

# Book reviews



**Lucien Bianco,**  
**La Récidive. Révolution russe et**  
**révolution chinoise (Recurrence:**  
**Russian Revolution and Chinese**  
**Revolution),**

Paris, Gallimard, Bibliothèque des  
Histoires, 2014, 528 pp.

## MARIE-CLAIRE BERGÈRE

**T**his book studies and compares the Russian and Chinese revolutions, which occurred at different points in time, the path-breaking triumph of Stalinism (1917-1953) having preceded that of Maoism (1949-1976) by three decades. To ensure the soundness of the parallels, Lucien Bianco displayed honesty and courage in acquiring the competences that have made him an expert on Soviet Russia as well as of Communist China. His project was helped by recent advances in historiography – starting with the opening up of Soviet archives and the multitude of accounts and memoirs published in China.

The book thus presents a vast duo fresco. Chapter 1, entitled “Delay,” deals with the disparity in the initial situations of the two countries. These included economic backwardness and otherness in relation to the West, both more pronounced in China than in Russia; the predominance of nationalism in China while Russia was more concerned with social problems and dreams of a universal project and new humanity; and the decisive role of foreign wars in their success in seizing power (the First World War in Russia and the Japanese invasion of China in 1937). The detailed comparison proceeds theme by theme in a penetrating and virtuoso synthesis.

The next chapter describes the “Catch-up,” mainly economic, to which the two revolutionary regimes accorded priority, with greater success, or at least less suffering, in Russia than in China.

Chapter 3, devoted to “Politics,” brings out the essential kinship, “stemming from a common Leninist mould” (p. 86), between the two systems and their organisational structures, even after – in fact especially after – 1956-1957, when Mao Zedong began criticising the Soviet model and touting the “Chinese path.” The author shows how Mao only pursued the “Stalinist mode of applying Leninism” (p. 90), exaggerating its practices. His policies boiled down to those of the Soviet autocrat, and “from this viewpoint, [he] is a perfect replica of Stalin” (p. 102).

Chapters 4 and 5, entitled respectively “Peasants” and “Famines,” are subjects on which Bianco has carried out numerous studies over half a century and constitute the heart of the book and its most original section. For the Russian revolutionaries, the Muzhiks were just backward barbarians, and the peasant question was “an accursed issue” (p. 121). The “spontaneous con-

fiscation” of land in 1917 was followed by the “grain battle between the authorities and the peasants” (p. 127). The New Economic Policy (NEP), launched in 1921, liberalised the marketing of harvests. Eight years later, the “Great Turning” signalled the forced collectivisation of land and dekulakisation, policies that preceded the major Famine of 1932-1933 and led to stagnation in agricultural production and marginalisation of a peasantry sacrificed at the altar of industrialisation and urbanisation.

Despite the greater proximity the Chinese leaders enjoyed with the rural world, their agrarian policies were as prejudicial to peasants as those of their Soviet predecessors. Soon after 1949, the Party confiscated rich peasants’ lands, but two or three years later set out on the path followed by the Soviets, namely forced collectivisation. In China, as in the USSR, priority was accorded to industrial development financed by agricultural surplus, to the detriment of peasants, who were transformed into veritable “slaves of primitive accumulation” (p. 163). As a symbol and pre-eminent manifestation of the Chinese path, the Great Leap Forward was the collectivisation policy at fever pitch. The utopian rhetoric with which Mao couched it merely delayed coming to terms with its catastrophic results.

Chapter 5 presents a comparative study of the two major famines caused by the agrarian policies of the two revolutionary parties in power. The one that ravaged Russia from 1931 to 1933 claimed six to seven million lives, while the famine that accompanied the Great Leap Forward caused 20 to 40 million deaths. Setting out the role of structural factors – agriculture’s vulnerability to the vagaries of the weather and difficulties in managing demographic transition – Bianco highlights the personal responsibility of Stalin, who decided to profit from the war he launched against the peasantry to be rid of all opposition, and of Mao, steeped in his utopia and vanity.

