Jie Chen and Bruce J. Dickson, *Allies of the state: China's private entrepreneurs and democratic change.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010; 232 pp., with chart, graphs, and tables: 9780674048966, £33.95 (hbk)

**Reviewed by:** Chun-Yi Lee, *University of Duisburg, Germany*

The main research question addressed in Jie Chen and Bruce J. Dickson’s *Allies of the state* is whether China’s private entrepreneurs have pushed the party-state towards democracy. The authors conducted their survey in five coastal provinces. The private sectors in these provinces is the most developed, with more than 70 per cent of the country’s private entrepreneurs. The authors utilized an original set of data which were collected from a representative sample of private entrepreneurs in 2006–2007 and completed an extensive survey of firms of various sizes and in different business sectors.

Based on their findings, Chen and Dickson conclude that China’s capitalists are unlikely to push for change in the state’s political structure. This is not a novel finding, most recent empirical research concludes that China’s capitalists do not strongly support democracy. Chen and Dickson’s research nonetheless explains in more detail why private entrepreneurs cannot be the agents of political change in China. Three main reasons can be identified from their research. The first one is the high degree of political embeddedness of entrepreneurs in the party-state and business organizations, which makes private entrepreneurs comparatively obedient to one-party rule. Secondly, they argue that private entrepreneurs’ financial connections with the state and their evaluation of government policy dramatically influence their attitude towards democracy. In particular, their findings confirmed that private entrepreneurs who received loans from state-controlled banks were less supportive of democracy. As Chen and Dickson argue at the beginning of their book, the closer the affinity between capitalists and the state, the less enthusiastic is their support of democracy. Thirdly, the authors find that most of China’s new capitalists support the CCP regime mainly because they do not believe in democracy or see the need for it. This can be attributed to several subjective variables, for instance, life satisfaction and approval of governmental policy performance.

In terms of research findings, this book is not the first one to assert that, in the case of China, private entrepreneurs do not favour regime change. It is an echo of much previous
Research on this topic. Research on wealth and regime change in China confirms that private entrepreneurs in China generally follow the traditional Chinese saying ‘Business is business, politics is politics’. Chen and Dickson’s research along with other seminal works argue that economic development cannot lead to a change in China’s party-state. This finding in itself is a contribution to highlight a shortcoming of modernization theory; nevertheless, this finding cannot answer the question of why wealth and democracy in China are not positively causally related. If we assume that all entrepreneurs focus on material interests, then the question arises as to why Western entrepreneurs care about regime change but Chinese or, more generally, Asian entrepreneurs do not. Current studies about the emergence of democracy in China already confirm that private entrepreneurs strengthen the party-state system rather than challenge it. Hopefully, future research will throw some light on the failure of Western modernization theory in this respect.

Nevertheless, the contribution of this book lies in the systematic review of theoretical frameworks in the realm of political economy and comprehensive survey methods. Chen and Dickson’s survey is based on a representative sampling of private entrepreneurs. They also take into account regional variations in levels of development, and they consider differences in size and scope of enterprises in their sample. Unlike much of the previous research based on the unit of company, Chen and Dickson’s research also pays attention to individual variables to explain entrepreneurs’ attitudes towards both the current political system and potential democratic future. Furthermore, this book can be viewed as presenting the most theoretically comprehensive and robustly methodological research in this realm.

Chen and Dickson’s book therefore is useful to students and researchers who are interested in the relationship between business and government in China. At the theoretical level, it also benefits researchers who are interested in the political economy of China, especially the focus on the correlation of economic development with political change. At the end of their book, Chen and Dickson mention that ‘China’s capitalists may be important allies of the state at the present, but their loyalty cannot be guaranteed in the long run’. From the perspective of policy analysis, it is also in the government’s interests to know how and why, and perhaps most importantly when, that change will come in the near future, when China’s capitalists no longer support a one-party regime.

Björn Alpermann, China’s cotton industry: Economic transformation and state capacity. London and New York: Routledge, 2010; xiv + 258 pp., with tables and figures: 9780415552370, US$130.00 (hbk)

Reviewed by: Jacob Eyferth, University of Chicago, USA

China is the world’s largest producer and largest consumer of cotton, growing 25 per cent of all cotton and processing 40 per cent of the world’s harvest in its mills. The Chinese government has long regarded cotton as a ‘strategic commodity’, and the cultivation, trade, and processing of cotton remained heavily regulated until China’s accession to the WTO. In this carefully researched study, Björn Alpermann recounts the transition from a
system in which only state-controlled supply and marketing cooperatives (SMCs) could buy and sell cotton to a ‘managed market’ in which most cotton is traded privately but where local and central governments play an important regulatory role. The book opens with an overview of the literature on China’s regulatory state, on central–local relations, and on the developmental, entrepreneurial, or predatory strategies of local governments. Chapters 2 and 3 outline repeated attempts by the central government to abolish the SMC monopoly and introduce competition. Twice, in 1985–1987 and 1992–1994, the central government reacted to cotton gluts by deregulating prices and opening the market to non-SMC buyers; in both cases, these measures had to be rescinded when glut gave way to shortage and local governments engaged in ‘cotton wars’ and tried to prevent farmers from selling outside their jurisdictions. It was only in a third attempt, in 1999–2001, that the central government managed to push through its vision of deregulation, and it did so only by using its WTO commitments as an external stick to break down local resistance.

