Culture
GINGER DENTON (University of Mississippi), Chair
GINGER DENTON (University of Mississippi), “Modes of Political Participation in Asia: Verba and Nie Revisited”
CALEB SIMMONS (University of Florida), “Constructing Religion in an Imagined Asia”
KHUN ENG KUAH-PEARCE (Hong Kong University), “The Reach of Democratic Ideals through Buddhist Philanthropic Acts in Asia”
JIANHUA ZHAO (University of Louisville), “Party Construction in Chinese Family Firms: A Case Study from Zhejiang”

7. Politics & Modernity in Southeast Asia: Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos
JASON ABBOTT (University of Surrey), Chair
JASON ABBOTT (University of Surrey), “Electoral Authoritarianism and the Print media in Malaysia: Measuring Political Partisanship”

8. Chinese Art & Politics
LAWRENCE CHANG (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), Chair
YUXIN MA (University of Louisville), Discussant
LAWRENCE CHANG (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), “Soft Power of the Qing State during the Qianlong Period”
YUNYOUNG HUR (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), “Discovering New Powers of Fiction in the Late Qing Period: Revisiting Liang Qichao’s Views on Fiction”
HUANG-LAN SU (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), “Novel Selection and the Content of Ziyou tan in Shen Bao from 1932–1935”
JINGMIN ZHANG (University of Maryland at College Park), “Chinese Palace Painting in Modern Japanese Art”

9. Beyond Context: Chinese Painting & Illustration
LI-LING HSIAO (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), Chair
DAVID A. ROSS (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), “Alarm in the Night: Lin Fengmian’s Speeding Birds in Western Context”
ALEXANDER WILLE (Washington University in Saint Louis), “‘Spirit of the Deep Sands’: Understanding Sha Wujing in the Illustration of Xiyou ji”
JING ZHANG (New College of Florida), “Framing Narratives: Illustrations of Reading in Some Chongzhen Fiction”

LI-LING HSIAO (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), “Beyond Words: Color Stationery and Letter Writing in Min Qiji’s Illustration of Xixiang ji”

10. Japanese Culture & Society
MASAKO N. RACEL (Kennesaw State University), Chair
MASAKO N. RACEL (Kennesaw State University), “Ryōsai Kenbo [Good Wives, Wise Mothers] and Victorian Womanhood: Shimoda Utako’s View of the West”
RICHARD RICE (University of Tennessee at Chattanooga), “The Role of the Identity Museum in Presenting Ainu Culture”
PETER A. WELDON (University of California, Los Angeles), “The Effects of the 2004 Reforms on Japanese Higher Education: Faculty Perspectives”
KAZUO YAGAMI (Savannah State University), “Chalmers Johnson and the Role of Japanese Bureaucracy in Economy”

11. Politics in South & Southeast Asia
BENJAMIN REILLY (Johns Hopkins University), Chair
STEVEN NAPIER (University of Cincinnati), “Political Development and Education in India”
MAHBUBUR RAHMAN (York College of the City University of New York), “Consensus Building and the Quest for Consolidation of Democracy in Bangladesh”
JUNGGU CHOI (University of Louisville & Konkuk University), “District Magnitude, Social Diversity and Indonesia’s Party System”
LAI YEE LEONG (Southern Methodist University), “Ideological Adaptability and the Role of Islamic Groups in Indonesia’s Democratization”

12. Politics in Northeast Asia
LEO J. DAUGHERTY (United States Army), Chair
COURTNEY SUIRE (University of Louisville), “North Korea: A Viable State in the Twenty-first Century?”
LEO J. DAUGHERTY (United States Army), “U.S. Naval Strategy and North Korea: Limited Means versus Significant Ends”
DAVID NELSON (Austin Peay State University), “Creating Japan’s Imperialist Image: Colonial City Building in Formosa and Manchuria”
JASON SMITH (University of Louisville), “China and Russia in the Twenty-first Century: Can the Dragon and the Bear Remain Friends?”

