

Book Reviews

David Finkelstein and Kristen Gunes, eds., *Civil-Military Relations in Today's China* (Armonk, M. E. Sharpe, 2006), 326p.

The excellent analyses in the numerous chapters of this data-rich volume offer shrewd views of the relation of military reform in China to changes in Chinese society. There is little stress on the many authors' valuable insights about the impact of civil-military relations on foreign policy. This review retrieves that buried theme.

After Mao died and Deng Xiaoping became the PRC's paramount leader, Deng promoted a policy of reform of Mao's military. For Mao, political loyalty was primary and poorly educated villagers from the nation's hinterland pervaded the army. That would no longer do. The military would have to be modernized. The navy and air force would become more important. The military needed educated and technically competent people who could act as professionals and stand-up to other modern militaries. Mao's base of villagers from north and central China were to be pushed aside. Their virtues did not mesh with the imperatives of a new age.

The Deng-era military reforms, however, could not be easily implemented. Recruitment continued to be proportional to population and location. Fraud-trumped merit criteria in a society structured by personalized, hierarchical networks. As economic opportunity beckoned in the Deng era, the left-behind, ill-educated villagers of the hinterland ever more looked to the military as a way out of stagnant misery. Meanwhile, others, the educated ones the new military needed, sought to take advantage of the new opportunities of the market, urbanization and openness. So did the military officer corps which utilized its positional resources to make money, often quite corruptly and immorally. The incentives and dynamics of the entrenched system were premised on interests and incentives that negated reform.

Then a democracy movement spread throughout China in 1989. Its defeat led to yet stronger resistance to reform from the conservative political apparatus. Certain segments of the military were reluctant to crush by force peaceful demonstrators. In response, opponents of the decade-old Deng reform agenda, newly empowered by the defeat of political reformers in 1989, complained about how the market opening led to corruption and unfairness to what had been the loyal base of the CCP. Conservatives, nationalists and new leftists, that is, Chinese anxious over Deng's policies of international openness, market-regardness and merit criteria interpreted the 1989 threat to continuing the CCP dictatorship as an imported Western attempt to subvert China by promoting professionalism in the military in place of absolute loyalty to the CCP. Reformers were attacked as enemies of the party and of social stability.

Then Deng counter-attacked and triumphed. Traumatized by the democratization of both Taiwan and also of former CP dictatorships in Europe, by

the easy US success in the January 1991 Gulf War, and by the August 1991 disintegration of the USSR, the angry chauvinist forces, which had been winning in Chinese politics after June 4, 1989, further intensified their attack on professionalism. They imagined themselves also as the voice of the nation's north and center, the great majority of Han Chinese not benefiting from reforms privileging the coastal, urban south. They tried to defeat Deng's reform project. They presented themselves as striving for social justice and a future China rooted in a glorious Chinese history. No large rupture was needed in the military, as the reformers supposedly claimed misleadingly.

But starting in a January 1992 trip to the south coastal, open, entrepôt of Shenzhen, Deng counter-attacked. He would defeat the enemies of economic reform, merit and professionalism. He pushed mightily ahead with the project of building a military that could compete in wars where high technology competence was ever more important, indeed, decisive. He pushed China's military to reach out to China's institutions of higher education. The PRC would offer better material incentives to court scientists and potential soldiers to join the PLA and its research institutions. The locus of Chinese nationalism and defense of the nation was moved, metaphorically, from the north to the south. Deng's policies of transition did not, however, completely succeed; but they did make great headway.

Reformers found, especially after China had no answer to US naval intervention in response to the PLA's March 1996 missile barrage off the coasts of Taiwan's two great container ports, an action which shut down international commerce vital to Japan, that the Chinese nation was truly endangered. Unable to challenge the US Navy's defense of Taiwan, Chinese leaders felt it was urgent now that China promote a military transition to an age of high technology warfare so China could stand up to America. That is, America's riposte to China's 1996 provocation against Taiwan was interpreted as directly threatening China and its future rise. If Deng's policies of military reform failed, reformist patriots felt, then Taiwan would institutionalize its permanent independence, Tibet and Xinjiang would break away, and China could be reduced to the ineptness of a weakened and emasculated post-1991 Russia. While outside observers noted that China had never been so safe and secure in over a century and a half, ruling groups in China actually were greatly anxious as a result of how they interpreted the events of 1989 to 1996.

