

Dermigny, no Chaunu, no Gardella, no Von Glahn, and so on. He seems to have little concern for the nature of the Chinese works he cites; summary modern works, and even dictionaries, and an article by Jiang Zemin are simply cited when their assertions should have been used with caution and traced to the sources as far as possible.

Deng is an economic historian. Many of his quantified arguments are intriguing. Some of his equations seem to add nothing to the analysis. He is extremely prone to writing phrases such as “supposing . . .” or “it is reasonable to guess . . .” in seeking to make the most of some unsatisfactory piece of evidence. He sometimes loses track (as did many Chinese statesmen) of the distinction between travel and warfare on the open ocean and on rivers and lakes. In a topical/analytic frame, exposition and analysis move erratically among examples separated by several centuries. His basic questions, like those of his mentor E. L. Jones, are ones of China-Europe comparison. His discussions of Europe for comparative purposes show familiarity with the high points of the recent literature, but not much depth of reading. Beginning with a very hazy concept of “sea power,” he comes in his conclusion to an important distinction between a maritime presence like China’s—motivated solely by private commercial goals—and the mercantilist profit-power interactions of the Europeans who came to dominate the world’s oceans after about 1750. But I am not sure that the concept of opportunity costs will bear the explanatory burden he places on it in these final pages, and I think it unfortunate that he ends with a diagram related to it that seems to me to add nothing to the exposition.

This is the fourth book Deng has published between 1993 and 1999. Clearly he is a scholar of great ambition and creativity who reads, thinks, and writes very fast. He has worked so fast over such a wide range of topics that many less ambitious and wide-ranging scholars will not be able to see beyond his defects of documentation and argument to appreciate the erudition and stimulation he gives us.

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Remaking the Chinese City: Modernity and National Identity, 1900–1950. Edited by JOSEPH W. ESHERICK. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000. x, 278 pp. \$55.00.

Over the course of the past few years, the attention of historians has focussed to a remarkable extent on the experience of Chinese cities in the early decades of the twentieth century. Attraction to this subject has been perhaps most compelling among scholars of Chinese origin and of a certain generation—scholars, apart from the contributors to this volume, such as Shi Mingzhen, Lu Hanchao, Shao Qin, and Wang Di—who have personally witnessed in their formative years a renewed frenzy of reformist changes in the Chinese urban scene. The book under review is a benchmark work, bringing together research by a number of key contributors to this new scholarly literature, and offering a broadly informed collective assessment of the late-Qing and Republican elite project fundamentally to remake the cities. It is a volume which no student of Chinese history should miss.

By orchestrating this inquiry, Joseph Esherick reinforces his claim to be America’s leading historian of twentieth-century China. Indeed, the contributors include so many of the editor’s students, former students, and *lao pengyou* that it has almost the appearance of a (premature) *festschrift*. Included are studies of Canton by Michael Tsin,

Tianjin by Ruth Rogaski and Brett Sheehan, Changchun by David Buck, Chengdu by Kristin Stapleton, Hangzhou by Liping Wang, Beijing by Madeleine Dong, Nanjing by Charles Musgrove, Wuhan by Stephen MacKinnon, and Chongqing by Lee MacIsaac, as well as concluding essays by Jeffrey Wasserstrom and David Strand.

By the evidence of this book, at least, the thrusts of elite efforts were concentrated in a few spheres—above all, remaking the urban spatial regime (architecture and city planning), and sprucing up the city and its people (sanitation and public hygiene). Several authors note that the visual appearance of “newness” was frankly more central to the reformist agenda than behavioral and institutional change; it was, it might be said, more an *aesthetic* project than anything else. Ironically, despite the thrust of reformists’ efforts on “opening up” the city, broadening its communications arteries and tearing down its walls, most contributors agree that a greater divorce of the urban from the rural was among the project’s most significant results. Yet, there is relatively little in this volume on urban cultural change *per se*; still less on shifting gender roles (though this is the subject of much other current research). Intriguingly, while there is frequent discussion of commercialization, and some of consumerism (e.g., department stores), we find very little on the impact of industrialization. Might it be that, outside of Shanghai (and perhaps Wuhan), the industrial impact was truly that negligible?

One question raised by the book involves the use of the word “modernity” in the subtitle. The authors treat this idiom in different ways. Stapleton seems scrupulously to avoid it; Tsin makes a forthright effort to specify its content; other contributors often appear to invoke it less critically. Esherick in his introduction properly historicizes the “modern” era, but doesn’t go further to problematize the notion altogether. In my own view, “modern” as a label has no utility other than in reference to a term in the historical discourse itself; one might even say that “modernism” has an historical reality, but “modernity” does not. From this perspective, it is striking that “modern” seems to have been so little present in the vocabulary of the period under study. No Chinese or Japanese translations of this word appear in the book’s ample glossary, nor in the titles of any contemporaneous Chinese writings listed in the bibliography. If early twentieth-century Chinese reformers did not themselves invest heavily in this cumbersome notion (they preferred “new” or “civilized,” *wenming*, a problem in itself) why should we saddle them with it in retrospect?

Especially given such strong contemporary parallels to the early twentieth-century reform project (parallels on occasion explicitly invoked here), it would seem hard to evade making value judgments. Several contributors stress the highly incomplete success of the reformers in achieving their goals, but was the Chinese population in any case better off for their efforts? As I read this book, I noticed a nicely balanced assessment being offered. We find, to be sure, the occasional tone of lament for “the world that was lost,” an appropriate emphasis on the dislocational costs to urban residents, and the expected subalternist attention to the financial and class interests of the reformers. But we have also, for example, Rogaski to remind us that public hygiene efforts in Tianjin did indeed save lives. Relatively liberated from the shackles of a “march of progress” teleology, the studies in this volume help us toward reaching our own critical evaluations of urban reformist projects, then and now.

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Social Transformation and Private Education in China. By JING LIN. New York: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1999. 248 pp. \$69.50.