13. Southeast Review of Asian Studies (SERAS) Editorial Meeting
STEVEN E. GUMP (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), Chair

14. Environment & Politics of China
DENISE HO (University of Kentucky), Chair
JAMES WOLF YOXALL (Mary Baldwin College), “China’s Environmental Issues and Their Effects on Her Under-privileged Children/Orphans”

NGHIA KHAC NGUYEN (National Cheng Kung University), “China’s Strategies towards Southeast Asia: An Eclectic and Interdisciplinary Perspective”

15. East Asian Culture & Society
DELIN LAI (University of Louisville), Chair
KELLY KAHMANN (University of Kentucky), “Evidence of Artistic Transfer in Northeast Asia: Korean Goryeo Inlaid Celadons and Liao Three-color Glazed Ware”
DELIN LAI (University of Louisville), “Translation: A Strategy for Modernizing Chinese Architecture”
XUE XIN LIU (Spelman College), “Cross the Borders: The Hip Hop Influence on the Chinese Youth Culture”
E. LESLIE WILLIAMS (Clemson University), “Early Ming Dynasty Health Principles for Long Life”

16. East Asian Education
EDDIE MCGEE (Ohio University), Chair
M.A. MCCOY, LUCIEN ELLINGTON, RONALD KALAFSKY (University of Tennessee at Chattanooga) & ALAN WHITEHEAD (White Station High School), “East Asia in Geography and World History: Pedagogy and Assessment” (Outreach Session)

17. East Asian Literature & Politics
ZENG LI (University of Louisville), Chair
ZHANG ZHENJUN (St. Lawrence University), “Two Models of Goddess Depictions in Medieval Chinese Literature”
YIPENG SHENG (College of the Holy Cross), “Orientalism, Passions under Gaze, and Chinese Leitmotif Film in the 1990s: A Case Study of Grief over the Yellow River”
DO HYUN HAN (Academy of Korean Studies), “Civic Engagement or Community Engagement in Modern Korea”

18. Literary Democracy: Diversity of the Contemporary Chinese Literary Scene
HARRY KUOSHU (Furman University), Chair
HONGBING ZHANG (Fayetteville State University), “Feminizing the Communist Message: Women and the Communist Male Spy in Qianfu”
HARRY KUOSHU (Furman University), “Waiting for Derrida, in Bed: Jiu Dan, Uncanny, and the Chinese Literary Scene”
DONGMING ZHANG, “Chinese Chivalrous Romance”
MATTHEW WELLS (University of Kentucky), “Seeing is Believing: Faith, Doubt, and Narrative in Ge Hong’s Baopuzi neipian”
19. **Asian Societies & the Outside World**

**MAY DU** *(Western Kentucky University)*, Chair

**JAMES A. ANDERSON** *(University of North Carolina at Greensboro)*, “Using Han Ways to Rule Non-Han Peoples: Sinitic Political Culture in the Frontier Administration of the Dali and Dai Viet Kingdoms”

**NATALIA STAROSTINA** *(Young Harris College)*, “The Harbingers of the Civilizing Mission or the Suppliers of Human Flesh? French Railway Engineers in Asia in French Fiction”

**IRIS L. ACEJO** *(Cardiff University)*, “Governance from Abroad: The Role of Transnational Linkages in the Politics of Decision-Making among Temporary Migrants”

**JINGMIN ZHANG** *(University of Maryland at College Park)*, “Chinese Palace Painting in Modern Japanese Art”

20. **The Tension between the Self & Society in East Asia**

**NATALSHA C. VAUBEL** *(Indiana University)*, Chair

**NATALSHA C. VAUBEL** *(Indiana University)*, “Inscribing ‘The Wisdom to Survive the Dark’: A Critical Response to the Survivalist Literature of Ōta Yōko”

**JU YOUNG JIN** *(Indiana University)*, “A Spy Who Came from Within: Divided Nation, Divided Subjects in Kim Young-Ha’s *Empire of Lights*”

**CLAIRE CHEN** *(Indiana University)*, “The Hidden and the Silent Subject: Rejection and Revision in Eileen Chang’s *The Little Reunion*”

21. **The Peasantry and Modernization: The Agrarian Question in Contemporary China**

**JANE HAYWARD** *(New York University)*, Chair

**MARK LAFFEY** *(School of Oriental and African Studies)*, “China’s Agrarian Question and the Internationalization of the State”

**JANE HAYWARD** *(New York University)*, “The New Model Peasant in China’s Urban Industrialization”

**QIAN ZHU** *(New York University)*, “Understanding the Everyday Life of Female Migrant Workers: A Historical Perspective”

**ROBERT WORKS** *(University of Louisville)*, “Chinese Modernization and Political International and Civilian Organizations: The Development of a New China”
Acknowledgments

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  McConnell Center
Minutes of the 49th Annual Business Meeting of the SEC/AAS

Southeast Conference of the Association for Asian Studies
Brown Hotel, Louisville, Kentucky
Saturday, January 16, 2010

These preliminary minutes are subject to approval at the 50th Annual Meeting in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, in January 2011.