At the heart of this book lies a comparison between two cotton-producing counties and their markedly different paths. Xiajin county in Shandong Province allowed private cotton trading long before this became official policy; in order to attract trade, the county openly declared that it would not enforce its own public sanitation and environmental protection rules (p. 85). Pro-business policies in Xiajin resulted in a dynamic if fragmented structure, with hundreds of cotton traders buying and processing cotton, mostly without official licenses. Nonetheless, the county remained intent on vertical integration, first by trying to force private companies into a quasi-governmental cotton trading centre, and then by establishing a conglomerate that combined the roles of market regulator and dominant market player. By the end of the author’s fieldwork, the county government had attracted investment promises from a large, privately owned textile company, which was granted not only the usual tax breaks but also full control over what remained of the county’s procurement network as well as privileged access to the entire local harvest. Tianmen county in Hubei Province pursued the same goal of ‘agricultural-industrial-commercial integration’ (贸工农一体化), but in a more entrepreneurial and predatory fashion. The county retained control of its procurement network even when central policies called for its privatization, and tried to set up a joint private–public venture on this basis. In spite of the company’s successes, its manager was fired, detained, and had his property confiscated by the incoming county Party secretary (later labelled a ‘five evil’ cadre). The ensuing lawsuits and general mismanagement led to the collapse of Tianmen’s spinning mills. Small private companies, which appeared relatively late, were subject to predatory fines and taxes. Although Alpermann repeatedly reminds us that developmental, entrepreneurial, and predatory states do not exist as pure types, the story as he tells it shows elements of a moral fable: here ‘virtuous’ Xiajin with its business-friendly policies, there predatory Tianmen with its meddling, conservative, and corrupt cadres. His evidence suggests that the situation may have been less clear-cut.

The final chapters take us back to the question of central state capacity. Alpermann accepts, with qualifications, Dali Yang’s formulation of China as a nascent ‘regulatory state’. He shows that in the cotton sector, the central government did not content itself with levelling the playing field but pursued a vision of large, integrated cotton conglomerates and moderate competition. This vision, Alpermann shows, was difficult to implement not only because of the recalcitrance of local governments but also because of reduced
government control over credit. The last chapter provides additional context by discussing events external to the central story: China’s WTO accession, the rise of China’s textile and apparel industry, and the emergence of Xinjiang as a major cotton producer. The book is strongest in its discussions of government behaviour in the two fieldwork sites. Its contributions to debates on the nature of the Chinese state are judicious but always qualified; the book’s strongest claim is that China has developed a regulatory skeleton but still needs to add muscles to the bones (p. 191). A notable absence in the book is China’s cotton farmers, victimized under the socialist procurement system and short-changed in the WTO accession negotiations. They appear in the book only as ‘societal inputs’ whose protests might conceivably have derailed the deregulation policies. There is no reason to doubt Alpermann’s assessment that their voices played no role in the policy-making process.

Joshua Fan, China’s homeless generation: Voices from the veterans of the Chinese civil war, 1940s–1990s. London and New York: Routledge, 2011; 182 pp.: 9780415582612, US$125.00 (hbk)

Reviewed by: Stéphane Corcuff, University of Lyon, France

Taiwan has seen in recent years the emergence of a new field of study that was formerly almost taboo: Mainlanders who arrived on the island after Taiwan’s retrocession to China in 1945, and especially after the Republic of China’s Nanking government’s relocation to Taipei in 1949 at the end of China’s civil war. By the time Taiwan’s national identity debate started to heat up in the 1990s, ordinary Taiwanese and scholars alike had become less passionate about the topic, which paved the way for a discussion about who mainland immigrants really were, what their schemes of identification were, and how they adapted to Taiwan. Yet, for many years, one topic has remained relatively neglected by scholars: the memories of the immigrants who lived through the multiple traumas of exile, relocation, prejudice, homelessness, and melancholy. In a meticulous, convincing, and even touching opus, Joshua Fan gives us a detailed and neutral account of the long process through which the veterans of the Chinese civil war who relocated in Taiwan with the Kuomintang’s retreat finally came to terms with their life situation in Taiwan. This happened in a plurality of ways: from total isolation and despair, to voluntarily rebuilding a family and henceforth deciding to move their roots from the past of a China that no longer existed to the future of their offspring on the island. As one veteran declared, ‘My roots are in Taiwan now, because … my family, children are all in Taiwan’ (p. 152).

Fan conducted lengthy oral interviews in 2003 with veterans about their life experiences. These interviews were held in Taiwan and the United States with mostly first-generation elder Mainlanders, who had actually moved to Taiwan, and in rare cases interviews were held with children who recalled what their parents told them. Fan does not elaborate on his method of sampling and questionnaires, but does not pretend to make a quantitative assessment either. His aim is to explore the variety of life experiences and to present them in a coherent way: how veterans joined the army, often unwillingly; their leaving the mainland and arriving in Taiwan; their tense relations with the
army and with a Kuomintang denying most of them of the right to marry in the early years after their arrival; how they dealt with homelessness and homesickness; their relations with Taiwanese; their visiting the mainland and their relatives from 1987 onwards when such visits were officially allowed, albeit only for those who could meet the strict conditions imposed; and finally their perception of Taiwan after realizing that China was no longer their home, 40, 50, 60 years (or even, for one interviewee, 70 years) after leaving their family and village.

The book not only intends to present their feelings, traumas, memories, despair, and adaptation. It also aims at countering arguments that are easily politicized, whose origins can be traced back to traumas sustained by Taiwanese from events after 1945 at the hands of the Kuomintang: Mainlanders in general, and veterans in particular, viewed as having been protected by the Kuomintang in its colonial-type domination of Taiwan until the 1990s. Joshua Fan convincingly shows that the veterans – many of whom were abducted from their home in China and forbidden to marry in Taiwan for several years – have on the contrary a wide range of reasons to resent the Kuomintang. The author keeps his analysis at the level of perceptions by actors, and distinguishes, as Hu Tai-li had done in the late 1980s, the veterans’ disappointment with the Kuomintang and their respect, if not adoration, of Chiang Kai-shek and his son Chiang Ching-kuo. By correctly presenting the complexity of the historical and emotional background of post-war Taiwan, Fan avoids, when describing the miserable fate of those mainland veterans, misleading the reader into viewing the majority of the Taiwanese as being guilty of unjustified exclusion. In the complex process of memory building in Taiwan in the 1940s and 1950s, generalizations of prejudices across ethnic lines were made by both camps – generalizations that last until this day. This book concurs with the idea that, knowing that ethnic resentment has historical roots, the only solution is knowledge, understanding, inclusiveness, and pardon.

