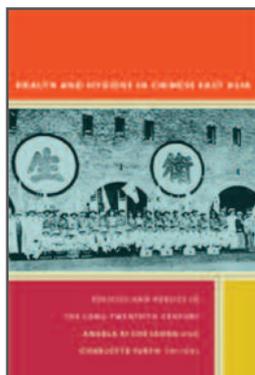


Book reviews



Angela Ki Che Leung and Charlotte Furth (eds),
Health and Hygiene in Chinese East Asia: Policies and Publics in the Long Twentieth Century,
 Durham, London, Duke University Press, 2010, 338 pp.

LUCA GABBIANI

The result of an initiative by Angela Leung and Charlotte Furth, who has written the introduction, this book contains ten articles written by Taiwanese (6), mainland Chinese (2), and American (2) researchers. It concludes with an afterword by Warwick Anderson, professor at the University of Sydney, whose contribution seeks to enlarge perspectives by replacing the general problematic in the framework of historiographic changes in recent decades. The high representation of Chinese and in particular of Taiwanese scholars in this collection indicates the importance that health problems have assumed in historiographic reflection and social sciences in general in this region over recent decades, a trend that owes much to Leung's pioneering work in this field over the past 30 years.

As Furth writes in the introduction, the book's aim is to clarify the "science and politics of public health policy making and action" (p. 3) in a part of East Asia that has long been under China's influence in the areas of language, intellect, and culture as well as in economics and politics. The period covered begins roughly a century and a half ago, from the introduction of the first "modern" notions of hygiene and public health in this region under the influence of European colonial expansion in the second half of the nineteenth century. At the heart of the reflection lies the notion of public health, rendered by the twin concepts of *eisei* in Japanese and *weisheng* (衛生) in Chinese, which Ruth Rogaski, author of one of the contributions in this volume, has popularised in the milieu of Anglo-Saxon Sinology through the expression *hygienic modernity*,⁽¹⁾ referred to as such throughout the book.

Furth, Leung, and the other authors step back from the English language historiographic tradition which was long dominated, especially in its approach to the case of India, by the colonial enterprise and the close links it had to the concept of nation and the discourse developed around the rise of modern medicine. They attempt to "complicate" the picture as a whole without ignoring the colonial dynamic and its claim to "civilising" influence. Through a series of detailed studies of limited scope, the authors try to shed light on multiple levels of interaction that were juxtaposed in a crucial transition period during which public health was extended in East Asia. In addition to the national and colonial spheres, there was also the transnational one, with international organisations – governmental or otherwise – taking

pride of place. Such diversified levels of analysis help especially in reconsidering the normally attempted chronology of the process. In the "science" domain – especially medical here – the studies in this volume attest to a complex form of adaptation and transformation, rather than pure and simple disappearance, of so-called traditional knowledge that was clearly threatened by the formidable challenge of modernity and triumphalist discourse of the era. The writers ably challenge the habitual and radical separation of so-called scientific knowledge from traditional (if not superstitious) practices.

Reflecting these concerns, the collection is divided into three parts. The first, entitled "Tradition and Transition," contains three articles that trace, each in its own way, the major lines of adaptation of traditional conceptions under the influence of new inputs. At the outset, Leung explores the Chinese notion of contagion (*chuanran* 傳染), retracing both the way in which it was conceptualised quite early in traditional Chinese medicine (right from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries) and the minor role long attributed to it in the passage to the pathological stage. This conceptual framework, which lasted until the early twentieth century, also influenced the way in which the great Manchurian pneumonic plague of winter 1910-1911 was perceived by some traditional practitioners. This is brought out very well in Sean Hsiang-lin Lei's article, devoted specifically to this well-known epidemic episode. Thought incurable at the time, the pulmonary plague that spread in the Qing empire's northeast from the autumn of 1910 highlighted the therapeutic ineffectuality of both traditional and modern medicine. While traditional practitioners sought – futilely, and sometimes sacrificing their own lives – to save the victims, practitioners of modern medicine could identify the cause of the disease using a microscope, and they persuaded the authorities to impose strict quarantine and isolation of patients. Despite the cruelty suffered by some of those concerned, the measures helped contain the spread of the disease and finally snuffed it out. The authorities were converted to the measures favoured by modern medicine of the period, while the foundations of traditional knowledge faced a challenge, forcing practitioners to reconsider their positions in light of new information.

The third article (second in order of presentation) by Yu Xinzhong is concerned with cleanliness and urban sanitation. The author seeks to present an overall picture of traditional waste disposal in cities in the Chinese empire and goes on to examine the influence of Western expansion on this process in the countryside. One of the few essays in the book to regard China as a whole, the article suffers from the author's juggling of sources vastly different in nature and relating to periods more than a century apart, resulting in generalities that unfortunately fail to do justice to an otherwise fascinating subject. It is also regrettable that in tackling the passage to modernity, the author limits his focus mostly to the foreign concessions of ports open to foreign trade starting from the mid-nineteenth century, and often overestimates the "gains" of this gradual modernisation, the limits of which

1. See Ruth Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Disease in Treaty-Port China*, Berkeley, London, University of California Press, 2004.

were exposed in many works of the era, as well as the still unstable scientific foundations, reflected in turbulent debate in the West and Japan throughout the second half of the nineteenth century around notions of contagion, infection, and micro-organism that are accepted unanimously today.

The book's second part is entitled "Colonial Health and Hygiene." The three articles it contains transport readers to the singular world of colonised societies, where traditional and imported novelties confront and merge with each other. Shang-jen Li looks at China's open ports in the second half of the nineteenth century and the issue of indigenous food regimes as described by foreign "observers," in this case all British doctors. The second article, by Ruth Rogaski, turns to Manchuria under Japanese domination, describing sanitary arrangements for the population during the 1930s, whereas the third article, written by Wu Chia-ling, focuses on the role and training of midwives in Taiwan, again during Japanese colonisation. The underlying theme here is represented through relating to the other or otherness in a general context in which, in a way more or less pronounced depending on the situation, the superiority of the colonising power, its knowledge, and its practices are taken for granted. It is interesting to note, as the authors do, that the confrontation between the expertise of one side and the "ancestral" practices of the other, though always provoking a form of symbolic if not physical violence, also created a space for mediation, even in Manchuria – which concerns Rogaski – where the word "occupation" would perhaps be most appropriate, as the Kwantung Army controlled the annexed territory.

