

BOOK REVIEWS

All Reviews are by Daniel Metraux, Editor of VRAS

Margaret MacMillan, *Nixon and Mao: The Week that Changed the World*. New York: Random House, 2007. 405 pp. ISBN: 140006127X.

James Kyngé, *China Shakes the World: A Titan's Rise and Troubled Future —and the Challenge for America*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2006. 270pp. ISBN: 9780618705641.

Napoleon once remarked, “Let China sleep, for when she wakes, she will shake the world.” Napoleon’s words seem eerily prescient today, especially when one considers that only four decades ago China was convulsed in the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution. There was complete chaos throughout China, most colleges and universities were either closed or being used as propaganda centers by the Red Guard battalions, and there was very little contact with the outside world. Relations with its former ally, the Soviet Union, were so bad that their respective armies were exchanging deadly gunfire along the Amur River frontier and leaders on both sides talked of the inevitability of war. But by 1969, while the Cultural Revolution still dominated China and war loomed with the Russians, Chinese leaders like Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai came to the conclusion that China needed to head in a new direction in order to avoid internal collapse.

At the same time Richard Nixon, who took office in early 1969, and his chief foreign policy advisor, Henry Kissinger, concluded that some thaw in relations with “Red” China could be beneficial to the US. Cooperation with Beijing might help in ending the Vietnam War and in strengthening the American position vis-à-vis the Russians. Both China and the US began sending signals to each other, at first so faint that they could hardly be recognized by the other, but by 1970 and early 1971 a top secret dialogue began between Nixon and Chinese leaders. China’s invitation to the US ping pong team in 1971 and Kissinger’s clandestine visit to China that summer paved the way to Nixon’s historic visit in February 1972. Nixon’s mission served as the catalyst that has led to the opening of China to the rest of the world and the nation’s current economic revolution.

Margaret MacMillan, author of another brilliant book, *Paris 1919*, provides excellent details of the process that led up to Nixon’s actual visit. She also explores the history of Sino-American relations from the perspectives of both sides. While expressing admiration for the Chinese, MacMillan demonstrates the brutality of the Mao regime, noting how even Zhou Enlai was responsible for many deaths and imprisonments. She shows the utter secrecy involved in the

negotiations between Nixon and the Chinese, so secret that many of Nixon's close advisors and key American allies were kept in the dark.

Macmillan reveals that the Americans, hoping to gain the trust of the Chinese, gave them sensitive intelligence on Soviet military developments and how explicitly they promised to withdraw US forces from Taiwan and, eventually, South Vietnam.

James Kynge, a highly trained Sinologist and for many years the China bureau chief of the *Financial Times* in Beijing, provides a penetrating look at China more than three decades after Nixon's mission. Napoleon's sleeping tiger has awakened—and is ravenously hungry. Kynge takes the reader back to the start of China's current revolution in the 1980s and meticulously traces Beijing's steady though somewhat haphazard growth path ever since. Kynge provides fascinating explanations for China's rise and shows how many of the usual explanations are in fact myths. He tries with success to reconcile China's greatest problem—a Communist government trying to manage an open market capitalist economic revolution.

Kynge is at his best when he deals with China's very profound systemic weaknesses, which include rampant fraud, a huge environmental crisis, a hopelessly corrupt banking system, faltering government institutions, and the world's most rapidly aging population (an unintended result of the one-child policy). He clearly indicates that China's rise will falter unless it can cope with all of these problems. Kynge also shows how China's voracious demand for foreign natural resources is causing major problems in other parts of the world—for example, China's insatiable demand for soy and its willingness to pay high prices for the product is causing many Brazilian farmers to cut down hundreds of acres of precious rain forest to grow soy for the Chinese. Kynge begins the book with a detailed description of how China's purchase of a German steel factory drastically changed the lives for everybody in the German city.

Taken together MacMillan and Kynge's books provide a superb portrait of China's progress (or lack thereof) from the days of the Cultural Revolution to the present. Using these books in tandem would provide students in any history course on modern China with a superb overview of the country's contemporary history. Both books are superbly researched, written in a lively simple manner and are highly recommended..