CCP leaders therefore intensified their campaign to remake the Chinese military. This effort was legitimated by a particular understanding of recent traumatic events. These traumas were seen as creating a world that threatened China's territorial integrity and its aspiration for global greatness. Within elite CCP political circles, America was found to be promoting a Theater Missile Defense so as to neutralize China's nuclear weapons and thereby keep the PLA from acting militarily on China's large, regional sovereign claims. As a result, China, or at least the prospect of China's return to its supposedly natural position of global greatness, beginning with the annexing of Taiwan and the incorporating of the East China Sea and the South China Sea, seemed, to CCP ruling groups, seriously endangered.

Conservatives and reformers, north and south, differed over how to be true Chinese patriots.

As a result, a campaign was intensified by Deng's successor, Jiang Zemin, to get the military out of corrupt enterprises and economic activities that did not serve the purpose of building a high-technology military that could restore China's greatness. Yet Jiang had to compromise with the anti-reform forces. Jiang's intensification of the Deng era agenda also gives the military a more independent professional voice in Chinese politics. It renders the marginalized losers from economic reform, especially villagers in China's north and center, the base of Mao's red armies, ever more peripheral. Conservatives complain. Political clash and compromises are virtually inevitable.

The wonderful chapters by well-informed analysts in this reliable book focus internally on what all these changes, anxieties and vicissitudes mean for civil – military relations. They do not focus on what the struggles over the transformation of the military mean for Chinese foreign policy. This review teases that data out of this excellent book.

There is much for China's ruling groups to disagree about. These essays scratch the surface of a largely non-transparent system and raise vital questions. One learns from the incomplete but important information provided by the knowledgeable analysts whose heavily detailed work is assembled in Finkelstein's and Gunness' weighty tome a much better set of questions to ask about China's military and Chinese future foreign policy and how they are related to domestic factors and forces in a reform era China in which much of the political system is unreformed and still resists reform.

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Willy Wo-Lap Lam, *Chinese Politics in the Hu Jintao Era: New Leaders, New Challenges* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2006), 359p.
\$82.95 cloth; \$29.95 paper.

Veteran journalist Willy Lam, now in academia, is well known for his chronicles of China's reform era. The volume under review presents readers with a comprehensive mid-term report on developments since Hu Jintao became the General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). In his view, China urgently needs more profound reforms, especially that of a political nature. Yet Hu Jintao, Wen Jiabao, and their colleagues have been more like firefighters dousing fires here and there with stop-gap measures but have not "demonstrated the kind of foresight and courage needed to push forward bold, far-reaching changes to their archaic system."(p. xiv)

Lam begins with a highly readable chapter on the rise of Hu Jintao. He discusses Hu's baptism in tension-filled Tibet, offers speculations on why Deng

Xiaoping chose him for the Political Bureau Standing Committee, and analyzes Hu's uneasy relationship with Jiang Zemin. There are also shrewd observations on Hu's political support base as well as the final maneuverings that cemented Hu's crowning as CCP's General Secretary. Lam goes on to suggest that Hu is unlikely to become another Mikhail Gorbachev and Chiang Ching-kuo but is more likely to resemble Vladimir Putin, the Russian president in being "an authoritarian and supernationalist" (p. 31).

The rest of the book reviews the Hu-Wen administration's policy initiatives in a range of areas. Chapter Two, on the CCP's crisis of legitimacy, dwells on efforts to articulate new policy ideas under Hu and Wen, including "the concept of scientific development." Lam notes that Hu and Wen are politically conservatives in promoting an efficient, scientific, and law-abiding administration with limited democracy.

Chapter Three examines the efforts by the Hu-Wen administration to introduce populist people-first policies to improve the lot of disadvantaged groups, especially farmers and workers, and alleviate the widening income inequality that has arisen in the reform era (the issue of regional balance was discussed in Ch. 2). Lam asserts that the improvements under this so-called new social contract will be limited by the lack of genuine political empowerment of the disadvantaged classes.

Lam's palpable dissatisfaction with the lack of political liberalization is amplified in Chapter 4. He argues that political change is where the Hu-Wen leadership can truly break new ground and make their mark in history. Yet he notes that there has even been some rollback in China's trend toward political liberalization. For Lam, the Hu-Wen team has apparently failed "to realize that much of China's worsening sociopolitical malaise has its roots in the country's archaic, Leninist party-and-state system" (p. 106). Instead, the leadership's resort to repression may instead invite more resistance and social upheaval.

Internationally the Chinese leadership, bolstered by its surging economy, has been able to make more headway in carrying out its ambitious foreign policy agenda. In Chapter 5, Lam describes China's persistent efforts to improve relations with most countries and to deflect Washington's containment policy. China, according to Lam, has partly succeeded in becoming a major international actor. Nonetheless, the continuing rise of China will be complicated by the challenge of nationalism and a variety of other factors. In Chapter Six, Lam pays special attention to China's "problematic handling of the April 2005 anti-Japan protests" to highlight nationalism as a double-edged sword.