The third part, "Campaigns for Epidemic Control," catches up with the present. The four articles therein deal with the efforts made from the twentieth century to the present to eradicate diseases endemic to the region or to control others that have appeared recently. First, Lin Yi-ping and Liu Shiyung tackle the classic case of malaria in Taiwan, retracing several eradication drives undertaken from the beginning of Japanese colonisation to the mid-1960s, when the island saw the last of the disease. The second contribution, by Li Yushang, is concerned with mainland China, especially the Jiangnan region, where bilharzia (or schistosomiasis) was endemic until the 1980s. Li examines an eradication campaign launched in the 1950s that illustrates the eagerness as well as the inability of new communist authorities to properly manage the effort at a time when over-mobilisation of the "masses" was afoot towards the end of the decade.

The last two texts, by Marta Hanson and by Tseng Yen-fen and Wu Chia-ling, deal with the SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) epidemic that gripped East Asia in 2003. Hanson looks at the role of Chinese traditional medicine in mainland China among possible treatments for the atypical disease, this therapeutic input being generally coupled with solutions sought in modern medicine. Rather than a return to favour of the principles and concepts underlying traditional Chinese medicine, Hanson sees their eventual marginalisation, as practitioners themselves talk of the "scientific" dimensions proving the validity of their system rather than basing their justification on traditional theoretical fundamentals. Tseng and Wu analyse the reactions of authorities faced with the epidemic, especially focusing on Taiwan and Singapore. They note the confusion in both places and the difficulties of reacting to an unknown pathology. They also note the faltering international cooperation and coordination at this level by the World Health Organisation. Inevitably, the outbreak of a disease that is difficult to cure using modern medicine confronts us with our humanity, mortality, and vulnerability, and revives age-old anxieties that the rise of public health and modern medicine during the twentieth century had relegated as relics of the past.

There is a great deal more to be said about a collection that will doubtless be read by anyone concerned with the themes of public health and modernisation of the Chinese world over the past two centuries. Leung and Furth are to be thanked for putting together this volume, which, among its numerous merits, demonstrates the virtue of publishing conference papers when they are well organised.

■ Translated by N. Jayaram.

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"La Chine et l'ordre du monde" (China and the World Order), special issue of *Agone*, No. 52, 2013, 232 pp.

DAVID BARTEL

The journal *Agone's* issue No. 52 is interesting on several counts. The collection of texts, written mainly by renowned Chinese intellectuals, attempts to examine "China from the inside, devoid of Orientalist colourings and fascination for economic performance."⁽¹⁾ It adds to a list of translations into French beginning with the *Écrits édifiants et curieux sur la Chine du xx^e siècle* (Edifying and Curious Writings on China in the Twentieth Century) edited by Chen Yan and Marie Holzman (éditions de l'Aube) in 2003. Also noteworthy are the journal *Diogène's* issue No. 221 on trends in political philosophy, published in 2008, and issue No. 31 of the journal *Extrême-Orient, Extrême-Occident* (Far East, Far West) edited by Sébastien Billioud and Joël Thoraval in 2009 and devoted to the political situation in China today. This special issue of *Agone* is thus part of the indispensable – and still too rare – effort to introduce texts by Chinese scholars concerned with the present and future evolution of their country; a perspective "from the inside" that is crucial to understanding the reality of this large and troubled nation. The dozen texts gathered here were previously published in the English language flagship of the intellectual Left, the *New Left Review*, between 1998 and 2013. It deals with different aspects – social, political, cultural – of China at the start of the twenty-first century.

Chinese nationalism (and its instrumentalisation by the regime as a tool of legitimation) was most apparent in the 1990s and remains much discussed. It is therefore logical that the issue opens with this theme, first with a text by Benedict Anderson, whose essay *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983) has become a reference. That is followed by Wang Chaohua's comparison of Chinese and

1. Link to the Agone website: <http://agone.org/revueagone/agone52/index.html>.

Taiwanese nationalism. She also cites Anderson in referring to the idea of "extra-territorial" nationalism in order to analyse Taiwan's case, i.e., nationalism similar in form to that of the 13 American colonies seeking freedom from metropolitan tutelage (p. 28). The two texts dealing with the ethnicisation of nationalism – or Han-centrism – facilitate a better theoretical grounding to tackle Tsering Shakya's account of the causes behind the violent riots of 2008 in China's border regions. Recounting the history of relations between Chinese and Tibetans, especially since the protests of the late 1980s, the Canada-based Tibetan Studies specialist paints a grim portrait of the situation in the region, where any expression of Tibetan identity is equated with separatism and therefore repressed.

Hong Ho-fung's text offers a good lesson in economics (even for those most allergic to the discipline): clearly analysing China's comportment during the 2009 financial crisis, he reconstructs the Chinese development "model" and most persuasively deconstructs widely held ideas on the *yuan's* undervaluation or the "inexhaustible" reserve of labour in the Chinese countryside (p. 84). He also analyses the effects of Chinese wage competitiveness on the world in general and on Asian neighbours in particular and offers simple keys for understanding the reasons for the intertwining of the Chinese and American economies. In his view, the "flying geese paradigm" centred on Japan was replaced in 2005 by a "Sino-centric production network" that allows China to supply the United States with cheap products while using its savings to finance their purchase by Americans (p. 91).

Pursuing the same iconoclastic impulse, He Qinglian presents an alarming analysis of the Chinese social structure. In a text written in 2000, a little after the polemics that followed her book *Xiandaihua de xianjin* (Pitfalls of Modernisation, 1998) and which led her to leave China in 2001, the author returns to the idea of a "South-Americanisation" of Chinese society and the growing concentration of power and wealth in the hands of a "political and intellectual elite that no longer believes in the future of the country it is governing" (p. 176). She mounts a spirited attack on the persistent myth of a large "middle class" seeking representation and thus political rights. She also expresses slim hope of the evolution of what she calls "intermediate organisations" (associations, NGOs, professional groups...), a conclusion that has proven sadly prescient over the last decade.

Also noteworthy is the discussion of major actors in the 1989 protests (Wang Chao, Wang Dan and Li Mingqi) published on the tenth anniversary of the Tiananmen movement in the *New Left Review*. Taking up the issue of the "ruthless exploitation of a large and cheap labour force" (p. 137), the discussion turns to the historic nature of the 1989 spring protests that heralded the end of the Cold War and of the communist dictatorships of Eastern Europe and Russia. Comparisons with the 1848 People's Spring, or even with 1968, in terms of the crushing of utopianism and idealism due to the obligations of – political and economic – realism are scintillating, especially as narrated by actors whose lives were overturned by the events.

Especially noteworthy is the article by Ying Qian, who teaches at the Australian National University, on the political discourse expressed in contemporary Chinese documentary films, retracing their origins and the major milestones in their history. She traces to 1984 the modern turn in the Chinese documentary and the inspiration for younger generations in images devoid of the "dramaturgy" of Antonioni's famous 1972 documentary (*Chung Kuo* – China). The rest of the article looks at the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s, noting the hesitations, doubts, and advances of a discipline "seeking political relevance" as it confronts the regime, its own insignificance, and the market (p. 198). Combining artistic discipline and political enquiry, the

author helps get to the heart of "an alternative source of analyses, experiences, and mobilisations of solidarity" through which it becomes possible to envisage "social change and a reconfigured public sphere" (p. 203).