Yuji Ichioka, *Before Internment: Essays in Prewar Japanese American History*. Edited by Gordon H. Chang and Eiichiro Azuma. Stanford California: Stanford University Press, 2006. ISBN 0-8047-5147-1. \$50.00. xxviii + 360 pp.

Yukji Ichioka (1936-2002) has prepared a brilliant volume of essays on Japanese-American history in the 1920s and 1930s. *Before Internment* is a sequel to Ichioka's 1988 work, *The Issei: The World of the First Generation Japanese Immigrant, 1885-1924*.

Carefully edited by two gifted historians, Gordon H. Chang and Eiichiro Azuma, this posthumous work examines the cultural divide between and the intergenerational experiences of the native-born *Issei* and American-born *Nisei* communities between World War I and Pearl Harbor.

Ichioka's essays introduce us to a kaleidoscope of individuals and topics which when read together present an intense look at the problems and conflicting issues facing Japanese immigrants and their children in the prewar era. They had to confront intense pressure from white society which overwhelmingly rejected them on racial grounds. "This racial animus toward the Japanese, unlike that toward the blacks, included a white fear that Japanese had superior traits, which made them formidable opponents against whom Americans could not compete." (25)

Ichioka brilliantly places the *Issei* and *Nisei* within the context of the anti-Japanese era in which they lived. "On the one hands, Japanese immigrants constituted a powerless racial minority. Denied the right of naturalization, they were unable to participate in the American political process to defend themselves. On the other hand, the anti-Japanese forces commanded overwhelming power and influence. They included among their number organized labor, the American Legion, various nativist groups, local Granger organizations, many local and state politicians, and much of the news media. In the face of such racist opposition, often of a violent nature, Japanese immigrants could only appeal to an abstract sense of American justice and fair play." (252-53)

Issei and *Nisei* also had to contend with conflicting loyalties between their country of origin and their new home at a time when the United States and Japan were spiraling towards war. Many influential Americans shared an inherent distrust of Japanese-Americans, fearing that they were a potentially subversive element in American society that would come to the aid of Tokyo in the event of war. Ichioka demonstrates that some of these fears were not unfounded because there were a number of Japanese-Americans who supported and in a few cases even worked for their mother country before and after Pearl Harbor.

The focus of the book is on the *Nisei* generation that grew up between the wars. Ichioka studies in great deal the attempts by *Issei* and by the Japanese

government to teach Nisei about their native culture and language. They created Japanese language institutes and offered scholarships so that Nisei could tour Japan, but as a whole Nisei were far more influenced by American cultures and values which they encountered in public schools. Ichioka notes that these schools “so successfully socialized the Nisei to American values that the Nisei became largely acculturated to American culture and society.” (46) As a result, many Nisei faced an intense cultural dilemma in the days before Pearl Harbor when Japan was fighting a brutal war in China: “Issei leaders expected them to champion Japan’s case in China and chastised them when they did not. On the other hand, if they stood up in defense of Japan, their loyalty to the United States came under a cloud of suspicion, making any public rationalization of Japan’s side in the Sino-Japanese War impossible.” (46)

Ichioka demonstrates the complexity of Japanese-American life and their relationships with both Japan and the United States through a series of beautifully researched individual studies. We meet Dr. Honda Rikita, a former Japanese soldier and doctor who later set up a highly successful medical practice in Los Angeles. His suicide while undergoing FBI questioning after Pearl Harbor because of his alleged pro-Japanese sympathies gave the Japanese great ammunition to substantiate their portrait of the US as a racist society. We are introduced to the infamous 1941 Tachibana Espionage case as well as the case of Kazumaro Buddy Uno, a Nisei who migrated to Japan in the 1930s to become a pro-Japanese journalist and propagandist. We also encounter Louis Adamic, an American writer who embraced the inclusion of all minorities into the American mainstream, including Japanese, as well as James Yoshinori Sakamoto, a journalist who sought first to build a bridge between the US and Japan and who then became a fervent American nationalist after Pearl Harbor.