Overall, scholars and policymakers should welcome this wide-ranging volume and will profit from Lam's observations on a large number of issues. Many will also appreciate his abiding concern about the need for political reforms in China. Again and again, Lam points to the fissures in China's social fabric and takes on a hortatory tone to urge China's leaders to launch political liberalization and democratization. He states that "Unless and until the CCP is ready to cede more power to the people by, for example, allowing non-party-controlled labor

unions, media, and political NGOs to appear, the entire modernization process can hardly take off (p. xi).” “To procrastinate further,” Lam warns, “is to invite the possibility of a lose-lose situation for China and the world (p.xiv).”

Yet Lam is at best uncertain about the prospects for elite-led political reforms in China. He blames the Hu-Wen administration’s disappointing record in political reforms on the Chinese leadership’s obsession with keeping the CCP in power. Nonetheless, he raises the possibility that the Hu-Wen team may hasten the pace of reform at the Seventeenth Party Congress in 2007 after they have consolidated their power (p.154). In the end, he seems to pin his hope for far-reaching political reforms on the next generation of leaders. Even here, however, Lam’s perennial skepticism reigns supreme and he ends the book by saying that Hu and Wen “might prefer to groom as Fifth-Generation successors obedient cadres who toe the party line unthinkingly—or even worse, opportunists whose only interest is gaining promotion and power. And this hardly bodes well for the country’s tortuous reform enterprise...” (p. 290) This is gloomy stuff but no less thought-provoking.

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John Makeham, *Transmitters and Creators: Chinese Commentators and Commentaries on the Analects*. (Cambridge MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2003), 457p. \$50.00 hardcover.

John Makeham’s *Transmitters and Creators* is a work for scholars or advanced students of Confucianism. Makeham’s focus is the vast number of commentaries written about the *Analects* (*Lunyu*) since the time of the spread of Confucianism. These commentaries served during the time of the Chinese Emperors as interpretive guides. Makeham’s thesis is that simply focusing upon the *Analects* alone leads to numerous misunderstandings. For Makeham Confucian scholarship apart from its commentary tradition is inadequate for understanding the meaning(s) of Confucius.

Makeham’s thesis is a hermeneutical claim. Is it possible even for the scholar, Western or otherwise, knowledgeable in Chinese at a level of mastery sufficient to read with full comprehension the *Analects*? Makeham’s thesis is a bit odd for if it were possible there would not be any commentaries. In other words if Confucius were spontaneously comprehensible then there would be no need for commentaries. Since few readers of the *Analects* are ever likely to have made this claim it seems to be proving the obvious. However, which commentaries are the “true guides”? And how can the student know this with certainty?

It is widely known that Confucius’ teachings were rejected by the political powers of his day. And that his thought, preserved and transmitted by his students

and their followers became the prevailing and official philosophy of the Chinese empire through out most of its history until it ended in the early 1900s. It is also basic knowledge that Confucianism spread to Korea, Japan, Vietnam and elsewhere. Furthermore the *Analects* are a putative record of the thinking of Confucius. Although there are three major received text(s), Makeham does not dwell on the history of the transmission of the text. This has been done by others elsewhere which readers unfamiliar with the received texts will find better described elsewhere.

Hermeneutical skepticism, a fact of modern textual interpretations, presents numerous problems for Makeham's thesis. As he recognizes there is a vast collection of commentaries that are too much for a lone researcher to manage. The commentaries were developed over two thousand years reporting what Confucius meant or implications of his teachings. The problem for modern students of Confucius is whether it is worth while studying any of this classical literature.

Makeham's book, after the introduction, is divided into four parts that use four commentaries on the *Analects*. In the first part he used the commentary of He Yan, *Collected Explanations of the Analects (Lunu jijie)* to present the old commentary tradition.

The second part uses Huang Kan's *Lunyu yishu (Elucidation of the Meaning of the Analects)* to argue that some commentators saw themselves as transmitters of Confucian thought rather than as developers. Zhu Xi's *Lunyu jizhu (Collected Annotations on the Analects)* is used in the third part to address matters beyond method. Interestingly there are others who have independently advanced commentary analysis independent of Makeham with Zhu Xi's thought.

The fourth commentator used by Makeham is Liu Baonan and Liu Gongmian commentary *Lunyu zhengyi (Correct Meaning of the Analects)*. This commentary tradition is used to illustrate Confucian scholarship and philosophy.

Makeham's book is not for the general reader or the beginning student. It does not report the textual traditions. It does not report the commentary traditions. What is the history of the traditions of meaning? What are the history of the traditions of the writing and transmission of the text? What are its problems common to any literary tradition?