Finally, the last two texts concern the journal *Dushu*. The first is an extract from an article by Zhang Yongle published in 2008 in the context of the dismissal of the team of editors led by Wang Hui and Huang Ping. The article notes the journal's importance in contemporary China's intellectual upbringing. The second is an extract of an interview with Wang in which he returns – yet again – to his disaffection with Chinese liberals, whom he accuses of many intellectual sins. These two extracts also quite accurately reflect the tone of Chinese intellectual debate over the events of the first decade of the century. Particularly noteworthy is the bitterness highlighted by Wang over Western "political hypocrisy" (p. 215), which became evident during the 1990s and led to a considerable loss of attraction for democratic ideals.

Agone, an independent journal founded in Marseille in 1990, deserves praise for bringing to the French public important works that can fuel a reflection on a China too often hidden behind official obfuscations of "Chinese characteristics" and their Western counterparts of "Chinese otherness." By removing China from the closed domain of Chinese Studies and opening it up to everyone, the journal has done yeoman service. China is not just "five thousand years of history" but is perceived through a well-grounded reality of current difficulties characterised by a divorce from promises of social justice and a headlong leap into the lure of consumption. The overall impression evoked after reading these articles is one of pervasive pessimism (with the notable exception of Wang Hui's) – a pessimism at odds with the soothing optimism underlying some discussions of Chinese growth and that raises questions of the degree of blindness indispensable for penetrating the Chinese market.

It is on the contradictions within liberalism in China that this issue of *Agone* offers a particularly interesting perspective. Indeed, if the back cover of the review seems tilted toward a certain Leftist criticism that holds that "liberals regard ordinary Chinese with goodwill so long as they contribute to the development of the market as consumers," the texts in the book are as much the work of intellectuals identified with the New Left as of Chinese "liberals." While social issues inform most of the special issue, it seems hazardous to list He Qinglian or Hung Ho-Fung in the nebulous "New Left." This evident tension between coverage and content indicates the difficulty the West has in distinguishing among divisions in the Chinese intellectual landscape. By highlighting liberal intellectuals' interest in social issues, the texts in the special issue strongly invalidate New Left postulates of a chasm between the "liberals" and the "people" and show contemporary Chinese liberalism's proximity to certain intellectual articulations of European and American intellectuals.

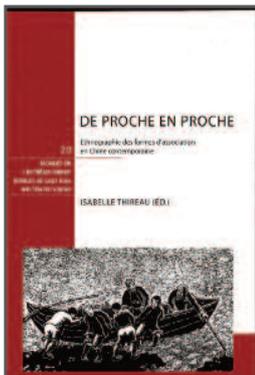
In order to understand the reasons for these gaps in the perception of contemporary Chinese intellectual and ideological currents, it would be instructive to examine the discursive strategies developed by the "New Left" in China and elsewhere. By accusing pro-reform "liberal" intellectuals of being partly responsible for economic liberalisation and thus for the catastrophic effects of neo-liberal developments since the mid-1990s, "New Left" critics seem to have found a sympathetic ear among both the Communist authorities, incapable of theoretically forgiving themselves for abandoning the revolutionary promises of equality and social justice, and European and American anti-globalisation movements, which were seeking new sources of support.

Behind these accusations lies a semantic derailment that looks much like a fraud. Terms such as “liberalism” and “neo-liberalism” are as equivocal as their theoretical origins are heterogeneous (Rosanvallon, *La société des égaux* [Society of equals], 2011, p. 328). Chinese liberals of the 1980s saw private property as the ultimate institutional protection for the individual from the state. Their common enemy was the totalitarian leviathan they had all confronted. The traumatic experience solidified a certain intellectual consensus in which the triptych of the individual, human rights, and democracy were seen as the surest fortifications against abuses of power. At that point, the excesses of (neo-)liberal development – social polarisation, marginalisation, and environmental destruction – had not yet had global consequences. Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan were just beginning their rule, unleashing “the great 1980s nightmare” (Cusset, *La Découverte*, 2006). Condemning liberals for the later results of the neo-liberal tendencies of the 1990s has been a convenient manipulation partly to blame for the misunderstandings between Chinese liberal intellectuals and European and American Leftists.

Finally, it must be noted that apart from Wang Hui, most of the Chinese authors in this collection are now *persona non grata* in mainland China, reflecting the sad reality of a country divorced from a portion of its intelligentsia. Nevertheless, by continuing to write and inform on the situation in their country, these intellectuals contribute to a “cultural China” in the process of emerging as, in the economist Hung Ho-Fung’s words, an “off-shore civil society” on which China might hope to count on to escape from the pitfalls of its modernisation.

■ Translated by N. Jayaram.

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Isabelle Thireau (ed),
De proche en proche. Ethnographie des formes d'association en Chine contemporaine (Face-to-face. An Ethnography of Forms of Association in Contemporary China),
Berne, Peter Lang, 2013, 317 pp.

ÉRIC FLORENCE

This volume originated in a research collaboration project (2006-2009) among Chinese and French sociologists and anthropologists seeking to “observe the processes of action, association, and coordination.” It analyses the multiple “forms of joint actions and collective initiatives, often disorganised and sometimes fleeting occurring in Chinese society now” (p. 11). While the texts assembled do not take a common theoretical approach, they nevertheless share an anchoring in solid ethnographic work and pay special attention to communication, both oral and written (p. 13).

Furthermore, despite the diversity of contributions, Isabelle Thireau’s introduction picks out several elements that could serve as kernels of the var-

ious contributions: the importance of a certain number of spaces (or their destruction) for “face-to-face” interactions or more virtual venues whether private or public, enabling the establishment of an “inter-subjectivity,” base for concerted action; the role “of promises, agreements, and engagements” and their importance for the social tissue in China today; a plurality of “us” noted in situations of association, cooperation, and action, as well as in “choices of action” and a diversity of “links between possibilities and choices”; and finally, accomplished collective actions with different modalities of public “visibility” (pp. 14-19).

The wealth and complexity of social relations dealt with by the various contributions reflects another transversal issue in all the texts in this volume, that of different modalities of links between those who mobilise and form associations on the one hand and state agents on the other. These relations may include asymmetry, reciprocity, mutual dependence, cooperation, instrumentalisation, and co-optation.