Ichioka was well-placed and trained as a scholar when writing this book. A founder of the UCLA Asian American Studies Center and adjunct Professor of History at UCLA for many years, he first coined the term “Asian American” to unify previously diverse Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Filipino groups. Ichioka’s first book *The Issei: The World of the First Generation Japanese Immigrant, 1885-1924*, received positive reviews and several awards.

Before Internment is a majestically researched and written masterpiece that describes Issei and Nisei life between the wars in a brilliant manner. The only real flaw is a rather annoying repetition of various incidents and biographies, but the editors ask our indulgence. Ichioka was unable to finish the work before his sudden and untimely death and Chang and Azuma have decided not to tamper with the integrity of Ichioka’s work, even if it was only about 90 percent done. An introduction and an epilogue by the editors place the book in the context of the times.

Xiaolu, *Village of Stone*. London and Sydney: Vintage/Random House, 2005. ISBN: 0-099-48495-1.

As a professor of Asian Studies at a small rural woman's college, I am always searching for that quintessential beautifully written Asian novel that will immediately attract the fervent attention of my students. The story must also serve as a useful teaching device, introducing an Asian culture from the perspective an introspective native writer. Novels that have met these criteria include Banana Yoshimoto's *Kitchen*, the ancient Korean folk story *Chunhyang*, Thich Nhat Hanh's *The Stone Boy*, Anchee Minh's *Wild Ginger* and *Empress Orchid*, Enchi Fumiko's *The Waiting Years*, Denise Chong's *The Concubine's Daughter*, and Jade Snow Wong's classic *Fifth Chinese Daughter*.

So many other Chinese novels one reads today in English translation feature the difficult experiences of the author or some fictionalized representation amidst the trials and tribulations of the violent upheavals of the Cultural Revolution (including some of Anchee Min's works) and Tiananmen Square. Xiaolu Guo, by contrast, tells the poignant story of a young girl growing up in a remote coastal village who manages to escape this vestige of ancient China and finds her way into the fast life that is modern Beijing. There are no crowds of adoring Red Guards in the background—all we hear is Xiaolu's own search for herself.

This is a first-person account of Coral, a twenty-eight-year-old woman who works in a Beijing video rental shop and lives with her lazy Frisbee-crazed boyfriend "Red" on the ground floor of a twenty-five story apartment building. It is a dark hole where the sun rarely shines and Red is rarely out of their bed, a crude mattress on the floor. One day she receives a mysterious package containing a smelly dried eel from the "Village of Stone" where she grew up. The arrival of the eel stirs memories of her youth:

I see myself on a boat, steering out to sea, to the seas of the Village of Stone. As the waves grow clearer in my memory, I find myself moving farther away from this enormous city, these enormous buildings, and enormous crowds...Scattering torpedoes as I go, I storm the secret fortresses of my soul, conquering them one-by-one, as explosions reverberate through my eardrums and shattered whitecaps drench my clothes. Soon all this subsides, drifting down to the deepest seafloor, torpedoes still exploding into schools of cruising fish. The sea turns red and I feel pain—all those fish, I never wanted them to die...I stand on the deck weeping, watching my tears fall into the sea, the sea of the Village of Stone, this place where I bury my fish, my memories, my childhood, and all the secrets of my past incarnation.

We rotate back and forth between Coral's life in the village and her later life in Beijing. Coral lives in the remotest of fishing villages with her dour grandfather and decrepit grandmother -- her mother is dead and her father left the village

during her infancy, never to be heard from again until he appears one day at their Beijing flat, a pitiful dying old man. Coral is very much alone as her grandparents, who have grown to hate each other, never talk to her or each other. Out of desperation one day her grand-father swallows a deadly bottle of insecticide. A middle-age man, the Mute, takes a fancy to young Coral, molests her and then hides her away for many days raping her incessantly. She eventually escapes and recovers while he dies in a typhoon. She blossoms into a radiant teenager who falls for her young chemistry high school teacher. Their affair leads to a pregnancy, abortion, her expulsion from school and escape from the village. She ends up with Red, who at the end of the story gets up enough energy to get a job and to ask her to marry him when Coral discovers she is pregnant. They find enough money to buy their own little house in the mountains outside of Beijing.