Makeham's scholarship is impressive. His book uses Chinese characters to name books, ideas or other matters along with their appropriate name or term in English. There is a very high quality to his writing, organization and to his documentation. All of these labors make the book one of very high scholarship.

Transmitters and Creators was the winner of the Joseph Levenson Book Prize in 2005 in the Pre-1900 category. It is a volume that should be in the personal library of world history and world religion teachers as well as in college and research libraries.

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Alan Hunter, *Peace Studies in the Chinese Century* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 215p. \$99, hardcover.

Alan Hunter's edited volume *Peace Studies in the Chinese Century* is a collection of conference proceedings. Held in Nanjing, the conference's main purpose was "for Chinese scholars to share peace studies perspectives with other researchers" (p.12). As one of the first efforts to apply the discipline of peace studies to study China, this book tries to address a hot topic (the rise of China) with a relatively under-used framework – at least in China. The most interesting aspect of the book is its attempt to translate and package some Chinese academic papers – introduced "for the first time in English", which were written "in a cultural environment that is different from the West" – under a Western theoretical framework (back-cover; p.13). This effort deserves credit for its creativeness and innovation, particularly for Western readers who know little about Chinese academia.

However, as a collection of 14 essays of which only two address China, the book is naturally uneasy to construct a coherent framework in which the diversified articles can gel together. In its current form, it is somewhere between a case-book of peace studies summarizing experiences from different countries and a guide-book for trans-disciplinary Chinese researchers to learn to study "the Chinese century" in every relation to peace. Those essays translated from Chinese have a particularly thin relevance to the Western discipline as defined by Johan Galtung (cp.1), who is considered as one of the founders of peace studies. The editor is challenged in arguing for the inclusion of the following three chapters: Pan Zhichang's focuses on the ancient Chinese culture of forgiveness; Liu Cheng's discusses the ethical dimension of Blair's foreign policy; Liu Yuan's argues the importance for maintaining social harmony while developing democracy in Hong Kong. They might have touched on some means of avoiding violence, but beyond that they have little connection with the "ten point primer" outlined by Galtung. These kinds of discrepancies between the Western and Chinese writers are overwhelming. For instance, those chapters written by Western scholars are more empirically based and critically reviewed, while those translated from Chinese are all but normative and commentary-oriented. The initial chapters attempt to theorize peace studies together with conflict resolution, but the Chinese ones tend to disregard this.

Such inconsistency is, precisely and amazingly, the merit of this book: indeed, the editor is well aware of the dynamics among his collection. As he acknowledges, his Chinese peace studies colleagues differ from their Western counterparts in three major areas: lack of interaction with mass movements or protests; lack of conscientious objectors or calculation of government spending; and lack of autonomy to address separatist movements derived from peace activists (p.9). The Chinese pieces in the book fit perfectly well into the above. It is uncertain whether the editor aims at exposing the huge gap between Chinese and Western understanding on peace studies, or integrating their differences into a consolidated

social science model. If it is the former, the collection has achieved its goal with ease. If it is the latter, the attempt remains wide of its mark.

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Kevin J. O'Brien and Lianjiang Li, *Rightful Resistance in Rural China* (London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 200p. \$21.99 paper.

The topic of this succinct and readable book is an important one: the growing phenomenon of political mobilization by China's rural population against the abuses and mismanagement of village, township, and county level governments. In an increasingly decentralized environment of weakened hierarchal control and runaway local fiefdoms, such popular mobilization has become a major—and frequently the main—channel to expose and confront unbearable local abuses. The book provides valuable insights on this important political development in contemporary China, of which several are especially significant.

First, the concept of “rightful resistance,” derived from the authors' extended research in the Chinese countryside, productively characterizes a particular form of contentious politics and distinguishes it from other forms of popular resistance. Rightful resisters dispute the authority of certain political authorities and their actions, while affirming and even relying on other authorities as well as established values to pursue their ends. Their contentious acts are intended to both open channels of participation and make use of existing channels, thus straddling the border between what is usually considered popular resistance and institutionalized participation. O'Brien and Li's term superbly captures the somewhat oxymoronic nature of China's rural social movement.

Secondly, the authors give due recognition to the structural openings made possible by post-Mao reforms, thus distinguishing contemporary resistance from peasant rebellions in Chinese history while allowing the occurrence of legitimate resistance in a polity that is frequently construed as monolithic. Those openings, as the authors correctly note, have been made possible by recent socioeconomic and political reforms that have brought about increased resources, mobility, knowledge and legalistic mechanisms for society yet also decreased fear and dependence on grass-roots cadres. This attention to increased leverage for forces outside the state makes a convincing case for the social and structural basis of rightful resistance in the Chinese context.