In his conclusion, Fan shows that, in a way, disoriented veterans had the impression of ‘dying’ a third time when, after having been uprooted from China, and finding out decades later that they could not call China their ‘home’ anymore, a nevertheless legitimate nativist movement in Taiwan further deprived them of those identification markers they had relied on for years to nurture the feeling of being at home somewhere. Regrettably, while Taiwan has seen a propensity among ordinary Taiwanese and even politicians (since the late 1970s) to open their hearts to the grievances and worldview of the Mainlanders, and to establish the basis of an inclusive nationalism to welcome them, by contrast the recognition of an alternative legitimacy of the Taiwanese worldview by Mainlanders and their historical grievances remain permanently hindered by political strategies of the pro-unification camp that basically denies any legitimacy to Taiwanese to even rule Taiwan, not to mention to think of Taiwan as a nation. We can only wish that Fan’s effort would be echoed by a similar work that offers Mainlanders a chance to see what many still refuse to see.

This book could have been subtitled Anthropology of trauma in a diaspora. For sure, the memories of veterans have not been left totally in oblivion in the past: several books, especially literary ones, have dealt with life in military dependents’ villages (眷村)，and several short MA theses on that subject are being republished in a collection of books. However Fan’s book is the most systematic exploration to date of the emotions engendered by the diasporic, or liminal situation of veterans too close to the original country not
to long for return, especially when the government has been mobilizing them for years to
do so, but yet originating from a country sufficiently dissimilar from Taiwan, in terms of
politics, culture, historical memories, and language, for them to feel at home where they
resettled. Fan details a story that many scholars know about. Yet, outside of the Mainlander
community, details of this story remained scarce. He presents a detailed analysis of the
succession of disillusions and traumas that veterans had to live through: the defeat of the
mainland; separation from their loved ones, sometimes without even being able to say
goodbye; the difficulty of putting down roots in Taiwan; and the biggest disillusion of all,
when they finally went back and hardly recognized their homeland, assaulted by greedy,
distant relatives eager for cash and gifts. Finally feeling nowhere at home, some then
came to realize more clearly that their real home was Taiwan. Fan makes a major contri-
bution to the study of contemporary Taiwan as well as to the study of diasporas. He also
helps to preserve the essence, sadness, and beauty of the memory and life experiences of
those victims of history and warfare, and of geopolitics and prejudices.

Richard Baum, China watcher: Confessions of a Peking Tom. Seattle, WA: University
of Washington Press, 2010: 336 pp., with illustrations and notes: 9780295989976,
US$29.95 (hbk)

Reviewed by: Jean Phillipe Béja, CNRS, Hong Kong, China

China watcher: Confessions of a Peking Tom is an intellectual autobiography. The author
does not go into details of his personal life, and readers who were expecting a Philip
Roth-type book or who were hoping to read some gossip about China specialists will be
disappointed.

Rick Baum is a contemporary of China’s Communist Party General Secretary Hu
Jintao. Like Hu, Baum has avoided the excesses of the Cultural Revolution; in Hu’s
case, blind involvement in Maoism which characterized many members of the later
generation. Baum started to do research on China at the beginning of the Sino-Soviet
rift, but before the ‘Chinese Revolutionary Way’ became an object of fascination for
young Western intellectuals. Differentiating himself from many of his younger
colleagues, Baum was never an apologist of the Great Helmsman.

Besides, Baum started to work on China before the People’s Republic established
diplomatic relations with the United States, and, like most of his colleagues of his
generation, he started his research in the periphery of the PRC, in Taiwan and Hong
Kong. And, corroborating Fernand Braudel’s theory on innovation, his experience shows
that being away from the centre allows the observer a more perspicacious perception of
events than those who are immersed in their midst.

However, Baum did not fall in love with Taiwan. But he did put his stay on the
Nationalist island to good use. A significant proportion of the contemporary Chinese
specialists’ time these days is devoted to the pursuit of information, especially first-
hand information. And, in the 1960s, before the Cultural Revolution, most of this
first-hand information was in the hands of the Nationalist army, the CIA, the
Nationalist secret service (and, of course, the CCP, but this was out of reach). How
could a Berkeley graduate student obtain these documents? Unless he himself was a
CIA agent, as we used to say in Europe about all American specialists. It was actually simpler than that. One had to be able to establish *guanxi* with some people, by exchanging favours. Unlike what we, in Europe, believed at the time, many people working for the Taiwanese or US intelligence were actually scholars or students who translated secret documents into English to earn some money. This is how Baum could lay his hands on a lot of secret materials on the Four Clean-ups. He shows how, like the heroes of the spy movies so popular at the time, the China specialist did not hesitate to take considerable risks: removing documents from an attaché case after everyone had left the office, making photocopies with agonizingly slow machines, missing a heartbeat when a secretary came by. Once the documents had been duplicated, Baum went to Hong Kong to analyse them. He gives a vivid description of the famous Universities Service Centre, where one had to stop interviewing refugees when planes flew by (which was very often).

Thanks to his experience in Taiwan, Baum learned very early in his career that a scholar had to protect his sources, to evade censorship, and to avoid the wrath of the Chinese authorities. At that time they were Nationalists, but it was a good training for his later dealings with the Chinese Communist Party. While in Hong Kong, despite the fact that he was not a member of the group of ‘concerned Asian scholars’, he could go past the bamboo curtain in May 1975, an unachievable dream at the time for most American scholars. He did not go to the PRC to do fieldwork in a Chinese village, far from that, but as an ‘escort’ (p. 63) of a group of athletes. Despite this seemingly uninteresting opportunity, he was lucky enough as, while watching his delegation compete at the Beijing’s Workers’ Stadium, he was seated beside Hua Guofeng, who, a year later, was to become the second great leader of the PRC: ‘Why hadn’t I recognized his name? Why hadn’t I persisted in trying to chat him up at the track meet?’ (p. 78). Most of the China specialists have stories of a similar nature to tell.