Xiaolu presents us with two very real Chinas—the remote, backward and impoverished villages of rural China and the new, modern and very busy lives of China's new urban youth. Life in China is very much a struggle to survive, to find even a drop of sunlight amidst the awful pollution of China's cities today. But however ugly the city may be, it is immensely superior to life in the villages of stone with all of their poverty, cruelty and ignorance.

Xiaolu Guo freely admits that her novel (one of six she has published before the age 30) is semi-autobiographical. She notes in a recent interview:

“Coral is my double in my real life,' My grandfather married a child bride when she was 12. They never loved each other. They lived separate lives under the same roof. He would beat her, but she never once complained. They both suffered. My grandfather committed suicide because he was so poor. I really hated that fishing village.”

As a baby, Guo first lived with a foster family. “They could not afford to feed me and, with my parents away, I was sent to my grandparents. My father was a fisherman who gave up the sea to paint Chinese landscapes. He made money, but he was frowned on as bourgeois during the Cultural Revolution. He then wrote an article about all the propaganda and lies, but was denounced and jailed.”

Meanwhile, Guo's mother was busy pushing the Maoist message. “In China - then, as now - boys were more important than girls, so my mother took my brother on tour,' she says. 'I've always had a violent relationship with my mother. When my father was freed, we all moved back together, away from Shi Tang.”¹

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http://www.guoxiaolu.com/interview_my_secret_life_coral.htm. 2004

Xiaolu's haunting portrait of her remote village form the best parts of the book. It is a China that has already disappeared as Coral discovers when she and Red venture there at the end of the story. The chapters on Beijing are a bit flat and tedious and I as reader was always glad to get back to the village. But *Village of Stone* was a most moving experience which I hope my students this semester will enjoy as much as myself this coming semester. Sadly, the book is not available in the United States and I only chanced upon it in while buying out a book store in old Hong Kong.

Diana L. Ahmad, *The Opium Debate and Chinese Exclusion Laws in the Nineteenth-Century American West*. Reno and Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 2007. ISBN: 978-0-87417-698-8

Today's war on drugs and drug addiction is not the first in American history. An opium-smoking epidemic in the latter half of the nineteenth century helped to fuel outrage against Chinese immigrants and played a key role in the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act and other later legislation against the entry of Chinese into the United States. University of Missouri-Rolla historian Dr. Diana Ahmad examines the controversy, noting that opium-smoking was denounced far and wide as a major social and public health problem, especially in the West. Opium addiction had become a major problem in China by the mid-1800s and opium dens were a common feature of Chinese enclaves in the United States.

Although only a very small minority of Chinese immigrants were involved in the opium business, the public image of Chinese were of a sleazy people deeply involved in the drug and prostitution trades. When a growing number of white Americans took up opium, the drug was perceived as a genuine threat to the stability of American middle-class life. The fact remains that the smoking variety of opium, unlike its medical relative, found its way into the United States with the Chinese who arrived at the start of the California gold rush. It is also a fact that in addition to building restaurants, general stores and laundries, the Chinese also built opium dens. Although initially employed as a pain reliever, smoking opium soon became a recreational drug, first among Chinese and then among white Americans.

Physicians, journalists, religious and political leaders as well as many self-appointed monitors of morality expressed deep concern about the spread of the drug. They believed that smoking opium had real side effects such as insanity, sexual promiscuity, and nonproductivity. Indeed, as Ahmad notes, "They considered smoking-opium detrimental to everything they held dear. One of the ways the ways to achieve their goal [to remove opium] was to eliminate the immigration of Chinese because many in this group believed the Chinese, who imported the narcotic, were responsible for seducing Americans with it."