Chapter 6 shows that the bureaucracy and the “New Class” nurtured by the two regimes had close sociological basis and habits (privileges and corruption). The only difference lay in the dictators’ attitude towards them: on the one hand quiet acceptance by Stalin, who appreciated the loyalty, competence, and conservatism of those he promoted; and on the other hand Mao’s repeated attacks against the new bourgeoisie, whose “work style” he criticised but to whom he was quick to hand back power after the chaotic Cultural Revolution.

In Chapter 7, focusing on Culture, the author picks out more similarities and differences: as for the former, rapid strides in literacy and the reign of socialist realism imposed by “guard dogs” quick to impose censorship and repression; as for the latter, more critical reactions in the USSR by writers and artists against cultural oppression versus a more muted reaction in China.

Chapter 8 compares the Soviet *Gulag* with the Chinese *laogai*. The first served as the model and reference for the second, and both in their ways have been equally cruel and destructive of humanity.

In Chapter 9, rather provocatively, Bianco abandons the Marxist reference to turn towards Plutarch to paint a portrait of the parallel lives of the two “Monsters,” Stalin and Mao. Both were moulded in a system that made them dictators, but their personalities led to variations in the exercise of

their power. Stalin, the realist, brought a cold and methodical cruelty to the eradication of all his opponents, current or potential. Mao practised a more detached cruelty. He was also less capable and no doubt less keen on guiding his country towards the path of economic development, the initial aim of the revolution he led.

While Bianco refuses to let history be held hostage by ideology, he does not adhere to a fragmentary, meticulous approach that graces current historic research. He grapples with the vast scenarios and major problems that were the subject of confrontations among previous generations: he approaches them without theoretical a priori, armed only with his deep knowledge of facts. This pragmatic approach could be labelled scientific if it had kept the author from offering a conclusion. But that is not the case, and his conclusions will rub quite a few readers the wrong way.

No, contrary to the claims of partisans disappointed by communism who sought refuge in Maoism, there was nothing original in the Chinese path. The regime founded by Mao had a fraternal resemblance to the Soviet regime, although not that of twins (p. 119). The Chinese revolution was only a "recurrence," repeating the error and the crime of the Russian one. Neither revolution attained the proclaimed aims of social justice and economic modernisation.

This negative judgement will shock the nostalgic, who can only challenge it with their faith in the Great Stalin and the Little Red Book. So be it. But will historians agree? It is no doubt in the last chapter, entitled "The Monsters," that Bianco goes the farthest. His absolute condemnation of Mao may not be acceptable to those who see the Great Helmsman's murderous utopia as more than a manipulation, and rather as reflecting a sincere revolutionary elan leading to salutary understandings and questionings. Those who want to accord Mao the benefit of the doubt (this reviewer is not among them) will certainly have difficulty coming up with facts capable of puncturing Bianco's punctilious argumentation. But then, is the author right in concluding, citing the failure of the two revolutions, that no revolution is capable of remedying the ills of the world? "Reformism," he avers, "is what works best." Subject to a test as exacting as that *Recurrence* imposes on the Russian and Chinese revolutions, can reformism really emerge "*magna cum laude*"?

This quick overview can hardly do justice to the science and humanity of a work made all the more pleasurable by its elegant and familiar style. There is no doubt that this book belongs in the historiography of the twentieth century and should long serve as a reference text for specialists. It should also appeal to larger intellectual circles, offering in an erudite and accessible manner the history of countries that globalisation has suddenly rendered close, and a history too often held hostage by ideology or simply ignored.

■ Translated by N. Jayaram.

■ Marie-Claire Bergère is professor emeritus at the Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales (INALCO), Paris (bergere.feugeas@gmail.com).



**Wenjing Guo,**  
**Internet entre État-parti et**  
**société civile en Chine (The**  
**Internet between the Party-**  
**State and Civil Society in China),**  
Paris, L'Harmattan, 2015, 329 pp.

NICOLE KHOURI

Wenjing Guo belongs to the so-called post-1980 generation, that of young Internet users on whom she focused a PhD thesis in socio-anthropology defended in October 2014: *Internet à Canton (Chine), Dynamiques sociales et politiques* (Internet in Guangzhou, China: Social and Political Dynamics), University of Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, and upon which this work is based.