*China watcher* can be read as a detailed chronicle of the last 30 years of the history of the PRC. Baum’s frequent trips to China and his exhaustive network (关系网) in Chinese academia put him in a very good position to give a vivid and objective description of the immense changes that have swept through the most populous country in the world in recent times. Every time something happened in the PRC, Baum was there. He shows how Deng Xiaoping decided not to follow the path of democracy in 1979 when he decided to repress the Democracy Wall movement. He was in Beijing during the 1989 events, but, like many observers, he never thought that Deng Xiaoping would send the army to crush the movement. He left two weeks before the massacre. But, unlike many of his colleagues, in 1990, he did not hesitate to respond to Ambassador Ma Yuzhen, who asked him how to improve the PRC’s image: that the CCP could start by ‘withdrawing the official characterization of the student demonstrations of April and May as “counterrevolutionary turmoil”’(p. 135), which did not close the door on invitations to China later on. Baum describes how, in the wake of 4 June, many Westerners were ‘bending over just a bit too far in [their] effort to rationalize the government’s excessive use of force’ (p. 143). His evaluation of the rise of China is balanced, and his criticism of the excesses of the CCP do not prevent him from distancing himself from the exponents of the ‘China threat’ (p. 171).

The author also takes us to the enclaved villages of Qinghai and tells a fascinating story of teaching English in villages where students walked hours to attend class, and
where native teachers were eager to take advantage of the presence of foreign students and teachers. He shows that a real China specialist should go to the grass roots and understand the common people (老百姓) as much as in the high spheres of power. The opening up of China has allowed specialists to put a finger on the pulse of Chinese society instead of trying to decipher the mysteries of power struggle in Zhongnanhai.

However, Baum, whose book is also a chronicle of the development of Chinese studies, has some very strong words about the modernization, or dare I say ‘scientification’ (科学化), of political science. Many new researchers have ‘only moderate proficiency in a single foreign language’ and ‘without [the] ability to communicate effectively with people from other cultures, one’s worldview tends to be narrow and parochial’. I was very pleased to read his critique of the new trends of political science: ‘methodology has been elevated in importance from a useful set of research tools, or means used to study politics, to a self-contained object of study, that is, an end in itself’ (p. 249).

Finally, in his chapter entitled ‘The gini in the jar’, Baum sums up the feeling of all those who have spent some time studying the politics of the PRC: ‘Some days, I wake up full of hope for this vast country and its incredibly industrious, resilient people…. Other days, however, I despair at the web of official arrogance, corruption, and self-aggrandizement that enmeshes local government, and I shake my head at the CCP’s near-pathological fear of unauthorized political expression’ (p. 271).

*China watcher* is an important book on the development of Chinese studies in the United States and on the changes that have rocked China in the last four decades.


**Reviewed by:** Jens Damm, *Chang Jung Christian University, Taiwan*

This book provides an outstanding sociological survey of the representation and challenging diversities of male homosexualities based mostly on intensive interviews in three ‘Chinese’ regions: Hong Kong, London, and urban areas of the People’s Republic of China, in particular Guangdong, Beijing, and Shanghai. Questioning essentialized identities, be they ‘gay’ or ‘Chinese’, Travis S. Kong’s exemplary work highlights changing forms of hybrid sexualities which are shaped by transnational developments. Through the current stream of transnational, and transregional migration, post-colonial spaces (such as London for Hong Kong men) are explored as well as the differences between the original urban populations of China and the increasing flow of young people arriving from the lesser developed rural parts.

The author has provided a wide and fascinating range of information in each chapter: not only are the variety of subjective positions of the interviewees shown, but each chapter is complemented by concise summaries of the political and societal situation, legal changes during the last decades, social movements and the idea of newly established forms of cultural and commercial citizenships.

After a helpful and informative foreword by Ken Plummer on the topic of hybrid sexualities (pp. xiii–xix), a lively and well-written introduction (pp. 1–15) provides
fascinating insights into the various lifestyles and changes in social perception of male homosexualities in the three areas under research and offers helpful definitions of the variety of terms employed. This is followed by a state-of-the-art introduction (pp. 16–39) which neatly summarizes related research at a theoretical level, and also more empirically based earlier research on Chinese gay homosexualities.

Part I of this volume deals with post-colonial Hong Kong (pp. 41–119). Kong links queer citizenship to the problem of partial citizenship which has been significant for both British Hong Kong and current Hong Kong under PRC rule. He emphasizes the fact that various forms of hegemonies regulate and restrict homosexual identities in Hong Kong: state-led governance forms, which do not grant full autonomy to Hong Kong citizens; a strong hetero-normativity within the family, which is based on policies and the specific role of Hong Kong historically; and, finally, the spatial constraints of the living conditions. Kong nevertheless goes on to show, in the subsequent chapters, that a personal space for creating various forms of relationships, such as a strong queer consumer citizenship, has come into existence. This is threatened, however, both by neoliberal governance and, in particular, by an active conservative ‘family value’-oriented citizenship led by Christian and other religious groups. Nevertheless, this has given rise to the negotiation of a variety of identities in post-colonial Hong Kong.

Moving on to Part II, that is, London (pp. 121–42), Kong provides an analysis of the situation of men from Hong Kong living in the queer diaspora located in the country of the former colonizers. For the purpose of his study, Kong separates these men into three groups that have developed their own strategies and their own forms of identity: first of all, men who decided on their own initiative to leave Hong Kong; secondly, men who were brought to London by their families, either to be educated or to keep the family together; and thirdly, ‘brides’ of London men, who have taken advantage of the newly liberalized legal situation in the United Kingdom. Although all three groups live in a queer diaspora and encounter problems with the dominant British gay culture, the various personal stories reveal diverse aspects of integration and acceptance as well as resistance and, in particular, the struggle of these men who are caught between various cultures.

