



The Association for
Asian Studies

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Review

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Source: *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 70, No. 4 (NOVEMBER 2011), pp. 1154-1156

Published by: [Association for Asian Studies](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41350009>

Accessed: 10-02-2016 21:17 UTC

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suggesting careless copy-editing. The incorrect use of the definite and indefinite article is frequent. Truptil, the representative of the French Ministry of War who began negotiations with the Chinese government in 1915 concerning recruitment of Chinese labor becomes “Triptil” (p. 17); the Qianlong emperor becomes “Qianglong” (p. 32); Cai Hesen, a friend of Mao Zedong who was a work-study student in France in 1919 becomes “Cai Hesheng” (p. 218); and “brothels” becomes “brothers” (p. 148).

Xu’s book is certainly to be welcomed as the first English-language study of Chinese contract labor in World War One, but there is still scope for further and more substantial exploration of the episode that highlights its importance in the history of Chinese overseas labor as well as of Sino-western interaction and mutual perceptions.

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Inside China’s Grand Strategy: The Perspective from the People’s Republic. By YE ZICHENG. Translated by GUOLI LIU and STEVEN I. LEVINE. Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2011. xii, 301 pp. \$35.00 (cloth).

doi:10.1017/S0021911811001963

China’s rise (relative to its past and other great powers) for the past three decades has caused anxiety among many people over the world. The opaque nature of Chinese foreign policy and global strategy and newly emerged divisions among the intellectual and political elites have further heightened anxiety. The translation and publication of Ye Zicheng’s book is a significant contribution to scholars in universities and researchers in think tanks and policymaking units outside of China. It provides a comprehensive, historical, and critical examination of key issues and competing ideas with regard to China’s global ambition and challenges, its strategic thinking for tackling these issues, and the cleavages among Chinese policymakers. As the author states, his book does not represent the official policy, but it certainly reflects it. We can also say that the book represents mainstream thinking in China’s foreign policy debates.

Basically, Ye articulates his arguments in the context of being against three other interlocutors. On the aggressive side of the spectrum are the “extreme nationalists” and “militarists” (e.g., the voices from both the New Left and *The Global Times*); on the passive side the “dogmatic conservatives” (e.g. those who insist on sticking to Deng Xiaoping’s policy of *taoguang yanghui*—“hiding the light and biding the time”). In contrast to the previous two approaches within the current regime, an anti-regime liberal voice (“radical liberals” in Ye’s term) is lurking behind, supporting internationalism and universal values. The

author chooses an assertive position, the so-called more “rational” and “balanced” perspective, or the middle way. The arguments in the book represent the more progressive and healthy part of Chinese strategic thinking that are tolerated by the regime.

The whole book is organized around this core argument: China has a strategic opportunity, given by world development and created itself, to pursue the goal of a world power and through it the nascence of the Chinese nation. In Chapter 1, Ye divides great powers into three categories: the global superpower, the superpower, and the world power, but does not give an explicit definition for world power. He argues that favorable natural, demographic, economic, historical, and international factors constitute preconditions for China’s achievement of world power status around the year 2050. He argues that this ideal “should be the Chinese people’s ideology for the twenty-first century” (p. 75).

Chapter 2 reveals that China has been neither a status quo nor a radical power, but rather a revisionist one pursuing a reformist agenda in the current international order. Several contradictory ideas are presented: China should not take the lead but does not recognize U.S. global leadership (p. 84); China will not actively challenge but integrate into the world system, but it will create a “new and different model of civilization” (p. 85); China will not follow the “Western model” essentialized by the author, but “the best of Marxism” is embedded in the “values and concepts of Chinese socialism” (p. 85). The most important message, which Ye does not elaborate on, is that the main challenges to China’s ambitions are “domestic.” He does discuss the importance of democratization as one key strategic choice for China’s achievement of the world power ideal, but he has failed to convince the reader that a Chinese democracy distinct from Western democracy has been formulated and can be viable. Neither has he realized how divergence over democratic values between China and the rest has been one major cause of the absence of trust between China and the U.S., Taiwan, and other neighboring countries. Overall, Ye writes as a realist throughout the book and puts enormous stress upon interest as a solution to any problem China has with other nations.

In Chapters 3 to 5, Ye demonstrates how China’s increasing ability to distribute interest can help it manage relationships with the global and regional powers and its neighbors, and pursue its “peaceful development” both in terms of its own strategy and the global environment. The interest-centric approach extends into the last chapter of the book that deals with the issue of reunification with Taiwan. The author has not examined how China’s fetishism of world power status would benefit the average Chinese; as he takes the reunification as a litmus test and quintessential symbol of China’s ascendancy into a world power, he does not question how and whether it will uplift rather than push down the dignity of the Taiwanese people, either.

Overall, reading this informative book is rewarding. However, it is not an enjoyable experience due to the lack of satisfactory answers and convincing arguments. The author’s reception and defense of many of the government’s ideological propositions at their face value and his mixing up of descriptive and

prescriptive narratives reveal a serious flaw in the scholarship of Chinese international studies.

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INNER ASIA

The Silk Road in World History. By XINRU LIU. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. x, 168 pp. \$74.00 (cloth); \$19.95 (paper).
doi:10.1017/S0021911811001975

This volume on the Silk Road by Xinru Liu is a welcome addition to the New Oxford World History series, which consists of brief and affordable introductions on a world region, period of history, or a general topic for world history classes or the interested general reader. Undertaking a history of the Silk Road is a formidable challenge because the Silk Road is not a clearly defined area, but rather convenient shorthand for the diverse land and sea trade routes that formed an extensive network covering most of Eurasia and parts of Africa. Silk in the form of both yarn and finished textiles was always instrumental in the development of this trade network, but there were other important goods as well, such as horses, incenses, spices, and later tea. Liu starts at the beginning of organized trade and communication on the Eurasian steppe sometime in the fifth century BCE and ends with the dissolution of the Mongol Empire in the fourteenth century CE only adding to the difficulty of this challenge, especially in a volume consisting of only 126 pages of text.

The goal for this series as envisioned by its editors, Bonnie G. Smith and Anand Yang, is a “new” world history that “emphasizes connectedness and interactions of all kinds—cultural, economic, political, religious and social” (p. ix-x). Liu’s previous work does just that in regard to Eurasia, making her the ideal choice to write *The Silk Road in World History*. It is mostly based on the research from two of her previous books on trade, religion and sericulture: *Ancient India and Ancient China: Trade and Religious Exchanges, AD 1–600* (Delhi and New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); and *Silk and Religion: an Exploration of Material Life and the Thought of People, AD 600–1200* (Delhi and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). The current work, however, is revised for a general audience, consisting of six chapters with a useful Chronology and lists of resources such as Further Reading and Websites.

Chapter 1, “China Looks West,” starts with the origins of the Silk Road during the Han Dynasty in China with its conflicts and alliances with nomads on the Eurasian steppe, especially the Xiongnu and Yuezhi. Rome’s appetite for silk and other luxuries from Arabia, Africa and Asia and the central role