The book is composed of two parts, one mainly devoted on the Internet in China (1994-2014) and the other to Internet usage based on three case studies undertaken in Guangzhou: a group of homosexuals formed around a "model mother" whose blog brought together thousands of Internet users, a residents' group mobilised against the construction of a waste incinerator, and an association of Internet users defending Cantonese language and culture: the tangible and intangible heritage of the city and the province. These two parts contain valuable methodological considerations. An overly short six-page conclusion follows.

Part 1 offers a synthesis of existing work and traces the Internet's evolution in China between 1994 and 2008, the latter year marking the passage from a regime marked by the government's sole responsibility for control to a governance logic by which entrepreneurs and Internet users are vested with responsibility for observing the norms laid down by the Party-state. This new governance also sought to ensure the participation of cadres and Party officials through the creation of blogs, in order to paint a benevolent image of the leadership. It took shape in the context of the "Harmonious Society" slogan put forward in 2002, evolving by 2008 towards the elaboration of a social reform. Like some other cities, Guangzhou constituted a pioneering laboratory where the notion of *gongyi* (public interest, public welfare) entails the commitment of ordinary people in resolving social problems. But 2008 also marked a turning point in the hardening of Internet censorship because of the rapid spread of news about incidents and mobilisations linked to ethnic confrontations (Tibet and Xinjiang), farmers' protests, or even major scandals ("bean curd schools," contaminated milk powder...).

The period between 2009 and 2014, the subject of the author's synthesis, saw the emergence of the incubator Yi Fu, founded in 2006 and analysed as an exemplary case of the market's insertion into social matters, largely borrowing from global models of venture philanthropy and corporate social responsibility. It led to a logic that, choosing among local grass roots initiatives, brings "acceptable" ones into a process of institutionalisation via fiscalisation and professionalisation through performance. Both Internet users and "social organisations" were asked by the government to take part in managing society online and offline.

Part 2 of the book focuses on the subsequent 2010-2012 period, looking at three groups of Internet users, "ordinary" actors belonging mainly to the post-1980 generation, invested in social and political relations reconstituted on the terrain of activism, both before and during the institutionalisation of struggles. A socio-anthropological approach guides the author's analysis here.

"Mama Shang" lies at the root of the first group studied. In 2008, the mother of a homosexual created a blog, a space for global communication that helped numerous homosexuals and lesbians to act individually and/or collectively. Then came the founding of PFLAG (Federation of Parents, Friends and Families of Lesbians and Gays), which, finding no acceptance in the existing framework of legitimate social organisations, joined associations engaged in anti-AIDS campaigns that enjoyed the backing of the government and international funding. In 2012, there was a robust debate between the mother and the co-founder, who enlarged the battlefronts over discrimination against homosexuals to include the right to marriage and made contact with similar causes linked to gender issues such as the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) network. "Mama Shang" considered this enlargement risky, as the blog had to preserve its apolitical appearance, a private and familial dimension protecting it from political attacks.

The second group studied is one of Internet users and proprietors living in a condominium, Jardinaqua, situated near Panyu, who mobilised against the construction of a nearby waste incinerator, which was scheduled to open in 2009. For these urban middle class youths, the Internet played a crucial role in researching technical and scientific information regarding pollution caused by such units. Faced with local entities, a coalition of interests among officials and a state enterprise tasked with the work, they experimented with a sort of grassroots democracy that strengthened their group identity. National and international reverberations from this mobilisation obliged the Panyu authorities to suspend the project during the preparations for the 2010 Asian Games in Guangzhou. A small group devoted to the environmental cause founded the "Green Family" in 2010, focusing on the issue of recyclable waste. Some activists regrouped a year later in Eco City, which was more responsive to their concerns over effectiveness and expansion of the struggle to other citizen and philanthropic fronts. They saw themselves as awakers of conscience, consultants, and mediators for co-operation between the authorities and citizens. Eco City typifies an NGO that marries personal conviction and responsibility with the idea of *gongyi* put forward by the government in its "Harmonious Society" version. The experience of Alon – a pseudonym used by the author – exemplifies a social actor who maintains the tension between basic freedom of expression and control by public authorities, equally agile in avoiding the trap of benevolent activism when taking on a professional form inside new "social organisations."

