

### Reviews

*The City and Chinese Modernity*. Edited by Wu Jen-Shu, Paul Katz and Lin May-li. Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 2010. Chinese edition, 15, 401 pp. TWD 500 (paperback).

Chinese cities and society have changed dramatically since the end of the long imperial period. While much research has dealt with the transformation of physical urban forms, urban planning concepts, urban policies and management on the macro-scale, *The City and Chinese Modernity* focuses on the everyday lives of communities and individuals in Chinese cities—on the micro-scale. The book provides detailed descriptions of how modernity has been reflected in numerous aspects of daily life in cities, and how the state and citizen groups interact and cooperate in public policy-making. The editors claim that the research papers published in this book extend the investigation of China's modernity from the conventionally recognized nineteenth century to earlier periods—the Ming and Qing dynasties.

The key theme of the book is the concept of modernity, which is specifically differentiated from modernization. The latter is a process of industrialization, capitalization and social change that completely adopts Western modern institutions, customs and culture which can be seen in the changes to the physical environment and state mechanism. Modernity, in contrast, relates to people's consciousness in the collective memory that has deviated from the tradition during the modernization process. In order to examine modernity, it is most appropriate to look at people's daily lives and understand how they, as individuals or communities, cope with Western influence. Chapters in this book address this issue through the vicissitudes of urban consumption, entertainment, tourism, the emergence of new grassroots organizations and professions, as well as religious practices. This provides a panorama of Chinese urban daily activities during that period, which is called 'multi-modernity' in the book.

The first two chapters explain how particular Western commodities survived the Chinese market in the Qing period. Lian's chapter focuses on department stores in Shanghai that provide recreational spaces for female consumers, and their role in the building of modern womanhood during the first half of the twentieth century. Zhang identifies how people adapt gambling on the Western sport 'Hai Alai' to the Chinese traditional gambling of mind-play. Wu and Carroll's chapters address the spatial transformation of tourist attractions and the rise and fall of prostitution in Suzhou respectively. The 'Tenants' Associations' in Shanghai and the 'Guild of Teahouses' in Chengdu as intermediaries on policy-making between the state and relevant citizens are examined in Sun and Wang's articles. For three Chinese modern entrepreneurs and reformers Chen Yingning, Zheng Guanying and Wang Yitin, traditional religions are not abandoned but promoted in their social activities as explained in Liu, Fan and Katz's chapters. Xu and Lin's chapters introduce the emergence and flourishing of two new professions—modern drama actors and accountants—in Chinese cities during the 1920s and 1940s. The last chapter investigates the political strategies of the Communist Party on social integration of office workers from previous private enterprises (later regarded as capitalist) into the new working class after the establishment of the socialist People's Republic of China.

## Reviews

The book contributes greatly to the debate on the dialectic relationships between tradition and modernity, state and citizens, which do not contradict each other but which coexist and interdepend. During the modernization process, modern commodities, customs and institutions have been collectively selected and adapted to local tradition. The gradual renewal and adjustment of tradition enhances the self-esteem of the nation, and further strengthens the national identity. The interweaving of tradition and modernity enables better communication and projecting of China's image to the world, which benefits the local people not only in economic terms but also in social and cultural perspectives. The role that common citizens play in public decision-making is evolving towards democracy and deeper autonomy, which is a significant issue in the change of Chinese society throughout history. Furthermore, the emergence of those aforementioned grassroots organizations, such as the 'Tenants' Associations', represents the path of individual power and institutional development. These two issues are still important to the study of today's Chinese cities and Chinese urban history. This book's examination of modernity on a micro scale fills a gap in our understanding of the current trends of globalization and urbanization of Chinese cities. For scholars who concentrate on individual Chinese cities, this book is also a valuable resource for information about lives in cities such as Beijing, Shanghai and Suzhou which will facilitate our understanding of spatial and social changes in those cities.

It is perhaps understandable, for an edited book with contributions from several authors emphasizing slightly different aspects of urban lives, that the structure of the book as a whole is rather loose. Chapters towards the end of the book deviate slightly from the main themes and each chapter has a high degree of independence. Another weakness is that the legibility and readability of the book may be limited for international readers, because of the use of historical Chinese words and syntax, possibly because it is based heavily on the study of historical literature.

Fei Chen  
University of Liverpool

*Christianity and Female Empowerment: The American Presbyterian Mission Schools in Weixian, Shandong Province (1883–1920).* By John R. Stanley. Social and Cultural Research, Occasional Paper Series, No. 8, April 2009. Department of Sociology, Hong Kong Shue Yan University, and Department of History, Pace University, 2009. 33 pp (paperback).

When a national literacy and numeracy test was held in Australia in 2009, a co-educational agricultural high school in Sydney was awarded the highest score. The majority of the students were of Chinese origin, and their academic excellence was attributed to a "Confucian" culture which, it was said, values education highly.

"Confucian" culture, however, has not always been identified with enthusiasm for education. In the past, it was even associated with illiteracy. The American missionaries who arrived in late nineteenth century China criticized the "slavish" position of the local