Thirdly, the authors duly recognize the opening and expansion of political opportunities created by divisions among the layers of China's government hierarchy. Like many (and probably any) sprawling, multilevel polities, those divisions arise from monitoring problems, policy mis-implementation and information slippage between central policy makers and ground-level officials. The

rhetoric and commitment of the center to beneficial policies allows the country folk to use official measures and values as weapons against local misconduct, through legally sanctioned means and strategic engagement with the state. This disaggregating of political opportunities makes a strong case for why popular contention can be “rightful” in an inhospitable political environment.

Fourthly, the authors position the Chinese case in relation to the larger literature on contentious politics, allowing these to underscore commonalities between popular contention in China and elsewhere, as well as bridges between different theories and perspectives. The authors’ comparative examples show that rightful resistance can appear in a wide spectrum of polities, from more repressive regimes to fully inclusive societies. As such the book enriches our understanding of rightful resistance as an effective strategy for the weak and the powerless more generally.

Finally, the book informs our understanding of both the sustainable and transformative nature of rightful resistance as China muddles through its historical post-socialist transition. As within-system contention, rightful resistance protests regime failures without challenging regime legitimacy. As a learning and empowering process for participants, rightful resistance helps foster new political discourse and identities. As a bottom-up collective voice, rightful resistance helps facilitate policy and institutional changes in both the short and long term.

Organized like an episode of collective action, the book works its way from origins to dynamics to consequences. These supply neat and useful conceptual frames not only for this particular book but also for the study of Chinese popular contention.

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Madeleine Yue Dong, *Republican Beijing: The City and Its Histories*
(Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003), 400p. \$55 paper.

This book examines the various histories and aspects of the city of Beijing during the Republican period (1911-1937). The turn of the 21st Century saw a growing interest in the so-called “Old Beijing”—largely referring to Beijing of the late Qing and Republican period. It is curious why such nostalgia would arise at the time of rapid modernization and expansion of the City. Dong argues that the intensification of interests in things and ideas related to “Old Beijing” is a protest against the city’s way-too-fast modernization and development, which are taking away people’s sense of what Beijing is and how life in Beijing should be. Against this backdrop, Dong sets out to investigate and reconstruct the object of contemporary nostalgia: what was the “Old Beijing” like, exactly?

The author (herself not a Beijing native) has a wonderful command of data and scholarly literatures, and weaves them into interesting accounts. For example,

in Part One, “The City of Planners”, the author describes how a city government was created (Before the 1911 Revolution, Beijing actually did not have a municipal government. Surprising?); how new streets were opened and court spaces transformed for public uses; and how the introduction of modern transportation (cable trolley, for example, but more importantly railway) fundamentally changed the lives of Beijing residents. All in all, Beijing was to become a real city in the modern sense, instead of an imperial capital serving just the imperial court. An inspiring process this may sound, it was full of intricacies, confusions, and difficulties, and the author was capable of laying these out in a well-organized and arresting manner.

Part II, titled “The City of Experience”, is in fact about the city’s economic life: production, consumption, and recycling made up the three chapters in it. The “Recycling” chapter is probably the most interesting for “Old Beijing” lovers, as it centers on the Tianqiao District, where the life of an ordinary Beijing resident was most vividly played out. Part III is titled “The Lettered City”, but the first chapter of it looks at the sociological studies of Beijing by scholars and university students during that period of time, mostly on the social ills: poverty and prostitution, for example. The second chapter looks at the narratives recorded by people during that time about the “Old Beijing” (“Old Beijing” of that time referred to late Qing Beijing). The third chapter looks at how writers of that time portray lives in Beijing, notably Lao She. Indeed today this body of literature still provides the most accessible account of the “Old Beijing”, and they continue to be appreciated, as well as re-enacted in TV plays and movies. What is missing, perhaps, are the Peking Opera and the various *quyi* genres. In fact, stories and episodes of the Peking Opera community (the *liyuan*) of that time are an important part of the “Old Beijing” discourse today (e.g. Zhang Yihe *Minglin Wangshi [Past Stories of Famous Peking Opera Performers]*, Changsha: Hunan Wenyi Chubanshe, 2006). Some of the performances, such as classical episodes from the *xiangsheng* (Cross-Talk) genre, are still being performed or played from recordings today. They provide us with the important pictures of the streets life of the “Old Beijing”.