The third group analysed consists of micro groups of Internet users or activists who came together over the G106 site (2008) and Lingliao (2010). Their actions were reminiscent of those of the Cantonese Association established in 2004, and through the website of which (the Cantonese diaspora obliging!) all sorts of action proposals were put online on a global scale and acted upon to stem the decline of Cantonese language in the face of the imposition of Mandarin in national education. Guangzhou's urban renewal programme and the demolition of its old quarters begun about a decade earlier, along with a proposal by the Guangdong Provincial People's Consultative Conference in 2010 to reduce the amount of Cantonese broadcasting on television, revived the debates both online and in the local press,

leading to a number of protests for the defence of Cantonese language and culture. Conserve what, for whom, and how? From 2008-09, young educated urbanites organised guided visits to areas earmarked for demolition, held Cantonese language classes, produced documentaries and organised photo exhibitions, recorded the memoirs of the last inhabitants, and presented evaluation dossiers on urban planning. These actions linked to their rehabilitation projects for old quarters helped with their application for NGO status. They were in step with the national and international eco-tourism market, and with NGOs gaining government authorisation and en-joined by UNESCO to preserve tangible and intangible heritage. And what of the quarters' inhabitants, left in the lurch and considered to be only aspiring to a higher payoff in order to vacate?

Through these three micro-groups the author has deliberately implicated the Internet in social relations, and the nature of her investigation is situated on a point farthest from an analysis built on a cross-section of opinions or themes raised by and on the Internet.

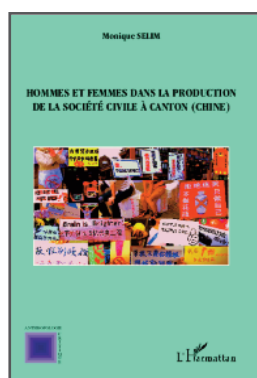
This book's interest resides entirely in the way it never sees Internet users or actors as effects of situations, even though the behaviour of those in authority strongly determines their conduct. It is by taking into account their aims and demands and the proposals of those taking part in collective action, as well as their expectations, that the socio-anthropological approach restores the voice of a civil society that is being experienced through what everyone lives and says at the crossroads of professional, affective, and activist relations.

Given this triple dimension, these young urbanites' activism fully qualifies as the kind of new social movements in post-modern societies analysed by Alain Touraine.

The Chinese young post-1980 generation has made massive use of the Internet and social networks, which have boosted their visibility and the expression of their rights, indignation, and mobilisations for a civil society in its infancy. They have experimented with a space of virtual autonomy, however limited, fully aware of the relative effectiveness of the Chinese government's control methods in respect of information circulation, and have aligned themselves more strongly with a world whose so-called global norms (cultural and financial) are a source of inspiration as well as of disquiet.

■ Translated by N. Jayaram.

■ Nicole Khouri is a sociologist and associate researcher at IMAF (Institute of African Worlds), UMR 8171, Paris, and at CEaA (Centre for Studies on Africa, Asia and Latin America), University of Lisbon, Portugal (khouri.n@wanadoo.fr).



**Monique Selim,**  
**Hommes et femmes dans la**  
**production de la société civile à**  
**Canton (Chine) (The Role of Men**  
**and Women in Creating Civil**  
**Society in Guangzhou, China),**  
 Paris, L'Harmattan, 2013, 304 pp.

NICOLE KHOURI

When discussing the emergence of civil society in Guangzhou, one must first take into account the particularities of Guangdong Province, an area of intensive migration and exchange between southern China and the rest of the world, a place receptive to new ideas, and a laboratory for the economic reform (*gaige kaifang*) that began in 1978, followed by the social reform encouraged in 2008. The fieldwork covered in this book occurred between 2005 and 2012, and is all carried by the same approach and anthropological analysis.