The first two chapters deal with the Mao era in a highly complementary manner, each tackling little-studied aspects of the period. Drawing inspiration from Hannah Arendt’s notion of “atomisation,” Chang Shu examines how the Chinese Communist Party managed to block the building of social relations that could have helped the people of Dazhai Village act collectively or even oppose the domination system introduced there. The article makes special reference to the political violence linked to two major campaigns – the first following Japan’s capitulation in 1945 and the second as part of agrarian reforms through which the Party established its hold on rural society in Xiyang District (Dazhai Village), directly exposing people to political terror and blocking them from any protection through intermediary associations. Chang pays special attention to the role of “activists” (*jijifenzhi*) within mass movements (*yundong*), accounting for up to 20% of the local population. The author explains that some of them were motivated to become activists by a desire not to be targeted in a mass movement (pp. 33, 38). In Chang’s view, apart from the suppression of local associations, the atmosphere of political terror could also have helped the party achieve its project of “transformation of the population’s thinking” (p. 44). On this point, it may be worth asking whether the author has not gone somewhat speedily from the suppression of alternative public discourse and of the possibility for people to organise themselves in associations to the effective transformation of their thinking, meaning the Party would have managed to block imagination even of an alternative social order or of another reality. It would have been helpful if Chang had tested this argument against social science literature dealing with hegemony and the process of symbolic and material resistance.

In the next contribution, Hua Linshan investigates what led residents of Xiaogang Village (Anhui Province) in 1978 to enter into a pact to oppose the official collectivist policy in agricultural production, thus taking on the major risk of exposure to repression. The author shows that those behind the decision had been marked by a shared experience of the indignities suffered during the dark days of the famine caused by the Great Leap Forward. This collective experience of indignities suffered also induced an attitude of passive resistance-turned-indifference towards collectivist organisation modes. This is similar to what Eric Hobsbawm wrote in 1973 about the resistance of subject populations who seek to minimise the harm done by a system of domination imposed on them. Hua also shows that “direct” and “personal” experiences of the realities of the famine, of poverty, and of indignities were stronger than a “compulsory and omnipresent” language associated with the system [and with terror] seen as being at the origin of a

situation deemed unacceptable (p. 70). Interestingly, the villagers' decision to oppose official policy by signing a collective pact was taken *without prior recourse to discussion*, and lying outside "any debate or controversy, it was oriented by an experience both singular and shared, by physical and psychological sufferings endured during more than 20 years by the farmers concerned" (p. 84). The author's stress on the non-recourse to discussion in the face of shared indignities, which seemed like "normative evidence," is interesting as it challenges the argument developed by James C. Scott that such experience tends to engender a collective discourse of indignity; in the specific conditions of Xiaogang it seems not to have taken place (Scott, 1990).

With more than ten years of observation in Qiejiazhuang Village (Hebei Province), Liu Xiaojing looks into elections organised there for heads of village committees and the manner in which different protagonists mobilise professional, personal, and political links to influence the electoral process. The study shows power relations in the village not being fundamentally altered by the elections. Nevertheless, the management of local affairs tends to get less asymmetric and the space for discussion, agreement, and negotiation greater and more productive than earlier. In Liu's view, this "institutional innovation" has induced incertitude in the rural community and nurtured the "eventual development [...] of other ways of acting together" (p. 122).

In the next chapter, Caroline Bodolec examines new mobilisations and associations around the artistic village of Xiaocheng and the Museum of Popular Culture of the Nianpan Plateau in Yanchuan District (Shaanxi Province). She documents the extent to which such initiatives bring together local actors and Chinese scholars collaborating with foreign actors and institutions. Although relatively independent from local authorities to begin with, such initiatives were rendered possible because of a form of recognition – even co-optation – and goodwill on the part of powers that be. The issue of modalities of relations with the Party-state also finds pride of place in the next contribution.

Based on the biographical sketch of a rural migrant who formed in Beijing's Dongcun area an association devoted to migrants from rural areas, Isabelle Thireau draws attention to an important issue recurring in several contributions in the volume: the necessity of those who organise collectively to be identified and recognised by local authorities in order "to be able to act and eventually overcome the limits" (p. 171). Such recognition could take the form of the association displaying a "plaque" attesting that its activities are "supported and supervised" (p. 171). Thireau refers to local authorities' "right to review" those organising themselves in associations, such a right taking on, in certain circumstances, arbitrary and intimidating dimensions extending up to the closure of the association in some cases, followed by an equally sudden withdrawal of the ban imposed on the association despite its prior closure. Thireau also stresses the concern on the part of those active in such associations not to have too high a public *visibility*. The fortunes of the association studied in this contribution show a "large spectre of local authorities' actions depending on their appreciation, given the circumstance, of the merits or political risks carried by official backing to such activities" (p. 175).

In the following text, Liu Chun Brenda relies on Bruno Latour's network society approach and explores the normative links mobilised during collective actions in the case of a mobilisation movement of a residents' collective seeking to resist an urban development project in several areas of Shenzhen. She clearly illustrates the extent to which participants in the mobilisation

use a large array of resources and organisational forms, and the lines between the just and unjust, public and private being "in constant redefinition" (p. 217). During the mobilisation, collective action is transformed into an essentially legal one, after having endured several reversals, and is steered towards higher echelons of state hierarchy (for instance the Environmental Protection Bureau) and a series of accommodations with local authorities.

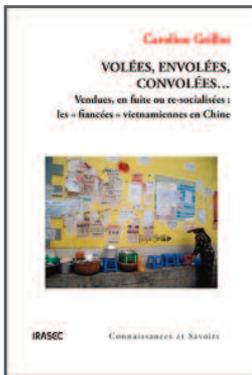
In the next chapter, Elisabeth Allès deals with the more or less formal modes of associations formed by three categories of Uyghur migrants in Guangzhou: temporary workers, traders, and officials. As in the case of the chapter dealing with migrants' associations in Beijing, the link between the experience of institutional discrimination and the desire to organise in order to confront arbitrary actions and abuse are well documented.

In the book's last contribution, Wang Hansheng and Wang Yige offer a most detailed analysis of the "administrative responsibility system" (*mubiao guanli zerenzhi*) linking Party committees and local governments. They draw attention to the fact that the system, which has no basis in legal texts or regulations regarding governmental actions, nevertheless plays a crucial role in the "way the authorities work at the base of the local level administration" (p. 243). The chapter's main interest lies in its explanation of the fact that during the transition from the Mao era to that of economic reform, it was among others the "responsibility by objectives system" that helped build institutional links among different vertical and territorial administrations, between the state and enterprises, as well as between townships and villages. Because it attributes the responsibility of proper implementation of a single valid contract for the state and the Party to the secretary of the Party committee, the system commands an important function in that it makes an operational linkage between the state and the Party. The authors explain this logic by specifying that "the village or Resident's Committees and local governments" are linked by "a chain of responsibility (*zeren liandai guanxi*) which integrates everyone in a community of obligations and interests [...] and a unit of action" (pp. 271, 293). It is worth noting that the system offers some elbow room for lower-level cadres as regards the carrying out of tasks, the main constraint being one of objectives, which "makes possible institutional novelties stemming from accommodations and transgressions" (pp. 303-304).