Part III, China (Guangdong, Beijing, and Shanghai) (pp. 143–93), deals with the more recent developments in urban areas of the PRC. Slowly, the once dominant medical discourse has been replaced here with a new focus on cultural citizenship, but with a strong differentiation based on the popular term suzhi (素质; ‘quality’) – which favours the new urban middle class over the so-called ‘money boys’ who form part of the large (officially illegal) rural to urban migration movement. The urban middle class milieu has already been quite thoroughly researched, but Kong’s insights into the world of prostitution are most revealing.

The entire book provides insights into the ways that transnational queer identities, cultures, and lifestyles have left their mark in various ‘Chinese’ regions and led to diverse outcomes due to the previously existing differences in society and in the political sphere. Kong deconstructs any notion of fixed and stable identities, be they gay/queer/homosexual or Chinese-dominated, and various forms of appropriate resistance are shown to provide various spaces for queer Chinese men. Nevertheless, transnational developments should not be equated with homogenizing global effects, but rather as having led to a great
variety of ‘sexual individualisms’ (Plummer’s Foreword, p. xv), dependent on class, place of residence, age, and degree of international connections.

This book is highly recommended, not only for researchers who are interested in queer cultures, but also for anybody who has an interest in identity changes in current Chinese societies and in the emergence of new forms of cultural and consumer-oriented citizenship.


Reviewed by: Naran Bilik, Fudan University, China

This is a study worthy of praise for several merits. First, the author, with his Inner Mongolian background and his academic presence in the United Kingdom and the United States, gives a particular perspective that complements views developed by Western and Chinese researchers on national minorities in China. Second, it unfolds a complex picture of ‘collaborative nationalism’ and points to one important aspect which has not received enough anthropological treatment in recent years, that is, the role Inner Mongolians have played in constructing New China. Third, the author adds theoretic complication to what has been taken for granted, replacing Sino-centric models with his notion of triadic space of multiparty negotiations. Fourth, the book combines geopolitical, ethnographic, and literary perspectives – a welcome synthesis for anthropological studies of China.

The author reveals the disjoint between the monophonic discourse of national unity (民族团结) and the polyphonic, fluctuating history of majority–minority relationships in China. He points out that Chinggis Khan, Buddhism, and communism are the ‘three systems of ideas or values’ that structure the relationship between Mongols and their neighbouring peoples, such as Manchu, Tibetans, Chinese, Japanese, and Russians, a situation that engenders ‘collaborative nationalism’: Mongols collaborate with forces they identify as friends against a common enemy.

There are, however, some statements and theoretic formulations that readers may not totally agree with. Too many theories are thrown together and cause unnecessary contradictions. While quoting Georg Simmel, who identified two types of group, a dyadic group and a triadic group, the author also quotes Rogers Brubaker, who links the national question to a triadic nexus involving national minorities, nationalizing states, and external national homelands. On the one hand, the author describes the relationship between Inner Mongolia and China after 1945 (pp. 13 and 19, for example) as an inclusive dyadic relationship; on the other hand, he holds that ‘the essence of social interaction is triadic rather than dyadic’. It is confusing. René Girard is criticized for not granting agency to the Mongols in analysing the triadic relationship between the Japanese, Chinese, and Mongols (p. 15); but the author does not grant full agency to the Mongols either. Making use of de Certeau’s distinction between ‘strategy’ (for the subject that has a postulated place and is with will and power) and ‘tactic’ (for the subject without a proper locus manoeuvring ‘within enemy territory’, p. 16.), the author grants ‘strategy’ to the Japanese and Chinese and ‘tactic’
to the Mongols. It is doubtful whether de Certeau’s distinction matches the Inner Mongolian reality and whether Mongols could not postulate a place of their own and therefore had their strategy as well. The author uses the term *subimperialism* to refer to efforts of cultural and racial identification with the targeted peoples by Japanese imperialists (p. 16). But we wonder why he does not call it ‘affective imperialism’ right away. We also find some overstatement: ‘Both *Mengjian* (Mongolian traitor) and *Menggu ganbu* (Mongolian cadre) eventually became hostile toward the Japanese and toward the CCP.’ To support this sweeping statement the author cites Lin Sheng (‘a Daur-Mongolian aristocrat’), who had supported Manchukuo and the Japanese, and who became disillusioned with the Japanese and was executed by them, and Prince De who ‘was deeply at odds with the Japanese’; he also mentions that ‘large numbers of Mongolian soldiers in Manchukuo killed their Japanese advisors upon the news of the Soviet–Mongolian declaration of war against Japan’ (p. 125). But this is not convincing. Indeed, the confrontation between *Menggu ganbu* and the CCP since the 1960s, especially 1968–1969, was exaggerated. As we know that quite a few *Menggu ganbu* (such as Ulaanbagan), CCP members or candidates themselves, worked with the CCP in exterminating ‘Mongolian traitors’. When commenting on *Quiet flows the Amin River*, a film about the adoption by a Mongolian mother of three orphans ‘from Shanghai’, the author asserts that ‘the majority of Chinese are too deeply moved by the performance, and they see in the Mongol mother the perfect image of minorities loving and caring for China, nursing the wounds of China’ (p. 239). It sounds like official propaganda rather than the feeling of the audience. We need to distinguish myth-making from experience.

There is a minor chronological issue: he puts the year in which Inner Mongolia was incorporated into China as 1945 on p. 13 and as 1949 on p. 19. Which is accurate? The etymological research on *xiongnu* (匈奴) is not accurate: while *nu* (奴) means ‘caitiff’, *xiong* (凶) does not mean ‘ferocious’; its primary meaning is ‘chest’, though it is homophonic with another word *xiong* (凶) which does mean ‘ferocious’. At the time of the Song and Yuan dynasties, however, the modern pronunciation *xiongnu* was pronounced *hiung-nu*, close to its Mongolian transcription *hungnu*.

Bulag’s historically grounded theorization of ‘collaborative nationalism’ and his exposition of the complexities of nation building make this book one of the best recent studies of China’s national minorities; it also highlights a very important area in the anthropology of China and Inner Asia.