Divided into three parts, the book examines the groups, social categories, and collective movements that are part of the changing relationship between the Party-state and civil society in Guangzhou. The first section, which covers the ground between "recognition of the subject and collective organisation," brings together – to use the terms provided by the author – exemplary geriatrics and "madmen," rehabilitated autistics, and the rise of psychological care, a new commodity on offer from the many psychologists who have set up business in Guangzhou. Model volunteers, environmental protection, the quest for nature, and urban mobilisations form a second section that moves between "protest and integration." Finally, the symbolic power of gender, educated women in the workforce, designated journalists, and mothers in search of a different life form a third section, exploring the territory between "sexual norms and demands."

In the first section, Monique Selim shows that for the older generation (geriatrics who visit the centre, or parents of exemplary "madmen"), the current investment in their new "living collectives" is proof of a breaking away, but also of a certain continuity with the still vivid remnants of the Maoist heritage that defined their youth, modelled on sacrifice and heroism. Functioning as a "happy family," where everyone shares tasks, puts his own skills to good use, and fulfils his organisational and managerial responsibilities, these communes cast a new light on the genealogical and biographical experiences that would previously have remained unspoken. The parents of recovering "madmen," who come to the day centre after a long and tumultuous course of treatment, say they see the space as an oasis of solidarity, provided that they can all put aside their personal traumas, caused by all the ideological upheavals they have been through, and which have driven their loved ones mad.

Finally, in her analysis of rehabilitated autistics, the author – who does not dwell for long on the definition of "autistic" – places emphasis on the Party-state's normative domination of people's private lives, with regard to the 1979 law that imposed the single-child rule on a system of patrilineal succession. The cases where this rule was broken are thus especially serious, particularly for women (resulting in loss of employment, high fines, induced

abortions, shame, and sanctions). The hope of having a male child lies behind a great many strategies used to hide pregnancy and conceal the birth. The shame and guilt on the part of the parents, and especially for mothers who have given birth to an autistic child, are doubly pronounced.

In the second part, Monique Selim looks at the many types of "ecophile" who retrieve information from the Internet (on biodiversity, climate change, ecology, health, and nutrition), construct their own personal or collective life stories, flourish amid the supposed bounties of nature, or attempt to eat in a healthy way, sourcing food from suppliers and farmers that provide healthy, fresh produce; a phenomenon that, incidentally, has prompted the Yao and Dong ethnic groups to convert their land to organic agriculture. The young people who rallied to protest the demolition of an old neighbourhood in the west of Guangzhou provide an opportunity to tell the stories of the area's last residents, fragments of a history that is in danger of being swept away.

Finally, the book's third section shows that gender studies are being promoted by female scholars of diverse statuses. Being introduced to this field of study has allowed them to think differently about their political and social standing, characterised by discrimination (be it within the family, in education, in the job market, or in professional life). The message – whether encountered during a scholarship at an American university or on an internship in Hong Kong – is unequivocal: you must be yourself, and become personally or collectively involved in campaigning against the aforementioned injustices, as well as fighting to establish this field of study in the world of academia. With a view to combining Marxism with feminism, some women have taken up activism within the Women's Federation, in order to influence and take part in the decision-making process. As the author attests, the effect of these studies has been astonishing, "creating a huge breach in political and social life: the right to pleasure that is subjective, without designated purpose, and that exists outside the strictures of reproductive, economic, and political expediency" (p. 198).

Female graduates of major Guangdong universities, as well as female journalists and editors, describe first-hand the ways in which they construct their married, family, and professional lives. The existence of a "double bind" imposed by the two markets (matrimonial and professional) leaves little room for manoeuvre for younger women born after 1980. Many of them would rather sacrifice their career than remain "on the shelf," excluded from the marriage market. The older women, who are "protected" from the rules of these two markets, speak of a time when equality allowed them to break away from the social conservatism that so powerfully constricts their younger counterparts. Female journalists are faced with the same professional problems as their male colleagues, such as red envelopes and various forms of harassment if they research or write about "sensitive" topics. Cor-doning them off into supposedly "female" journalism, by assigning them subjects related to everyday life (organic farming, schools, transport, public toilet schemes for women, centres for the disabled) has been revealed as pure illusion, since these topics are laden with political implications.