Ahmad expresses the purpose of her book:

The Opium Debate and Chinese Exclusion Laws yields insight into the impact smoking opium and its culture had on the demands for Chinese expulsion. Rightly, economic and political reasons have long dominated the literature. More recently, historians have added the issue of Chinese prostitution to the exclusionist argument. The opium debate needs to be included in the discussion of why the United States excluded the Chinese. Based on historical evidence that includes police records, court files, newspaper accounts, diaries, journals, and government records, this work seeks to do just that: include the debate over smoking-opium into the

reasons for Chinese exclusion. In doing so, it focuses on Anglo-American perceptions of the Chinese and is not designed to show the Chinese side. Few Chinese involved themselves in the business of opium dens; however, the white middle and elite classes failed to acknowledge that. They saw both the narcotic and the Chinese as threats to their society and wanted them eliminated as quickly as possible.

Prostitution in the American West was another related problem. A huge majority of the early Chinese immigrants were young men who lived in bachelor communities. Many of the Chinese women who came to the U.S. were prostitutes, in effect sex slaves who had no escape from the drudgery of their lives. Brothels and opium dens were places where single Chinese men could find an escape from loneliness and everyday tensions. Nearly every Chinatown possessed at least one opium resort and brothel and one could find scattered communities of Chinese all over the West, even in Wyoming and in small towns in Montana. In the foothills of the Sierra Nevadas in northern California, there were close to three thousand Chinese miners near the village of Sonora in the early and mid-1850s. When white Americans began to visit these brothels and dens, others denounced Chinese as a threat to the moral character of the nation. As one Nevada-based writer wrote his former Senator in 1901: "No civilized home can exist, when brought into contact with the degradation of the Orient." The Chinese were a "festering sore. We have seen the youth of this country enticed into their dens of vice and ruined morally and physically." The letter ended wishing the Senator "God-speed" in his efforts to "protect the American manhood from the threatened peril."

The manufacture and importation of opium was legal in the United States through 1909 and, in fact, the federal government collected millions of dollars in revenue in tariffs, but by the 1870s many states and local communities started banning the possession, sale or use of opium. Although generally ineffective, these laws caused opium prices to rise from twelve to seventy dollars a pound and persuaded addicts to switch to other cheaper, legal and readily available drugs as heroin, morphine and cocaine.

Ahmad's short book is well researched and written. She has used a very wide range of primary sources that expose the anti-Chinese feelings prevalent at the time. Ahmad also gives a full background to the history of the spread of opium trafficking from the British in India and Americans in Turkey into China and its subsequent entry into the United States with the onset of Chinese immigration at the time of the California gold rush. This book makes an invaluable contribution to the field of Chinese American history.

Unfortunately, the author ignores the large-scale presence of Chinese in western Canada. Any visitor to Victoria, the capital of British Columbia, will visit tiny Fan Alley in the city's ancient Chinatown and hear that there were 13 opium dens there in the early 1900s as well as numerous places where opium for

smoking was manufactured. Opium smoking and production and smoking were legal in Canada long after it was prohibited in the U.S, and vast quantities of the drug were smuggled into this country well into the twentieth century. Including some research on Canada would have increased the value of this already worthy book.

Peter Pagnamento and Momoko Williams, *Sword and Blossom: A British Officer's Enduring Love for a Japanese Woman*. New York: The Penguin Press, 2006. xiv+345pp. ISBN: 1-59420-089-0. \$25.95.

Sword and Blossom is a love story between a late Victorian British Army officer and a beautiful Japanese woman he met while serving in Japan, but it is much more. Authors Peter Pagnamento and Momoko Williams provide us with an excellent look at early twentieth century life in Japan and a fascinating analysis of the British-Japanese military alliance which made this relationship possible. The British officer, Brigadier General Arthur Hart-Synnot (AHS), also takes us on a historical tour of the Boer War in South Africa, reviews life at the front in Manchuria during the Russo-Japanese War, involves us in tours of duty in Hong Kong, India, Burma and Japan, and gives us a front row seat to the horrors of World War I in France. Masa Suzuki, who met AHS at the Officer's Club in Tokyo in 1904, gives us a clear view of family life and the status of Japanese women in the late Meiji era (1868-1912).