In 400 pages and weighting heavily, this book is certainly too formidable for a tourist planning a trip to Beijing. The historical studies of Beijing’s city management, transportation system, street system, public spaces, recycling life, social ills, entertainments, and literary representation are probably more thoroughly studied by specialists. Then what purpose does this book serve? It is the idea of “Old Beijing” that really makes this book unique. Its reconstructions of things “Old Beijing” might have missed some parts while overemphasized others, but to my knowledge, this is yet the only attempt that gave the “Old Beijing” idea a serious scholarly treatment.

But then, among the people who have the ability to appreciate such a daunting book, few probably share an enthusiasm in the idea of “Old Beijing”. Most important of all, in an unprecedented speed Beijing is being made and remade everyday, so forcefully, just by what is going on on the ground. Before Beijing has

the time to reflect on what its “Old Beijing” (that is, pre-1937 or pre-1949) past was like and how its past should help define its future, the future is already made (alas, this is true for every Chinese city today). Very soon, the notion of “Old Beijing” will acquire a different meaning.

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Helen Dunstan, *State or Merchant: Political Economy and Political Process in 1740s China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006), xv, 523p. \$54.95 cloth.

In this tightly focused book, Helen Dunstan explores the policy determination process within the court of Qing China on the topic of state intervention in grain trade during the 1738 – 52 period. Readers in search of narratives will find two intertwining debate themes: the degree to which the state should restrict grain merchants, and the ability of the state’s grain stockpiling system (ever-normal granaries) to provide public welfare.

Part I, consisting of three chapters, focuses on state action against grain hoarders. The first two chapters cover state anti-merchant policies including collecting and manipulating grain information, price cuts, state sanctioned violence and moral exhortation. In the third chapter a stricter temporary policy on hoarding is discussed as well as the resulting laissez-faire backlash debate in court.

Part II considers internal political challenges to the view that the state’s grain stockpiling system served the public welfare. During the period from 1738 to 1753 there was debate within the Qing state regarding how much grain should be withheld from the market in the ever-normal granaries. It is perhaps this section of the book, consisting of five chapters, that offers the greatest contribution to the literature, since Dunstan’s analysis on this issue is more detailed and thorough than previous studies. Interesting and novel analysis by Dunstan here relates the grain target decisions of the 1748-49 period to debates in the previous decade. Chapter 4 provides background information on the ever-normal granary system and describes the issues regarding grain surplus politics. Chapter 5 through Chapter 8 covers the grain debate from 1738 to 1749. Chapter 5 examines how policy criticism lead to a change from high-level storage targets in 1738 to more limited targets in 1743. Chapter 6 considers a modest policy change to increase stockpiles during the 1744-47 period. Chapter 7 describes the major policy episode, in which Emperor Qianlong in August 1748 set a radical policy of major reduction in grain storage targets. Chapter 8 explores the rationale behind the radical policy of 1748 and its complex political consequences. In Chapter 9, after a review of some of the final twists in the grain policy debate, Dunstan completes the analysis by casting the debate in a broader light. Other developments of the 1740s are reviewed and shown

to be broadly consistent with a general withdraw of state interest in policy aimed at public welfare.

In conclusion, Dunstan argues that the political process during the 1738-52 was complex and does not fit well into typical descriptions such as “autocracy.” Numerous groups and events influenced the grain policy debates of this period. Pressure came from military needs, a broad shift in policy goals from domestic welfare toward foreign policy, concerns of Sino-Manchu tensions and, according to the author, pressure from grain merchants. Resistance to radical grain stock reductions also came from provincial officials who disagreed with such policies. The author generally agrees a mid-century shift in imperial policy from more liberal public welfare toward harsher discipline of riots and disturbers of the social order occurred. Yet the author argues that strands of policy continuity are also important – most notably Emperor Qianlong’s occasional lenient policies – and suggests that the loss of imperial power may have taken place more gradually than often recognized.

It is not possible in a brief review to do justice to the detailed analysis Dunstan provides on numerous topics. This is a solidly researched piece of work based on archival sources. The book is full of detailed information regarding many aspects of the Qing grain policy debates. The author has done an excellent job in comprehensively analyzing the government decision-making environment and process during the grain policy debates of 1738-52, a very rare achievement in the area of Chinese political history. Some readers may wish to know more about the larger economic context during the period under consideration. Two topics that come to mind are (i) the general economic condition during the mid-18th century relative to that of the 17th and 18th centuries, and (ii) the extent of the military pressure, as perhaps measured by estimates of the share of military expenditures in total central government expenditures, in late 1748. Analysis of these issues could also shed light on pressures exerted on the court.

This is a thoroughly researched and carefully written book that will be required reading for those interested in Qing Dynasty grain policy. Those interested in Chinese political economic history will also find much of value here. A final noteworthy strength of the book is that it was conceived of, at least in part, as a larger comparison with other cases, such as mid-18th century France. For those interested in comparisons of another country’s policy-making process with Qing China this book presents an excellent study.