In an entirely different sector, the mothers of the Steiner school offer a vision of what a "fully feminine" institution can be, in the context of an alternative school and a lifestyle that works in harmony with nature and personal development. They make a career for their children, forge a partnership with them, reorganise family arrangements by keeping separate living spaces (funded by the husbands, who live at their workplaces), and begin to dream of growing old together in this community of women. The author lays the groundwork for research on the forms of anxiety and proscription

among women in contemporary Chinese society. No longer raised on the pronouncements of the symbolic father figure as they were during the Mao era, they must seek fulfilment through their sons and against their own instincts.

The book's conclusion examines the specificity of relationships between the Party-state and the market, and between the latter and the ethical question expressed in the "grassroots" demands of citizens. This analysis situates the Chinese experience within a broader framework and poses questions about the structural integrity of the two conflicting sides that comprise our new historicity: a globalised financial economy on one side, and the demands and rights of the human subject on the other, signalling the tensions, practices, and nature of the conflicts, where, paradoxically, the subject of rights is both market commodity and ethical subject.

The groups, social categories, and collective movements presented in this publication make frequent reference to an ethic of conviction and responsibility. These citizens and volunteers are the salt of the earth, building the civil society of the future. Monique Selim's anthropological approach has the unique benefit of showing us, at close quarters, their ability to observe and analyse, allowing them to express what they feel the threats are, and the multitude of ways to ensure that their rights are recognised.

■ Translated by David Buchanan.

■ Nicole Khouri is a sociologist and associate researcher at IMAF (Institute of African Worlds), UMR 8171, Paris, and at CEaA (Centre for Studies on Africa, Asia and Latin America), University of Lisbon, Portugal (khouri.n@wanadoo.fr).



**Michael T. Rock and Michael A. Toman, China's Technological Catch-Up Strategy: Industrial Development, Energy Efficiency, and CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions**, New York, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015, 274 pp.

## JEAN-PAUL MARÉCHAL

In the first decade of the twenty-first century, China acquired the world's second largest economy and became the top carbon dioxide emitter as well as the leading consumer of energy. The future of the planet's climate is thus bound up with the Chinese economy's evolution.

Therein lies the interest in the work of Michael T. Rock and Michael A. Toman, who take stock of evolution in four industries – aluminium, cement, iron and steel, and paper – that have contributed substantially (at least the first three) to the country's transformation and are among the highest CO<sub>2</sub> emitters in China. While industry as a whole accounts for 60% of China's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, the four sectors cited represent nearly 60% of industrial emissions. *China's Technological Catch-Up Strategy* seeks to understand – by examining these four high-energy consuming industries – the impact of technological upgrading on the Chinese economy's energy efficiency and CO<sub>2</sub> intensity.

It is clear from the outset that the Chinese economy's energy efficiency has been increasing over the past three decades. This can be seen from the fact that between 1980 and 2010, the Chinese economy's CO<sub>2</sub> intensity fell from nine kg to three kg of CO<sub>2</sub> per dollar of GDP created, while that of industry slid from 18 kg to a little more than three kg.

Such an evolution was possible because of deliberate public policies. Right from the early 1980s, the authorities put in place energy efficiency criteria in a certain number of industrial sectors and included adherence to these criteria in the checklist for evaluating cadres. China inaugurated an industrial restructuring policy that took the form of a vast programme of mergers and acquisitions with the slogan "grasp the large, let go the small." Despite some difficulties in implementation, this modernisation strategy deeply transformed the four industrial sectors studied in this book.

Between 1985 and 2010, CO<sub>2</sub> intensity in cement production fell by 36% (p. 69), that of iron and steel by 64% (p. 105), of aluminium by 49% (p. 145), and of paper by 57% (p. 182). The differences between the levels of emissions obtained and what would have corresponded to the reference scenario were considerable. Thus in 2010, cement factories prevented the emission of 904 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere (p. 70), iron and steel factories about 2.5 billion tonnes (p. 106), aluminium firms nearly 175 million tonnes (p. 135), and paper mills about 185 million tonnes (p. 179).