Reviewed by: Meiwen Chen, *Leiden University, The Netherlands*

How should we understand the saying ‘Chairman Mao is the God of Wealth’, which is popular with many people in China? The book *Faiths on display: Religion, tourism, and the Chinese state*, edited by Tim Oakes and Donald S. Sutton is a well-written guidebook consisting of nine illustrative case studies by various contributors that demonstrate the extremely dynamic and complicated process which makes the aforementioned popular saying possible. As argued by Oakes and Sutton in the introduction, all the authors of this
volume challenge the assumption that tourism and pilgrimage should be viewed as two unrelated categories and provocatively suggest that there is a continuum between the pilgrim and the tourist (p. 11). They aim to understand the role of the Chinese state in brokering both tourism development and religious revival in China, and they question the nature of this ‘revival’ itself (pp. 3–4). Unlike James C. Scott’s *The art of not being governed: An anarchist history of upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009) aim of establishing an anarchist history of people inhabiting parts of Southwest China, all the contributing authors do not present arguments about ‘society without the state’ because the Chinese state, and the People’s Republic of China in particular, has proved itself to be an inescapable power expanding its political influence on different levels of people’s lives. Nonetheless, they also argue convincingly that the Chinese state is not, in fact, all-powerful.

*Faiths on display* has an introduction by Oakes and Sutton, nine chapters in the form of case studies, and an afterword by Rubie Watson. The work represents a continual effort to research the mobility of the Chinese people and the modification of localities against a backdrop of the interaction between globalization and glocalization, a trail blazed admirably by an earlier book, *Translocal China: Linkages, identities, and the reimagining of space* (ed. Tim Oakes and Louisa Schein, London and New York: Routledge, 2006). Unlike *Translocal China*, however, which is more concerned about how different sorts of network have become intertwined and come into play in the formation of diverse identities, *Faiths on display* lays emphasis on the ‘contents’ (i.e. ‘religious revival’) that flow within different sorts of network in the face of the flourishing tourism industry in post-Mao China. Even without any specific (re-)definition, it is understandable why the editors focus on ‘faith’ instead of ‘religion’, since they can then explore different forms of practices that are ‘religious’, rather than ‘religions’ themselves. Brian R. Dott, Yu Luo Rioux, and Marina Svensson deal with the reshaping of the religious landscape (Mount Tai, Jinggangshan, Wuzhen); Tim Oakes, Charlene Makley, and Charles F. McKhann elaborate on the recreations of beliefs and rituals (Dixi, Beijing Ethnic Park, Naxi religion); and Donald S. Sutton and Xiaofei Kang, Susan K. McCarthy, and Kenneth Dean illustrate the reformations of local religions and cultures (northern Sichuan, Xishuangbanna, Fujian). All the contributors to this volume successfully elucidate how and why many landscapes, rituals, cultures, and local societies have been modified and transformed as the Chinese state boosts its economy by promoting tourism. Most strikingly, the book reveals a much more dynamic and complicated picture. Dott, Rioux, and Svensson’s chapters beautifully demonstrate how the behaviours of tourists fail to meet the state’s expectations and how ‘red tourism’ has failed to serve as a propaganda tool for the Chinese state. Oakes, Makley, McKhann, and Dean convincingly show how ‘revival’ acquires a life and meaning of its own beyond the reach of the state’s power. Sutton and Kang, and McCarthy touch upon the issue of ethnicity and religion and their controversial roles in the nation-state building.

And yet, some assumptions need to be reconsidered in future studies. First, I partially agree that a ‘pilgrim–tourist continuum’ exists as argued by the authors, since it implies a gradation in how much the tourist’s or pilgrim’s behaviour qualifies as the behaviour of the typical tourist or pilgrim, and how much a particular attraction is sacred or profane. The case studies included in the book, however, point to a more relational and situational
picture. Here I suggest an alternative viewpoint; that is, that the relationship between tourism/pilgrimage and tourist/pilgrim should be seen as a single, simultaneous phenomenon. In other words, in the Chinese context it is more like two sides of the same coin. Second, the theoretical problem just described results from the other dilemma the argument is prone to. As the meanings of tourism and religion in the Chinese context differ greatly from those in a Western context, using a non-Western country to scrutinize a Western concept seems to be an easier way of proving that the distinction between tourism and pilgrimage is a false one. One of the differences that concerns us here is the perception regarding ‘leisure time’ and what people ‘do’ in their leisure time. Without a clear-cut distinction between living domains and the differentiation of religious, recreational, social, and economic functions, the social activities of Chinese people appear to be more holistic. Therefore, the argument seems to be tautological and might not accurately throw light on the nature of tourism and pilgrimage in modern China.

Despite these shortcomings, it is undeniable that Faiths on display is an outstanding and eloquent work that sets a new milestone in the study of modern China. It will be particularly useful to researchers and students who are interested in studies of cultural heritage, the tourism industry, and Chinese statecraft.

Mette Halskov Hansen and Rune Svarverud (eds), iChina: The rise of the individual in modern Chinese society. Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2010; xx + 275 pp. with tables, notes, bibliography, and index: 9788776940522, £50.00 (hbk); 9788776940539, £18.00 (pbk)

Reviewed by: Zhiyi Yang, Princeton University, New Jersey, USA

A cooperative effort comprising eight contributions, preface, foreword, and introduction, iChina covers a variety of issues concerning the silent rise of individualism in modern China. This phenomenon is silent for its lack of support from dominant ideological discourses or social–political institutions, such as democracy and a welfare system. The individual in contemporary China provides a transformed and transforming counterpart to the ‘institutionalized individual’ in the West, a product of what Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim call the ‘second modernity’ (p. xiv).