President Daniel A. Métraux called the meeting to order at 12:10 PM in the Gallery Ballroom of the Brown Hotel and introduced Dr. Shirley Wilhingan, the provost of the University of Louisville. Dr. Wilhingan welcomed the SEC to Louisville and spoke about the role of the Center for Asian Democracy at her institution. Local Arrangements and Program Chair Shiping Hua announced that the featured speaker, U.S. Senator Mitch McConnell, had been unexpectedly called back to Washington, DC, due to the Haitian crisis and asked us to begin our meal.

At 12:20 PM, President Métraux called the meeting back to order and expressed his appreciation of Program Chair Hua and the Center for Asian Democracy. He commended Hua as a magician who had quickly solved every new problem and who had done the work of both the local arrangements chair and program chair, a first for our organization. Hua introduced his staff: Stacey Schoen, Adria Schwarber, and Christian Potter (all of the University of Louisville). President Métraux introduced the SEC Executive Committee, beginning with Vice-President Cheryl Crowley, and expressed his appreciation for the work of the SEC webmaster, Kenneth W. Berger, who was not in attendance.

The minutes of the 2009 Annual Business Meeting at Emory University, which had been placed on the luncheon tables, were accepted without changes.

Program Chair Hua reported on local arrangements and the conference program. There were seventy-eight presenters; very few had dropped out. The program budget was well into the black in spite of the national economic turndown. Three travel awards were granted; the winners were asked to track down the secretary-treasurer to collect their checks.

Vice-President Crowley announced the candidates for election to SEC Executive Committee. Senior Member-at-Large Harry Kuoshu was the sole
candidate for vice president, but there was space on the ballots that had been distributed for write-in candidates. James Yoxall (Mary Baldwin College) and Wan-Li Ho (Emory University) had volunteered to stand for the position first-year member-at-large. Vice-President Crowley reminded the audience of that afternoon’s address by AAS President Robert Hefner (Boston University).

Council of Conferences Representative Susan Walcott reported on the Council on Conferences meeting, which took place prior to the 2009 AAS meeting in Chicago. The AAS leadership is trying to encourage better attendance at its various presentations and more press coverage for nationally known keynote speakers. The AAS’s 2010 meeting will be held in Philadelphia and the 2011 meeting in Honolulu. The AAS will continue to select a panel for the national meeting from among the winners of the graduate paper competitions held by the regional conferences.

Steven E. Gump, SERAS editor, presented his final report. President Métraux noted that in thirty-one years SERAS had evolved from a small, in-house publication to a regional journal with many attributes of a national journal, and he urged all to contribute. President Métraux remarked that during Gump’s three-year editorship the quality of the journal had increased annually, and he asked all to recognize the quality of his work. Editor Gump in turn thanked all who had contributed to SERAS and the Academy of Korean Studies for its generous subvention for the 2009 issue. He asked all members to urge their home institutions to consider support for a themed issue. All present who had contributed in any way to SERAS during the previous thirty-one years were asked to stand. He then introduced his successors: Li-Ling Hsiao, associate professor of Asian Studies at UNC-Chapel Hill, with degrees from Taiwan University and Oxford University, and David A. Ross, lecturer in English and Comparative Literature at UNC-Chapel Hill, with degrees from Yale University and Oxford University. Editor-elect Ross expressed the hope that he and Professor Hsiao could live up to the high standards that Editor Gump had set, and he said that they had already benefitted enormously from his expertise. Editor-elect Hsiao spoke of the appointment as a great honor but reminded the audience that the ultimate success of SERAS depends on SEC member participation. Past Past President Mark Ravina urged those who have written successful grants to consider assisting SERAS. He said that agencies are looking for inexpensive projects with short-term outcomes and that the Academy for Korean Studies had been very happy with the results of its grant to SERAS. He expressed thanks to the new editors, to Editor Gump, and to President Métraux, a former editor.

Discussing the treasurer’s report, which had been previously distributed, Secretary-Treasurer Charlotte Beahan noted that the previous two issues of SERAS had been partly funded by grants from the Academy for
Korean Studies and Emory University and that the journal remained fiscally healthy. She said that dues remain the biggest source of SEC income and that a number of presenters on the 2010 program had yet to pay the dues that were required in order to appear on the program. The auditors, Richard Rice (University of Tennessee at Chattanooga) and Lucien Ellington (University of Tennessee at Chattanooga), reported that they had found no fault with the SEC books. The secretary–treasurer’s report was accepted by the body.