What the authors say regarding cement production holds almost word for word for the chapters on the three other sectors and summarises the book's conclusions. Rock and Toman note that "none of this would have been possible without a strong central government committed to a pragmatic approach to industrial development and high-speed technological learning in energy intensive industries" (p. 73).

The results obtained through detailed study of the four branches are confirmed by statistical studies presented by the authors. They show that higher energy prices combined with investment in new technologies and formation of larger companies led to diminution of energy intensity (p. 208).

Of course, this does not mean CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have fallen in absolute value, but simply that there is now a decoupling between growth in GDP and that in greenhouse gas emissions. Between 1971 and 2011, China's GDP rose 33-fold, from US\$127 billion to US\$4,195 billion, with an average annual growth rate of a little over 9.2%, while during the same period, energy consumption rose from 392 million tonnes oil equivalent to 2.727 billion tonnes, a 6.9-fold increase, with a growth rate of almost 5%. Given these conditions, it is possible to better understand why in climate negotiations, China systematically stresses the need to take into account intensity indicators. The 12<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan (2011-2015), for instance, aimed to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 11% per unit of GDP.<sup>(1)</sup>

China is by far the planet's top CO<sub>2</sub> emitter and will remain so for a very long time. With 10.3 billion tonnes of emissions, it accounts for nearly a third of global emissions (35.3 billion tonnes). Besides, China's per capita emissions are nearly eight tonnes, equivalent to the level of the EU's 28 countries (France being a bit lower at five tonnes).

Of course, some of these figures need to be regarded with caution: in early November 2015, it was learned that Beijing had massively underestimated

1. For more details on these figures, see Jean-Paul Maréchal, "La Chine et le climat. Mur de l'environnement et bras de fer sino-américain" (China and Climate: The Environment Wall and Sino-US Tussle), in Pierre Alary and Elsa Lafaye de Micheaux (eds), *Capitalismes asiatiques et puissance chinoise* (Asian Capitalisms and Chinese Might), Paris, Presses de Sciences Po, 2015, pp. 95 and 107.

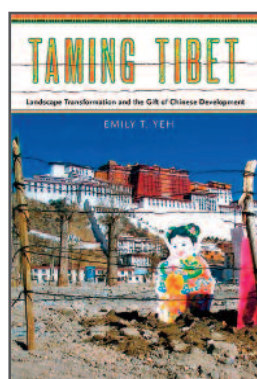
coal consumption in the 2000–2012 period. The result: in 2012, Chinese CO<sub>2</sub> emissions had to be reassessed at one billion tonnes,<sup>(2)</sup> or nearly thrice the total French emissions! Nothing too surprising in this discovery, given that an article published in 2012 showed that based on data supplied by local statistics departments, China in 2010 emitted 1.4 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> more than it was declaring.<sup>(3)</sup>

The book by Rock and Toman containing meticulous analyses, several graphs, tables, and concrete examples constitutes an interesting contribution to a debate that is far from over.

■ Translated by N. Jayaram.

■ Jean-Paul Maréchal is associate professor of economics at the Université Paris-Sud (marechal.jean-paul@wanadoo.fr).

2. Chris Buckley, "China Burns Much More Coal Than Reported, Complicating Climate Talks," *The New York Times*, 3 November 2015.
3. Dabo Guan, Zhu Liu, Yong Geng, Sören Lindner, and Klaus Hubacek, "The Gigatonne Gap in China's Carbon Dioxide Inventories," *Nature Climate Change*, No. 2, 2012, pp. 672–675.



**Emily T. Yeh,**  
**Taming Tibet: Landscape Transformation and the Gift of Chinese Development,**  
 Ithaca, London, Cornell University Press,  
 2013, 344 pp.