Seven of the nine texts (including the introduction) are in French and two in English, something that could have done with an explanation. However, this takes nothing away from the great quality and originality of the contributions gathered in this work, which contributes greatly towards clarifying the dynamics of formation of different modalities of association. The analyses are solidly supported, and each of the texts is based on real ethnographic riches illuminating the complexity of social and political relations in contemporary China.

■ **Translated by N. Jayaram**

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Caroline Grillot,
**Volées, envolées, convolées...
 Vendues, en fuite, ou re-socialisées: les "fiancées" vietnamiennes en Chine (Abducted, Flown, Married... Sold, escaped or rehabilitated: Vietnamese fiancées in China)** Bangkok/Paris, IRASEC/Connaissances & Savoirs, 2012, 407 pp.

HÉLÈNE LE BAIL

Traditions of exogamy and patrilocality of marriage in Asia have long led women to leave their villages, regions, or even countries in search of a husband. Distances have tended to grow, at first within frontiers and then beyond. Inside China, many works have shown a correspondence between migrations for marriage and spatial hierarchy linked to development: using mobility through marriage, women have sought to move to more affluent coastal regions. ⁽¹⁾ Chinese women's migration for marriage has crossed borders since the late 1980s: "overseas marriages" (*shewai jiehun* 涉外结婚). Migrating for marriage implies that matrimonial union involves obtaining a visa and crossing national borders. Through marriages arranged or otherwise, large numbers of mainland Chinese brides have gone to Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea alongside women from Vietnam and the Philippines. While from China's viewpoint, these outflows remain relatively low (under 0.5%), immigration for marriage has become a major social phenomenon in most host countries.

One of the strengths of Caroline Grillot's book is that it shows China as more than a source country in the migratory system nurtured by brides' mobility across East Asian borders. It has also become a destination for foreign brides, and the totality of these flows, internal and international, must be analysed in their continuity.

"The phenomenon of cross-border marriages [in China] has to be viewed as a continuum, a form of expansion of those consecrated inside China for about two decades, the fates of the women concerned being more similar than different: the second type often making up for the defection of the first in search of the same dreams elsewhere." (p. 129)

In China as a whole, cross-border mobility for marriage remains marginal. However, the phenomenon is highly visible in some localities, which have emerged as zones of departure and arrival. This localisation underlines the importance of migration chains and networks, leading to the following observation: "Why are there so few migrants from so many places and so many from only a few places?" ⁽²⁾ It also reflects social and demographic upheavals in rural zones. Depopulation, rising numbers of singletons, and measures that favour preservation of family enterprises have affected South Korean, Taiwanese, and Japanese rural zones for decades, and immigration for marriage is one of the solutions sought by localities or individuals. More recently, China has been facing the same problems but in a more accelerated manner. Studies highlight the rapid process of rural exodus and the already evident influence of the skewed male-female ratio on single men, especially in rural areas. ⁽³⁾

Grillot's study of marriages between Vietnamese women and Chinese men is in the framework of highly local transformations underway in China's peripheral zones and of Asia's transnational matrimonial market. Her original approach lies in regarding China as an immigration area and is part of studies on novel forms of cross-border exchanges between China and Southeast Asia, with borders having long been shut and mobility restricted. The entire introductory chapter describes this border region, its history and the choice to focus on two Sino-Vietnamese "twin cities" that thrive on cross-border trade: Dongxing and Mong-Cai in Guangxi Province, and Hekou and Lao-Cai in Yunnan. These cities have historically been major transit routes; the Hanoi-Kunming railway built by the French in 1910 passes through Hekou. They have again come into their own as the Dongxing-Mong-Cai Free Trade Zone and Hekou-Lao-Cai Economic Cooperation District. The author spent many months in the area, a crossroads between China and Vietnam, in order to gain intimate knowledge of marginalised women.

The ground covered in *Volées, envolées, convolées...* expanded and deepened, leading to a thesis that Grillot defended at Macquarie University in May 2012. ⁽⁴⁾ The research project germinated when the author went to Phnom Penh on a mission for an NGO, AFESIP Cambodia, and its observatory on illicit traffic in Southeast Asia. Contradictions observed between "institutionalised stereotypes" of cross-border marriages between China and Vietnam and the remarks encountered on the ground spawned the idea of an ethnographic study. Starting from an analytical framework focused on forced marriages and notions of human trafficking that treated women as victims, the author gradually changed her approach, abandoning what she considered stereotypes to take into account a surprising social reality (PhD thesis, p. 5). Thus was born this book project, its publication supported by IRASEC (Institut de l'Asie du Sud-Est contemporaine or Research Institute on Contemporary Southeast Asia at Bangkok), as well as the PhD thesis.

Apart from deconstructing the discourse on trafficking of women in Southeast Asia, fieldwork also helped the author enrich socioeconomic analyses that often remain at too macro a level to properly gauge the reality of such mixed marriages and the migration of these women. Grillot offers a look at these marriages from the inside, through women's own accounts, juxtaposing transformations underway in the Chinese and Vietnamese societies with illustrated representations of conjugality and matrimonial norms in these couples' daily and private lives. While taking note of structuralist approaches highlighting the demographic crisis and poverty in explaining such mixed marriages (Chapter 3), the author gives pride of place to the issue of marginality, especially in discussing the Chinese husbands, whose profiles are much more varied than might be suspected.

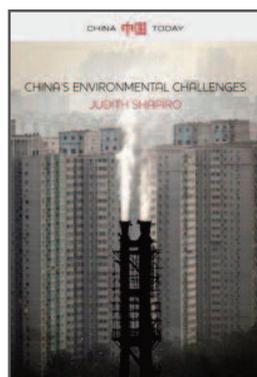
1. Fan Cindy and Huang Youqing, "Waves of Rural Brides: Female Marriage Migration in China," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 88, No. 2, 1998, pp. 227-251. Delia Davin, "Marriage Migrations in China: The Enlargement of Marriage Markets in the Era of Market Reforms," in Rajni Paliwala, Patricia Uberoi, *Marriage, Migration and Gender*, New Delhi, Sage Publications India, 2008.
2. Thomas Faist, *The Volume and Dynamics of International Migration and Transnational Social Spaces*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, p.1.
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4. Caroline Grillot, "The fringes of conjugality: On fantasies, tactics and representations of Sino-Vietnamese encounters in borderlands," PhD thesis in social anthropology, Macquarie University, Sydney, cotutelle Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2012, 477 pp.