The 14 contributors to this volume come from three continents, and their academic specialization is wide-ranging. Such authorial diversity guarantees thematic diversity, which is welcome. The book’s structure proceeds from Beck and Beck-Gernsheim’s theoretical construction, from a global perspective to a more China-specific discussion by Yunxiang Yan in the Introduction, and further to nuanced, historicized, and contextualized discussions from local angles. Yan articulates a key criticism of the hostility of the Chinese state towards self-organizations and autonomous society, which might feed the rise of ‘the incomplete and uncivil individual’ who emphasizes private rights as a privilege that is earned and whose identity remains to be defined in relation to a collectivity (pp. 2, 13, 27, 31). The contrasts between ideology and practice, and between rural and urban individuals give rise to Chinese individualism that is multi-layered and multi-temporal (pp. 32–5).

The book’s contributions comprise both field and textual studies. Matte-Halskov Hansen and Cuiming Pang examine the idealization of individual choice among young
rural Chinese, manifested in their urban workplace and in the acceptance of ‘free love’. Their individualism, however, must often reconcile with family commitments, as most clearly shown in the case of marriage (pp. 54–5). Stig Thøgersen and Ni Anru, in contrast, focus on the rural elderly, who are found to be nimble in the way they cope with changed family relations and how they create new life patterns (pp. 65–6). The third chapter by Jørgen Delman and Yin Xiaoqing focuses on the ‘singular yet symbolic case’ of Sun Dawu. Sun’s is a quixotic story of a self-taught rural entrepreneur who fought against the exploitation of local regulatory and financial institutions. What the authors fail to convince, however, is how this fascinating biography represents Chinese private businesspeople, a social group which the title of their chapter is ostensibly about. Moving from rural to urban society, the fourth contribution by Unn Målfrid H. Rolandsen analyses the collective of young volunteers ‘at the fringes of the Party Realm’ (p. 132). Though volunteerism appeals to the recognition of individual values, it also provides urban youth with an opportunity to join a collective where they can contribute to society, an opportunity that works in favour of the Chinese Communist Party’s agenda.

Three contributions provide textual studies from the perspectives of literature, intellectual history, and legal systems. Anne Wedell-Wedellsborg examines and periodizes the literary representations of the individual since 1980. Her major criterion is the notion of alterity; that is, how other possible identities are available to the individual (p. 166). Rune Svarverud discovers that, despite the distinction between liberal and leftist discourses in the early 20th century, intellectuals of this period put forth a common argument that ‘the individual is free by nature but his freedom may only be secured through collective freedom’ (p. 220), an insight that remains valid to date. By examining evolving Chinese legal systems, Klaus Mühlhahn argues that individualism did not emerge as an oppositional mode of thinking in China; individuals are freed from clan and family only to be incorporated by the nation-state (p. 244).

The last chapter is Li Minghuan’s study of a state-owned farm engaged in relocating and employing returned overseas Chinese. In this case, some privileged farmers, failing to succeed in an individualized marketplace, reinvented their collective identity as ‘patriotic returnees’ and secured preferential treatment from the state. It presents a counter-narrative to the theme of individualization.

I shall address two problems concerning the title of the volume under review and its theoretical framework. The title, *China*, clearly refers to a series of technical products of cult status. This *i* stands not only for ‘individualism’, but more specifically, for consumerism or commercialized individualism defined by material possession. Yet this reference is misleading. Consumerism is but a minor issue even in the two or three contributions that touch on the topic. In effect this title only makes the dearth of concern for issues surrounding information technology or internet freedom all the more glaring. The second problem is the typology of modernity (European, American, Chinese, and Islamic) put forth by Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (p. xvi). Though they caution that these are but ideal types, this framework is casually defined (the distinction between European and American modernity seems trivial by comparison; the term ‘Islamic’ is used loosely) as well as superfluous, since this specific project is about the rapidly changing realities in contemporary China that may quickly outdate any reified ideal type. In general, this is a well-organized and timely project, providing useful case studies and theoretical perspectives for graduate seminars.

**Reviewed by:** Jean-Louis Rocca, CERI, Paris, France

This book aims at analysing the emergence of a Chinese middle class through the spectrum of the revolution in homeownership that China has been experiencing since the 1990s. How do middle-class professionals search for ‘their private paradise in a society dominated by consumerism?’ (p. 1). ‘It is a tale of how the rise of private homeownership is reconfiguring urban space, class subjects, gender, and ways of living in the reform era’ (p. 2), focusing on three key aspects: spatial form, class-specific subjects, and modes of community governing. The first two chapters deal with the change that has occurred in housing since the 1980s, and the third, fourth, and fifth with new urban landscapes and ensuing implications in terms of class stratification. The sixth chapter is devoted to the consequences of the new spatial order on subjectivities, and the final chapter to new ways of governing local communities.

The study focuses on Kunming, the author’s birthplace, where she has been gathering an incredible wealth of information for the past decade using a variety of means: interviews, fieldwork, articles, selling brochures, data, and so on. Drawing from rich anthropological and sociological literature dealing with urban problems in China and abroad (essentially in the United States) and backed by in-depth research and analysis, Zhang Li has produced a comprehensive ethnographic study of the middle class in Kunming.

In brief, the author’s main argument is that the present specificities of Chinese society are the results of partly contradictory aspects of the reform policy and of the ways people have interpreted and ‘absorbed’ the effects of reform policy. The adoption of ‘neoliberal’ policies and the continuation of the political regime have given birth to big real estate companies whose activities are clearly capitalist-oriented but which remain under the control of local governments. From the allocation of land to the management of inhabited compounds, the whole process is under the direct or indirect control of interest groups consisting of businessmen and officials. These practices have allowed China to reach many objectives: accumulating wealth, providing resources to local government, reshaping and modernizing the urban landscape, satisfying the middle class in terms of housing and access to property, and so forth, all at a rapid pace. Thousands of people have had to pay the price for this reshaping of the urban landscape: they have been brutally displaced in exchange for little compensation.