After the ratification of the Anglo-Japanese alliance in 1902, the British sent ten promising young officers to Tokyo to learn Japanese so that British and Japanese military officials could begin conversing with each other. AHS volunteered for the mission and soon became amazing fluent with near native writing and speaking ability. A genuine scholar, he developed a deep appreciation for Japanese history and culture when he met Masa, the daughter of a lower-middle-class tradesman doing clerical work at the Officer's Club. They were immediately smitten and were soon living together in his small private apartment.

Because AHS was so proficient in Japanese, they developed a hot and heavy correspondence where they shared their love and made fascinating observations about their lives and times. AHS provides brilliant depictions of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05) and colonial postings in India, Burma and Hong Kong. We even view English gentry life at AHS' family estate in Ireland and the destruction of the house by the IRA during the Irish Civil War of 1916. Fortunately, AHS was also stationed in Japan for long intervals between other assignments and was thus able to live with Masa. Their love relationship endured despite the racial prejudice and social snobbery they endured. They became parents of two boys (one died very young) and Masa even joined AHS in Hong Kong for two long intervals. AHS begged Masa to marry him, but her family wanted her home caring for her aged mother and feared that she would be racially stigmatized abroad. Her refusal, despite her intense love for him, was a move she would later deeply regret.

Like the Madame Butterfly story, this relationship was ultimately doomed. AHS always came back to his Masa, but his military duty and other assignments meant long painful separations as well. AHS was considering retirement from the army in 1914 and a permanent life with Masa and her boys in Japan, but World

War I got in their way. He was severely wounded and had both his legs amputated. He needed daily care and could not make the long boat trip to Japan. Luckily for him, he was able to marry his older British nurse who cared for him through his death in 1942. Masa was shocked that her lover married another, but they eventually reconciled and he maintained his financial support for her up through the start of World War II.

Their surviving Anglo-Japanese son, Kiyoshi, evolved into a brilliant athlete and scholar-author. He even met his father in France shortly before WW II when both were living there, but Kiyoshi died a tragic death at the hands of the Russians at the end of the War. Masa died in the 1960s.

Both Masa and AHS saved each other's letters, but Masa's letters were lost during WW II. AHS' letters to Masa, however, survive and authors Williams and Pagnamento have combed hundreds of these letters to provide a marvelous picture of this relationship as well as an excellent history of this critical period. The book is clearly and beautifully written. The only drawback is that Masa emerges as a rather hollow person because her letters do not survive—we only see her through AHS' eyes. This book would serve as a great supplement for a course on modern Japan or early modern Asia..

Fred Bergsten, Bates Gill, Nicholas R. Lardy, and Derek J. Mitchell, *China, The Balance Sheet: What the World Needs to Know About the Emerging Superpower*. New York: PublicAffairs, 2006. 206 pp. ISBN: 1586484648.

The authors of this slim volume are think-tank based researchers at The Center for Strategic and International Studies and at the Institute for International Economics in Washington, DC. They boldly state that China's emergence as a major international power is perhaps the most important development in world affairs of the 21st century. Their goal is to provide a concise yet detailed portrait of China as it evolves into a major superpower. The authors focus on economic, political and security issues, often entertaining a variety of opinions on each issue addressed and often supplying data to better understand the major issues facing China.

The authors provide two solid chapters on China's domestic economy and economic relations with the West and Japan. A thoughtful Chapter on China's emergence as a military power and its relations with the United States and other powers serves as a powerful conclusion. A middle chapter on China's domestic transformation is a useful guide to the many socio-political changes that have occurred in China since 1980. The most interesting sections, however, are those that examine the rise of Chinese nationalism and the country's increasingly complex foreign and trade relationships.

The authors stress that thus far China's ascent has been peaceful. Nationalism is an important force wherever one travels in China today, but it is not a truculent or militaristic concept. There is lingering anger over the humiliations and subsequent poverty and weakness that China experienced between 1850 and 1950. There is a strong desire to recover China's "place in the sun," but this does not mean that China desires to build a foreign empire or seize or dominate other lands.