Chapter 4, devoted to encounter factors, describes these forms of marginality and diversity of profiles. Chinese husbands are childless farmers, excluded from society (the sick, differently abled, divorced, etc.), or migrants from interior areas. Vietnamese women are often victims of trickery, but are also determined to emerge from their marginality (being old, divorced, widows, single-mothers, victims of violence) or are even adventurers or romantics dreaming of a better life in China. Chapters 5, 6, and 7 describe their daily lives: first of all, the marriage, often non-regularised, a life of illegality; and relations with in-laws and the rest of society as well as between the couples themselves. Relying on extensive interviews, the author analyses the mutual representations, deceptions, and adaptations by both men and women. Finally, the last chapter describes cases of such women's return to Vietnam, often under the most difficult circumstances.

Volées, envolées, convolées... is an absorbing tableau of personal dealings and stories set around the Sino-Vietnamese border over more than two decades. Making for easy reading with numerous accounts of daily life, this tableau, with its nuances and critical stance, is part of numerous discussions on the social transformations in China and Vietnam, and more generally on human trafficking and on the feminisation of migration.

■ Translated by N. Jayaram.

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Judith Shapiro,
China's Environmental
Challenges,
Cambridge, Polity Press, 2012, 205 pp.

HIAY-YEN DAM

In the decades since the late 1970s, China has become a manufacturing powerhouse for the world. This has helped improve the lives of its population, but major repercussions on its environment have drawn the attention of Western scholars in diverse disciplines since the 1980s. Judith Shapiro's book is part of this trend. She already published a book on this issue in 2001 (*Mao's War against Nature: Politics and the Environment in Revolutionary China*, Cambridge University Press). While that work focused on the Maoist period, her latest offers a panorama on the issue from the launch of reform and opening to the present time. The author was studying Chinese language and civilisation (Master of Asian Studies) at the University of California when she was selected to teach English in Hunan Province in 1979. After returning to the United States two and a half years later, her career took a turn towards Global Environmental Politics. She has since been teaching at the School of International Service at American University (Washington, D.C.).

China's Environmental Challenges takes the form of a manual for students specialising in environmental policy or contemporary China but also for

anyone interested in the subject. Its 205 pages (plus preface) are divided into seven chapters. Each chapter ends with a series of questions and several links to websites so the reader can take the discussion further. The book thus has a highly didactic aspect. It is based on a compilation of secondary sources, Internet sites specialising in environmental issues in China and elsewhere, articles, documentary films as well as some personal interviews and communications addressed to the author. The environmental theme is dealt with using a multidisciplinary approach (political science, environmental anthropology, human geography, environmental history, and economics of the environment) centred on five key analytical concepts: globalisation, governance, national identity, civil society, and environmental justice. The introduction describes the environmental problems and challenges facing China. Chapter 2 details the factors affecting the country's natural environment: over-population, the rise of the middle class, globalisation and industrialisation, urbanisation and the diminution of arable land, as well as climate change. Chapter 3 looks at the institutional and legal framework of China's governance system. Chapter 4 focuses on national identity and the possibility of creating a sustainable Chinese model of development. Chapter 5 examines the emergence of a civil society and the population's participation in the country's political orientation on environmental issues. The penultimate chapter raises the issue of equity and of the displacement of environmental harm towards poorer regions of China and the world. Finally, by way of conclusion, the author offers paths China might pursue as well as a reflection on the role developed countries may play.

In the context of debate over the increasing depletion of natural resources and the influence of human activities on the planet, what is China's stand and what role does it play? By opening up to the world and to market economics, China has reaped unprecedented growth. On the other hand, the effects on the environment and people's well-being stemming from this development model (air and water pollution, soil erosion, threats to wild fauna and flora, and impact on human health) and their effect on the rest of the planet are increasingly apparent. It has become crucial to question China's development model, the factors influencing the environment, and the manner in which the country is dealing with its problems.

In Chapter 2, the author recalls the rapid growth of China's population during the Maoist era and the linkage between overpopulation and environmental degradation. The rise of the middle class is a more recent phenomenon inciting fears as well as hopes. Its choices and modes of consumption tend to imitate those of the populations of developed countries, with a negative influence on the environment. Nevertheless, better education and information and consciousness of the need for a less polluted environment could pressure the state to take steps in the right direction. Even so, are resources sufficient to meet the Chinese population's basic needs so that a sufficiently large middle class can influence the state's decisions? Is the state able to ensure implementation of its decisions? China has become the manufacturing hub of the world, but it is neither the sole beneficiary nor sole victim. Its development benefits the developed countries to which its finished products are exported, to the detriment of the developing countries that supply raw material. These countries, including China, also receive junk for recycling, adding to their pollution issues.

Chapter 3 examines the political structure and legislative system dealing with environmental issues. China has taken part in major international conferences on the environment and has signed or ratified many treaties. In 2008, the *State Environmental Protection Administration* – SEPA – became the Ministry of Environmental Protection, a sign of increased attention de-

voted to the issue. China also acquired a series of laws on environmental protection deemed to be among the most exhaustive. However, many obstacles stall their implementation. Apart from recurring problems linked to weak grasp of laws or lack of competence within bureaucracies and legal institutions, there are also structural flaws. China's quasi-federal administrative system is a form of fragmented authoritarianism based on verticality and horizontality (*tiao kuai* 条块). From a functional standpoint, there is, as in the case of environmental protection, a vertical hierarchy; the Ministry of Environmental Protection presides over a pyramid of agencies and services. But territorially, the Ministry is confronted by a competing horizontal level of authority held by provincial and local governments. Further, governmental organs face contradictory pressures – maintaining economic growth and the Party's legitimacy or the country's stability and pursuit of sustainable development.

In Chapter 4, Shapiro turns to the issue of Chinese national identity, which she sees gripped by conflicting feelings of pride over a glorious past and humiliation at defeat by Westerners. Thus the strategies favoured by the Chinese state would be motivated by a desire to re-conquer what it deems its rightful place on the global chessboard. To attain this objective, should it adopt a Western model or propose a new Chinese model? This is not a new question but one that has been posed since the late Imperial era. Aware of the flaws of the West's past strategies of growth and environmental management, many Western scholars have voiced the hope that China could propose a different model based on its long and rich philosophical tradition, especially in its representation of humans and their place within nature. While the author seems to abide by this vision, she offers no solution as to how it might be realised.