The emergence of a new middle class that places emphasis on housing as a major aspect of its identity also reveals many contradictions. All neighbourhoods have to be ‘equivalent’ and have to correspond to a certain architectural ‘middle class’ style, but they also have to be easily differentiated so that consumers are enticed into buying. New buyers focus on private property and privacy, but they have to deal with many actors and institutions in order to make their compound a ‘paradise’. Similarly, the neighbourhood as a source of income (renting of shops and warehouses, etc.) cannot be completely closed to the outside.

New subjectivities are emerging through tension and articulation between love/emotion and property/material logics. Feeling, sensuality, personhood, and selfhood are at the core of marital relationships. But at the same time, the home is a central element of
this relationship (and of its possible breakdown). Men are supposed to provide a place to stay and this place has to be owned.

There is no doubt that this book is destined to become an important contribution to current debates on the middle class and on cultural change in contemporary China. It taps into rich and diverse sources of information, and it goes beyond any univocal vision of the issue. There are no powerful actors on one side and passive and deprived ‘subjects’ responding adequately to official expectations on the other side. The author is particularly good at showing and analysing the divergences which are appearing in the field, both within the realm of ‘power’ and within the ‘middle class’ itself. Its constant comparison of China with other countries makes the book easily accessible for non-China scholars who are looking for a reliable assessment of the Chinese case.

Nevertheless, the fact that this book constitutes a turning point in the way scholars consider the emergence of a middle class in China does not exempt it from criticism. In particular, the author has not sufficiently pursued the questioning of univocal analysis of Chinese society which usually compares China with an ‘ideal’ modern world. For example, the tension between emotional and material expectations seems too close to Judeo-Christian morality, appraising behaviour in terms of good and evil, ‘authentic’ and ‘commodified’. Another example concerns the question of governance. The analysis of the ‘distinctive mode of postsocialist governance’ (p. 187) depends mainly on a comparison with modern society (and its emblematic albeit highly blurred ‘civil society’). The author implicitly suggests (ch. 7) that the emergence of a civil society is a prerequisite for modernization, a notion which is still debated in the literature dealing with the European middle class. The author’s attempt to break with the modernization theory (and the idea of ‘transition’ to market democracy) is a line of questioning worthy of further scrutiny. Undoubtedly, In search of paradise is a seminal book which paves the way for broader and deeper research.


Reviewed by: Wang Dan, Taiwan National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan

For a long time, studies on 4 June were mainly carried out by two groups: 4 June participants themselves and scholars who were not participants. Where the former is concerned, their accounts and writings are full of passion but influenced by prejudice and even personal feelings. Some of the these are controversial (for example, Feng Congde’s Tiananmen diary), which raises questions about their credibility and objectivity. In the case of the latter group, their analysis appears to lack passion and is lost in cold narrative. It is hard to journey into the heart of history without passion.

Philip J. Cunningham’s experiences, as portrayed in Tiananmen moon: Inside the Chinese student uprising of 1989, provide another perspective to approach 4 June: memories as related by ordinary people who participated in the uprising. His vantage point, then as a foreign student, makes his observation unique and invaluable.
Considerable research is focused on ‘elite participants’ – student leaders, high-level officials of the Chinese Communist Party such as Deng Xiaoping and Zhao Ziyang, influential intellectuals who later were labelled as ‘black hands’ such as Chen Ziming and Wang Juntao, and so on – research through which we become acquainted with personalities and hardly with people.

However, as one of the participants in the 1989 uprising, I believe that ordinary people who participated – intellectuals, merchants, workers, farmers, and even the military – played a very important role, which had long escaped attention. In fact, the real force that drove students at that time to uphold their courage and enthusiasm, to steer the movement to a new stage, came from vast popular support. This support constituted for students not only legitimacy for their protest but also a sense of historical mission, a sacred duty to carry on their fight: ‘Standing on a monument of history, gazing at such a vast and defiant gathering, now at least a hundred thousand strong, it was not hard to have the impression the history was being made’ (p. 89). I myself also had the feeling that ‘history was being made’, when I saw Chanan Boulevard packed with flags and banners and students, on 27 April 1989 when the first big parade was launched to protest the 26 April editorial of the People’s Daily.

More importantly, support from the immense crowd also gave students a feeling of being safe, as conveyed by Cunningham’s description of the bicycle parade: ‘the mood was relaxed and confident, not only because the police backed off, but because there was a sense of safety due to the tacit support of townspeople and the growing camaraderie of fellow cyclists’ (p. 50). It is very important for any activist involved in any social movement to have a sense of safety and confidence when enlisting the support and participation of others and when making bold moves. One big question that was often raised in connection with the 1989 democracy movement is why students did not withdraw from Tiananmen Square when there were many signs of a looming, bloody crackdown. In the past, the main responsibility was put on the shoulders of student leaders labelled as the ‘radical fraction’. I am not saying this is incorrect, but I do not think that this is the whole truth. Even radical student leaders must rely on the sentiments and mood of that moment when they make a decision, and the question is: what emboldened those radical student leaders to decide to remain on Tiananmen Square? There is at least one reason: the overwhelming support from people, which is so clearly portrayed in Cunningham’s book. History has shown that people as a collective never take responsibility for anything, but it is impossible to evaluate any historical event without analysing the role of people. Unfortunately, we lack this perspective in the study of the 1989 student movement in China.

This is why Cunningham’s observations are invaluable. What he provides us with is a personal account, partly as insider and partly outsider. He tries to give readers a picture of different reactions from different levels of society about the movement and what ordinary people felt during that time. He has succeeded admirably.

However, I have to say that some of Cunningham’s viewpoints seem arbitrary. For instance, he declares that ‘in China, every rebel wants to be another Mao’ (p. 46). That might be true for peasant uprisings during feudal times, but before he applies this claim to evaluate the modern democracy movement from the 1919 May Fourth movement to the 1989 protest, he will need to adopt a more academic approach.
Finally, Cunningham has made a very important point that what happened on Tiananmen was shaped by things that came before (p. vii). Indeed, without a review of the entire 1980s, we cannot obtain a deeper understanding of 1989. While the author himself has not followed this route, his remark points to the wide expanse that has to be traversed in future research.