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Yi Li, *The Structure and Evolution of Chinese Social Stratification*
(Lanham: University Press of America, 2005), 231p. \$37 paper

With a historical analysis, this book provides the readers with a comprehensive understanding of the structure and evolution of the Chinese social

stratification. Having pointed out the inadequacy of the current study of the Chinese society, the author has retrospectively discussed historical, societal, and political factors that have contributed to the current social stratification in the Chinese society. Among those factors, three seem most unique and fundamental. The first is the national civil service examination; the second is the household registration system; and the third is the stratification of the cadres in the Chinese social structure since the early 1950s.

In the traditional China, the civil service examination was a unique social phenomenon which fundamentally affected the social mobility in the Chinese society. The household registration system, which also has a long history in China, is often utilized for social control is a unique phenomenon in the Chinese social structure. Between the early 1960s and 1970s, the Chinese government increased its utilization of the household registration system to control migration, mostly from rural areas to urban areas. Later on, the household registration system was used to divide the Chinese population into agricultural population and non-agricultural population. Under the state planned economy, the household registration system became the most important determinant of differential privileges in the Chinese society between the 1960s and 1970s. These privileges include access to nonagricultural jobs, child education, housing, health care, and the right to live in a city. When the non-agricultural population, mostly in the urban areas, enjoyed more privileges than did the agricultural population, mostly live in the rural areas, urban and rural residents have actually become two dramatically different social classes. Therefore, to limit the migration of the agricultural population from rural areas into the urban areas through household registration was actually to limit the privileges to the non agricultural urbanites and to prevent the agricultural population from moving into the middle or upper classes. Although the agricultural population is now allowed to seek employment in urban areas, the peasant workers still cannot enjoy the privileges enjoyed by the urbanites. The household registration system is still a yoke on the rural agricultural population. Therefore, the author calls for revoking the household registration, which would not only allow the rural population physical and social mobility, but also promote China's development.

When discussing about China's social stratification, the author focuses on the classification of cadres which is another unique phenomenon in the Chinese society. The stratification of the cadres (or cadre system as the author refers to) in the Chinese society is not limited to the government officials, it substantially reflects the stratification of the Chinese society under the state planned economy. Although the stratification of the cadres has experienced many changes since the 1950s, it still reflects a significant part of the Chinese social stratification.

Accordingly, the author developed his own model to capture the essence of the Chinese social stratification which is a pyramid structure of social classes, with the vast number of peasants (or agricultural population) at the bottom, peasant workers from rural areas on the second level; the urban workers (or non-agricultural population) on the third level, and a small fraction of usually well educated cadres

and quasi cadres at the top. This model does capture the unique and fundamental factors of the Chinese social stratification. During the 1960s and 1970s, the Chinese government that drove for total equality was trying to eliminate the gaps between workers and farmers, between urban areas and rural areas, and between laborers and intellectuals in the Chinese society. Li's model actually parallels with the social differences identified by the Chinese government between the 1960s and 1970s. Since 1980s, studies on the social stratification and mobility in the vast Chinese society have become popular and significant. More books and papers on social stratification have been published in both English and Chinese. Li's book has made a unique contribution to the understanding of the complicated Chinese society and its stratifications.

Nevertheless, the rapid changes in the Chinese society have posed a great challenge to the scholars who are interested in social stratification in China, including Li. Li's model seems to have somewhat oversimplified the social structure of the Chinese society and its validity may be eroded by the dramatic changes in China today. In another word, Li's model may be more valid for the Chinese society under the state planned economy between the 1950s and 1980s than for the current society in which the government planning has been substantially reduced and the cadre system seems less able to reflect individuals' income, property, prestige, and power. On the other hand, Li's model seems to have ignored the huge differences among the non-agricultural population in the urban areas and among the agricultural population in the rural areas, especially when many farmers have disengaged in agricultural activities. Similarly, the model seems to have ignored the growing differences between the coastal areas and inland areas, or between the eastern regions and the western regions in China.

The book indicates that the author possesses substantial knowledge and information about the complicated Chinese society. However, the author has not done a great job in developing a carefully refined theory although he has realized that the current western assumptions, hypotheses, and theories are not adequate in explaining the Chinese society and its social stratification.