Shapiro then looks at how the population perceives the environmental question and the possibilities for citizen participation. Freedom of association was highly circumscribed under Mao, social organisations having been entirely under state control and obliged to maintain surveillance over the population. Despite a relaxation with Deng Xiaoping's arrival at the helm, the registration of associations remained subject to strict regulation, necessitating supervision by a government organ. Since 2008, pilot projects have begun to take shape in some cities, offering the possibility of registering directly with civil affairs departments. Among registered NGOs, the most numerous are dedicated to environmental protection. In fact, although this is a sensitive subject, it is less so than human rights. As in other developing countries, environmental protection is a Trojan Horse in China, allowing for the introduction of a larger debate on democracy. Alongside NGOs, there are also GONGOs (Government Organized NGOs), non-profit associations set up by governmental agencies or by their members. Despite this affiliation, such organisations can play a not insignificant role in environmental protection. NGOs' actions take the form of mobilising opinion using new communication technologies, social networks, the media, and protest movements. Protests worry the state, raising fears over the country's stability and the Party's legitimacy. While citizen activists are recruited from all social strata, Shapiro notes that movements initiated in cities and led by those from the middle classes, who are more educated and organised, have a better chance of success than those led by farmers.

Inequality in the ability to raise demands between urban and rural residents, between people in China's coastal regions and those in the interior, between Han Chinese and ethnic minorities, as well as between China and less developed countries, is discussed in the penultimate chapter. The notion of environmental justice takes into account extraction of natural resources,

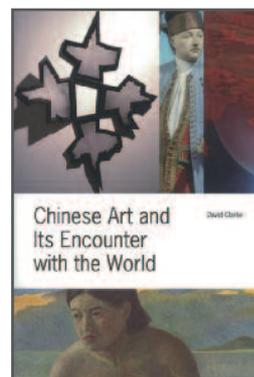
exposure to various forms of pollution, access to information, and participation in the decision-making process. It goes with the notion of displacement of environmental harm. In fact, if citizens' associations succeed at times in blocking industrial projects inside major cities, all that results is relocation to the periphery or to rural areas. Furthermore, concessions to the imperatives of environmental protection, such as the logging ban, have merely shifted the pressure of damaging activities from China to Southeast Asia and elsewhere. The impact of China's resource extraction activities outside its territory has been the subject of lively debate. There are those who point to positive effects of such activities accompanied by development assistance projects (road infrastructure, hospitals, and schools), but others see them only as means for greater exploitation of host countries' natural resources.

While China has gradually managed to join the ranks of key global actors, this new position requires a special orientation towards sustainable development and protection of the global environment. In Shapiro's view, China can and should play the role of a modern laboratory in order to promote reflection on other paths to development. Throughout the book, Shapiro has tried to develop a highly nuanced vision of the Chinese case in order to integrate and accompany the country's efforts towards a more environment-respecting development model.

This book's strengths also contain the germs of its weaknesses. Its structure as a manual and its multidisciplinary approach gather several themes related to the environment and afford a good overview of the issues in a single book. However, it is replete with repetition – both examples and analyses – and the facts related are not always fresh. Moreover, some subjects are touched on too briefly, especially Chapter 4 on Chinese philosophical traditions and their potential as a source of inspiration in environmental conservation. This can perhaps be explained by the target readership, which is not necessarily China experts.

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David Clarke,
**Chinese Art and Its Encounter
with the World,**

Hong Kong, Hong Kong University
Press, 2011, 259 pp.

NICOLAS IDIER

David Clarke is founder and scientific director of *Hong Kong Art Archive*, a database of use to art historians and collectors, critics, advertisers, and gallery owners. With his diverse activities (he has been part of the Hong Kong Arts Development Council and Hong Kong Arts Centre,

currently chairing the academic committee of the Centre's Hong Kong Art School; he is also a photographer), Clarke envisages the art world in three main dimensions: artistic creation, academic research, and administration of its promotion. All this imparts a special richness to this compilation of six of his articles, some previously published in exhibition catalogues, collective works, and specialised journals between 2005 and 2010. Apart from this, Clarke lives in the heartland of the object of his investigation. Such proximity nurtures a form of empathy he seeks and that does seem to be a necessary quality for the discipline of art history, which cannot be divorced from frequent familiarity with the subject of study. This triple quality – scientific, public, and artistic – opens up enlarged perspectives. The coming together of different forms of art helps engender a non-formalist art history without, however, losing sight of the visual objects. This has become necessary as art history in the modern and contemporary era has gotten more complex, notably because of the acceleration of exchanges and multiplication of screens and cross references. When images circulate much faster than texts, does it mean no translation is needed? Certainly not, as they operate in a complex environment, something Clarke alludes to: the process of cultural transfer, resistance, and imitation, as well as of ingestion, has been at work between China and the West ever since the first contact.

While it might be regrettable that the book's title suggests too vast a canvas, as is often the case with collections of articles or pre-published contributions, what is important is that each chapter is perfectly laid out and gives the reader the keys to understanding the subjects of specific issues: Chinese artist Chitqua, who lived in London in the eighteenth century, and then the relations between Teng Baiye and Mark Tobey during a crucial era in Chinese aesthetic modernity (the 1920s), constitute the first part, entitled "Trajectories"; the second part is devoted to two recurring issues – representation of the body and abstraction; the third and last part focuses on two cities wedged "between China and the world" – Macao and Hong Kong. Clarke thus envisages major axes of art history in the spectrum of cultural history: artists, concepts, and places. Formal analysis of some works helps synthesise the conjunction of these three axes without recourse to excessive structuralism. While the author says his work benefits from a "multi focal" approach (introduction, p. 5), everything seems set to stress the importance of place of production and reception, of the work, concept, and artist.

First, Chitqua in eighteenth century London: through a focus on this sculptor and modeller, Clarke expounds on Chinese art in its least noble angle – craft and anecdote, as opposed to literary arts that generally monopolised international and Chinese exhibitions. Pierre Ryckmans had opted for a similar approach, devoting a monograph to Su Renshan, a little-known nineteenth century Guangdong painter.⁽¹⁾ Chitqua's travels necessitate a narration that Clarke reconstructs – from Guangdong to London, where he arrived in 1769 and departed from in 1772 (he could not stand the British climate), well-versed in English, a Chinese art expert sought out by British collectors and introduced to London's high society, where his art became a sensation. While untangling Chitqua's career, Clarke explores a great diversity of sources: gazettes from the era, personal diaries, and paintings. This visual enquiry is usefully reconstituted through a high-quality iconography, leading to the author's first conclusion: Chinese artists' mobility, which today is one of the main motors of globalised contemporary art, began quite early, with often little-known personalities such as Chitqua, "a pioneering example," first in a genealogy that Clarke pursues in the rest of the book: Teng Baiye, Zao Wou-ki, Lin Fengmian, and Li Tiefu.

After examining the career of an eighteenth-century artist, Clarke turns to the relations between two artists considered the masters of aesthetic modernity in Chinese and Western modernity respectively: Teng Baiye (1900-1980) and Mark Tobey (1890-1976). Tobey's "white writing" constitutes an aesthetic turning point, having influenced many contemporary artists such as Jackson Pollock and stemming at least in part from the discovery of Asian, especially Chinese, art. Tobey first met Teng in Seattle in the 1920s. Some years later Tobey went to China and pursued his study of calligraphy. Thus their careers overlapped.