Past President James T. Gillam called attention to a lack of entrants for this year’s graduate and undergraduate student paper prizes. In response, the SEC Executive Committee had voted to loosen the submission requirements. Papers written during the spring and fall semesters of 2009 and during the spring semester of 2010 (or the equivalent in quarters) would now be eligible. The last date by which a paper could be submitted to an instructor and still be eligible would be May 1, 2010.

Lucien Ellington, editor of Education about Asia, asked all present who had contributed to the publication to stand. He pointed out that this included Roger Ames (Friday night’s keynote speaker), the program chair, the SEC president, and the AAS president. He solicited manuscripts for upcoming issues and stated that the journal needs both individual and institutional subscribers. Ellington said that he had become editor of Key Issues in Asian Studies, a series of eighty-page pamphlets on Asia for survey-level college classes and advanced high-school classes. Issues have included caste in India, and South Asia in Early World History, while an upcoming issue will look at popular culture in Japan.

Vice-President Crowley announced that the 50th annual meeting of the SEC will most likely be held in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, under the sponsorship of UNC–Chapel Hill, pending a final dean’s approval. Editor-elect Hsiao indicated that a UNC volunteer had stepped forward for the position of local arrangements chair.

Vice-President Crowley announced the results of the SEC Executive Committee Meeting. Senior Member-at-Large Kuoshu had been elected vice president, and in a tight race, Wan-li Ho had emerged as the new first-year at-large member. Vice-President Crowley announced that Eric Reinders (Emory University) had agreed to serve as 2011 program chair.

President M étroix called for announcements from the floor. Secretary–Treasurer Beahan reported the death of Derek Waller, a retired professor of Asian political science and associate dean at Vanderbilt University, long-term member of the SEC, and her predecessor as SEC secretary-treasurer. President M é troix called him a great scholar and asked us to cherish his work and his life.

President M é troix adjourned the meeting at 1:45 PM.
SEC/AAS Executive Committee, 2010–2011

President           CHERYL A. CROWLEY
                   Emory University

Vice President      HARRY KUOSHU
                   Furman University

Past President      DANIEL A. MÉTRAUX
                   Mary Baldwin College

Past Past President  JAMES T. GILLAM
                   Spelman College

Secretary–Treasurer  CHARLOTTE BEAHAN
                   Murray State University

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Senior Member-at-Large  TOM PYNN
                   Kennesaw State University

Second-Year Member-at-Large  XUEXIN LIU
                   Spelman College

First-Year Member-at-Large  WANLI HO
                   Emory University

2010 Program Chair  JAN BARDSLY
                   University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

2010 Local Arrangements Chair  WEI-CHENG LIN
                   University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Council of Conferences Representative  SUSAN WALCOTT
                   University of North Carolina at Greensboro

SERAS Editors       LI-LING HSIAO
                   DAVID A. ROSS
                   University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
In Memory of Professor Derek John Waller, 1937–2009

CHARLOTTE BEAHAN
Murray State University

Professor Derek John Waller, professor of political science emeritus at Vanderbilt, died at age seventy-two on December 31, 2009, in Sewanee, Tennessee, from pancreatic cancer. He was a long-time member of the Southeast Conference, serving as its president (1991–2), secretary–treasurer (1993–2001) and program chair (1987–8).

Professor Waller was born in Coventry, England, in 1937 and spent the war years in London. He received his undergraduate training at the London School of Economics and went on to earn a master’s degree from Indiana University and a Ph.D. from London University’s School of Oriental and African Studies. He taught at Vanderbilt University in the Political Science Department for over thirty years, directing its East Asian Studies program and developing the Vanderbilt International Studies Program in London. He also served as an associate dean.

Derek never lost his British accent or his British sense of humor — his SEC presentations were always standing room only, applauded for both his scholarly wisdom and his dry wit. He retired from Vanderbilt in 2000, but continued to moonlight as owner of Marco Polo Books, selling antiquarian works on Central Asia. He also took up several volunteer tasks at the University of the South and in Sewanee. He and his wife Gayle McKeen, a political scientist at the University of the South, built a lovely home in the woods in Clifftops on the Cumberland Plateau where they lived with their beloved dog, Fitzhugh, when they were not traveling the world.

Among Professor Waller’s publications are The Pundits: British Exploration of Tibet and Central Asia (1990), which was translated into Japanese, and The Government and Politics of the People’s Republic of China (1981). He published several articles in SERAS over the years.

He is survived by his wife, his son Daniel, his daughter Juliet, and his grandson Eli. He also leaves behind a generation of grateful students and colleagues. If you are of the drinking persuasion, raise a martini to his memory.