Additionally, the organization and the writing of the book need improvement. After reading its recently translated Chinese version of the book on line, I feel that the English version does not always convey the actual meaning of the author. For example, the English word, hero, used in the preface, does not have the rich and powerful connotation of the word in Chinese. Similarly, some direct translations are not appropriate and may not be readily understandable by readers of the English version of the book. For example, "higher engineer" (p. 106) was a direct word by word translation from Chinese into English, and should be translated as "senior engineer". Similarly, "higher editor" should be translated as "senior editor", and "vice prefecture universities" should be translated as "junior colleges or professional schools". Some careful editing would have improved the book considerably.

The book could also be more effective had the author focused more on social stratification. It is true that China's social stratification is shaped or affected by many historical, political, international, and social developments; however, when the author wrote so much about these relevant factors, it shifted his focus away from the central theme of social stratification. As a result, the book, though is still quite conducive to understanding the Chinese culture and society, does not accomplish what the author has set out to do in the first place.

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Jinghao Zhou, *Remaking China's Public Philosophy and Chinese Women's Liberation: The Volatile Mixing of Confucianism, Marxism, and Feminism* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2006), 309 p. \$119.95 cloth.

A more apt title for this ambitious work might be "Chinese Women's Liberation and the Fifth Modernization." Zhou's work is centered on two fundamental premises: (1) "changing the one-party system has become the precondition for China's democratization" (p.xxiii); and, (2) "Chinese women's liberation cannot separate from the process of China's democratization" (p.xxiv). Underlying these ideas is a more softly spoken notion that the liberation of Chinese women can be accomplished neither through the ideological assertions of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong-Deng Xiaoping-Jiang Zemin thought nor through the uncritical acceptance of Western feminist thought. Instead, Chinese feminism must – in best dialectical fashion – be informed by the critical examination of Western feminist thought combined with the careful re-appropriation of Chinese traditions of political philosophy – both Confucian and Maoist; hence, the "volatile mix" of the book's title. Only an atmosphere of democratic reform can tolerate the intellectual ferment generated by trying to define a truly Chinese feminism; and, only ideological challenges such as that presented by a nascent Chinese feminism can help to catalyze the reexamination of politics that will challenge the dominance of the Communist Party of China (CPC).

In a series of chapters that are meticulously documented and that offer the reader a significant cross-section of Chinese and western scholarship on the status of women in China, Zhou reexamines and problematizes most of the classic theories claiming to explain Chinese cultural, social, and political structures defining women's changing roles over time. Zhou carefully teases apart the multiple threads of Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism and suggests that there is no simple relationship between Confucianism and the relegation of women to lesser roles; instead there is an essential core of Confucian ideas that offers an emphasis on self-cultivation and responsible harmony in society that are antithetical neither to feminist consciousness nor to democracy. Examining the four twentieth century

revolutions in China – the Revolution of 1911, which though overturning the imperial system had little impact on women; the May Fourth Movement of 1919, which launched a nascent women’s movement and led the Nationalist government to accord women some legal rights; the Communist revolution of 1949, which saw women’s liberation in terms of class struggle and social production; and the post-Mao reform movement of 1978, which has economized the notion of liberation while denying its politicization – Zhou insists that this zigzag course of advancement has left the women’s revolution “unfinished.” Western feminism, while playing a vital role in awakening and nurturing Chinese women’s consciousness remains largely the province of Chinese female intellectuals and must grant that “the most urgent task for Chinese women’s liberation is to improve the living standard of Chinese women and to guarantee women’s rights in every aspect of Chinese society.” (p. 135) Here is where the women’s movement in China must inevitably cross purposes with both the state and Marxist ideology. “Marxism and feminism are opposite theories,” Zhou observes, because the goal of feminism is to establish a civil society in which women enjoy freedom of expression whereas Marxism envisions a democratic centralism in which party and state mechanisms define democracy and any independent women’s movement “is suffocated.” (p. 168)

Professor Zhou has really written two books – one a voluminously documented history of the changing place of women in Chinese social and intellectual history, the other an intellectually stimulating critique of the inability of Chinese governance – imperial, republican, or communist – to truly encourage the liberation of women. Though he has introduced the idea of remaking Chinese public philosophy as a theoretical framework for connecting these themes that is precisely where the work falls short. While it is provocative to suggest that a vital women’s movement in China should play a central role in moving the government toward democracy, Zhou’s work is disappointingly thin in suggesting what a feminist public philosophy for China might look like or what tactics it might adopt to catalyze political change. At the same time, Zhou’s work is evocative in suggesting that women’s liberation, like religious reawakening, in China may provide a critical angle of vision that will significantly critique the reigning Maoist-Dengist ideology, will catalyze the emergence of a non-state public sphere, and will come with its own broad base of support in the everyday experience of Chinese women that makes it far more difficult to regulate than the Internet and far more difficult to mute than the Falun Gong movement.

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