While the influence of contemporary Western art on Chinese productions throughout the twentieth century is formally acknowledged, the reciprocal influence is less well known. Without a doubt, the major merit of Clarke's book is that it shows, using precise and documented examples, the interpenetration of the Chinese and Western art scenes, and the reciprocity of influences. The reader will appreciate the importance attached to the first-rate linguistic analysis, especially problems of phonetic transcriptions of Chinese patronyms. This is not an anecdotal issue, as it conditioned sources at the time. Take Teng Baiye, for instance: art history books in English flounder among "T'eng Kwei," "Teng Kuei," "Teng Kroi," "Teng Quay" and even "Kwei Dun," for Teng Baiye's real name, Teng Gui. This example is cited in order to highlight another quality of Clarke's work: getting the reader's feet muddled in the methodology and obstacles in retracing art history.

Clarke cites several accounts of artists whose careers he examines, as well as those of people they encountered, in what constitutes another form of getting the feet muddled. Take for instance the extract of a letter Tobey sent from Shanghai in 1934 to Dorothy Elmirst, a rich American philanthropist linked to a large number of contemporary artists: "[...] the Chinese are not figure or nude conscious" (p. 101). The reader discovers a considerable historical exchange process that traverses the aesthetic thought expressed by the actors. From then on, the lines of separation become less distinct and clear than might have appeared at first: while in the 1920s and 1930s Tobey experimented with calligraphy and line drawings, Teng was exploring volumes through sculpture and "finger painting," practices that were held in low esteem in Chinese aesthetic judgements, as they dispensed with the use of the paintbrush.

The link between the first part and the next is Shanghai, which served many artists as a venue for reciprocal learning and discovery. The second part will easily persuade the readers of Meyer Schapiro's *Theory and Philosophy of Arts: Style, Artist, and Society* (Georges Braziller Inc., 1994), in which the Columbia University professor explored visuality through several angles – criticism, philosophy, and psychoanalysis, but always proceeding from the image itself – and which distinguishes his enterprise from all abstract generalisations. Clarke plunges into two major questions frequently asked with regards to the difference between Chinese and Western art: first the place of the body and then the issue of abstraction. These two chapters are distinct from each other and yet form, side by side, a coherent whole, since it is calligraphy that is considered the nub of the problematic. Clarke brings to his analysis a deep knowledge of history, using for example the works of Lothar Ledderose on the painter and calligrapher Mi Fu (*Mi Fu and the Classical Tradition of Chinese Calligraphy*, Princeton University Press, 1979); he then uses the exhibitions of the early twentieth century as well as images reproduced in magazines and journals of the era, especially those

1. *La Vie et l'œuvre de Su Renshan, rebelle, peintre et fou* (The life and works of Su Renshan: Rebel, painter, and madman 1814-1849, English translation by Angharad Pimpaneau), UER Asie orientale, Université Paris 7, 1970.

in Shanghai, which acted as catalysts in the encounters between two modernities, Western and Chinese. Once more, Clarke's pragmatic approach saves him from hasty theorisations. He deciphers new systems of production in the twentieth century (especially the development of studios, not to be confused with the study of literary figures, which left less of a place for *production* than for *reflection*). In addition, this part gives the author space to deal with the issue of critical reception. He does this not only in respect of the development of nudes in the 1920s and 1930s in Shanghai, but also, much like Eric de Chassey in the case of the United States,⁽²⁾ for the reception of abstraction. The issue of abstraction is again approached through the problematic of calligraphy, as seen through the citation of a work of the Hong Kong painter Lui Shou-kwan, *Zhuangzi* (1974, coll. Hong Kong Museum of Art), whose three categories of motifs complete each other: a column of calligraphic characters that ends with a red seal; thick black ink features resembling calligraphic gestures (especially "flying whites" 飛白 *feibai*); and red butterfly wings. Clarke considers this work to be the culmination of the artist's work in that it reconciles perfect modern abstraction of plane work with the calligraphic space. He deciphers the specifically Chinese mechanism, appropriation of abstraction, including its relation to tradition through the mountain-and-water motif.

In the third part, Clarke focuses on two well-studied cities: Macao and Hong Kong. The author uses their status as buffers to analyse what creates a local identity. Using several visual examples, including photographs, he again brings out the specificity of the object studied. In this last part, one senses the author's personal implication: he has chosen to specify that he lives in Hong Kong and that he therefore has a non-objective view of the city and its close neighbour. This also harks back to his role as a photographer.⁽³⁾ The identity question leads on to that of critical reception: Clarke considers the tourism industry an integral part of the visual constitution of Macao's "spectacle." Psychological conclusions could pose problems, such as when Clarke evokes the "hidden anxiety behind the concept of 'world city'" as regards Hong Kong, if the visual analysis did not come up with an effective rationale. Clarke's work concentrates on visual analysis using concrete examples that constitute proof that Chinese art history is a domain of multiple influences, the process of cultural transfer and acculturation/in-culturation being of primary importance.

Clarke's objective has been served: proving that Chinese art history must necessarily be integrated with world art history, and not only under the label of "extra-Western," but as actively part and parcel of a constitution of common visual heritage whose most recent experimentations have been largely tributary. Another strength of the book is its emphasis on the analysis of art history as applied to contemporary China. Without rejecting formal analysis and some traditional questionings, art history is a discipline capable of dealing with the complexity of contemporary changes.

A review of Clarke's book would be incomplete without mentioning the numerous illustrations, the perfect quality of their reproduction, and their pertinence of choice: the editorial quality of the book adds to the reader's pleasure, especially enhancing understanding of the author's view. In the manner of an exhibition curator, Clarke, offers comparisons of truly interesting images such as the screen shots of Maggie Cheung and Anita Mui, to cite just one example. This visual mastery refines the regard and makes this book a visual experience in itself. Educating the eye, which is the hidden aim behind every good art history work, is achieved here. Finally, with an elaborate index and annotations, the book will be useful both for students and for those who wish to understand the process at work in the history of globalised art.

■ Translated by N. Jayaram.

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2. *La Peinture efficace. Une histoire de l'abstraction aux États-Unis, 1910-1960* (Efficient painting: A history of abstraction in the United States 1910-1960), Paris, Gallimard, 2001.
3. Exhibitions "The Metropolis – Visual Research into Contemporary Hong Kong" in 1996 at the Hong Kong Art Centre; "A Year in the Life of a City" in 2007 at the University of Hong Kong Museum; "Hong Kong Experience," also in 2007, in Britain.

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