The authors argue that China's greatest desire is to sustain its long term economic growth well into the twenty-first century. Continued prosperity in turn requires full access to natural resources and increased trade with its major international partners, the United States, Japan and Europe. A confrontational foreign policy could well disrupt this growth which in turn would impact the lives of tens of millions of Chinese and might even cause many Chinese to lose confidence in the Communist Party. The Chinese know full well that in the case of a conflict, their international trade would come to a crashing halt, the flow of oil would cease, and their economy would come to a grinding halt. It would be the end, however temporary of the Chinese dream of ascendancy.

The authors stress that the focus of China's foreign policy is primarily economic. It wishes to acquire the necessary resources, improve the avenues of trade, develop new and expand existing markets, and secure the investments necessary for the continuation of its economic growth. This approach to foreign affairs requires a stable nation which while able to defend its own interests, does not present a threatening face to the rest of the world.

Accepting the status quo for the present, however, does not preclude China long-term goal of working towards a more multipolar world. Chinese admit that for the time being nothing they do can alter the fact that the United States is the dominant force in world affairs and that nothing can and should be done to change this fact. Still, in the long run the Chinese promote the idea of a multipolar world where several power centers, including China, would balance American influence

Readers in search of a sophisticated introduction to China will find this volume to be extremely useful, but there are a number of serious shortcomings. There is very little coverage of education, China's environmental crisis, health care system and other important issues. Education is critical to China's growth as a modern power, and the multi-faceted environmental crisis could well short-circuit the country's economic revival. The tiny handful of paragraphs on these and other important topics strangely diminish what is in many other respects a most worthy book.

Edward Friedman and Bruce Gilley, eds., *Asia's Giants: Comparing China and India*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005. ISBN: 1-4039-7110-2

A recent report by the U.S. State Department predicted that along with the United States, China and India, which together account for forty-percent of the world's population, would emerge as the great powers of the current century. Today both these powers are growing rapidly in terms of economic, political and military power, but their approaches to power have been radically different. One side has been China's rapid economic growth and heady achievements in poverty alleviation and diplomatic power. The other side has been India's less rapid growth but continued success in democratic rule and social pluralism.

Edward Friedman, Professor of Political Science at the University of Wisconsin and author of two books on contemporary China, and Bruce Gilley, Adjunct Professor of International Affairs at the New School University and author of four books on China, have edited a remarkable volume, *Asia's Giants: Comparing China and India*. The clearly stated purpose of the book is to offer new ideas and approaches about the comparative performance of India and China from "economic, political, social and moral" perspectives. They have assembled papers from a rather remarkable group of international scholars from the business, academic and policy worlds. These writers offer excellent overviews, comparative analyses of economic reforms, discussions of such subnational factors as "the persistence of informal finance" and "indigenous versus foreign business models," and a variety of "New Perspectives" including the role of democracy in development.

I read the book to enhance my own understanding of China without much regard for what the writers said about India, but one cannot help coming away with a much keener appreciation for India as well. The contributors challenge the conventional wisdom that argues that the comparative performance of China has been superior to that of India. For example, writer Tony Saich notes that both countries have made significant progress in terms of health care since 1980, "India has outperformed China in the overall fairness and efficiency of its health system (231)." India also offers its people superior governance, but is significantly behind in terms of the development of the development of physical and social infrastructure.

Bruce Gilley notes that even in the realm of economic development, "India by no means pales in comparison to China...India's developmental gains have been early as good as China's since 1975, even though China's reforms began nearly a decade earlier...Today India has many clear economic advantages over China – more efficient energy use, less income inequality, less state involvement in the economy, a successful software industry, far superior equity markets, and better economic and environmental governance. (247)"

Interestingly, the contributors bring forward several new paradigms for comparing and evaluating the two countries in terms of economics, social policy, politics and diplomacy and look at various obstacles that might slow if not derail the rapid modernization of both countries. However, they have neglected to talk much about problems that both countries, especially China, are having with environmental degradation. There is also virtually no mention of the energy needs and policies of both countries. Nevertheless, Friedman and Gilley have presented an excellent study that belongs in every academic library and collection.