## VALENTINA PUNZI

Studies about the economic development of China's western regions have mainly focused on the central government-driven plans carried out since the post-1980 reform period and intensified during the last decade. However, without a much-needed historical assessment of earlier development projects started in the 1950s, the China Western Development (*Xibu da kaifa*) program launched in 2000 and the most recent One Belt One Road (*Yi dai yi lu*) initiative promoted last year have often been mistakenly presented as sudden sprouts without seeds.

In her insightful work, *Taming Tibet: Landscape Transformation and the Gift of Chinese Development*, Emily Yeh contributes to filling this gap with an excellent monographic study that explores the topic of development in the circumscribed location of Lhasa City and its environs over the long stretch from the 1950s to the 2000s. Through a detailed account of Chinese policy changes during this period, she analyses the interconnections among physical, economic, and social transformations that affected the historical and religious capital of Tibet.

The main argument of the book is that from the beginning, the Chinese state enterprise's coercive development strategies were conceived as acts of benevolence and that development itself was "offered" to Tibetans as an irrefutable gift to establish effective national rule in Tibet. Drawing on the Maussian theory of the gift, the author maintains that through the disguised act of disinterested giving, Chinese development is given to Tibetans as a

gift that generates obligation and indebtedness, while bringing with it a high expectation of being reciprocated with gratitude and loyalty.

Based upon historical sources, policymaking analysis, and ethnographic fieldwork, Yeh effectively shows how development has been deployed by the Chinese state as both a theoretical principle and an applied strategy aimed at the territorial incorporation of the Tibetan land and its inhabitants. In this sense, the purpose of any Chinese development project carried on since the 1950s ultimately entails a hegemonic discourse that – beyond its merely economic purpose – assumes and in fact demands that Tibetans should appreciate the gift.

The book exposes the consequences of different development projects and outlines the social and economic dynamics involving Tibetans, the state, the land, and Han newcomers over the course of 60 years. The author identifies three phases of government intervention in Tibet, and more specifically in Lhasa, each characterised by a single development focus, respectively: state farms, greenhouses, and house building. This long narrative is arranged around these three thematic and chronological nuclei, poignantly named soil, plastic, and concrete, which over time have reconfigured Lhasa from originally being the very centre of Tibet to its present status as a geographic, cultural, and economic periphery in need of development.

The first part, "Soil," deals with the earliest phase of development (1950s–1980s) and the first transformations of the Tibetan landscape through the institution of state farms, with the introduction of new modes of production and the initial cultivation of the land that involved the joint efforts of the Chinese army and the local people. In terms of centre-periphery relations, the first years witnessed the best period in the history of the region: the enthusiasm animating both the Han soldiers and the local Tibetans working in the state farms sustained relatively good ethnic relations that rapidly deteriorated afterwards, following the increasing symbolic and effective conquering of the land.

This part of the book sheds light on many pieces of diversified memories from that time that have been often silenced in the Tibetan exile communities, including, for example, the improvement of gender equality thanks to the inclusion of women in farming work. Extracts from interviews and memories vivify and contextualise the historical reconstruction of this and the next two parts of the book: the constant shifting between concrete micro-examples of biographical experiences and broader political issues offers a complex and complete narrative to the reader, and this alternating macro-micro lens authenticates the accuracy of the historical and political analysis.

In the second part, "Plastic," the chronological focus is on the 1990s, a critical phase of transition from state economy to market economy at the national level that had a direct impact on development strategies in Tibet. State farms were progressively abandoned, and a growing number of Han migrant workers from Sichuan Province took over the emerging market of greenhouses that spread through the suburban villages around Lhasa.

The author provides an insightful analysis of the interdependence of multiple political, economic, and cultural levels of discourses and practices that, following the introduction of greenhouses, marked Tibetans' overdetermined condition of marginalisation in vegetable farming and markets (p. 121). For Tibetans, the decollectivisation of agriculture essentially entailed not only nonparticipation but also a progressive exclusion from the new lines of market-led development.

With Han immigrants replacing the previous direct intervention of the state, the issue of Tibetan development became further connected to ethnic tensions, and the naturalisation of the increasing presence of Han workers

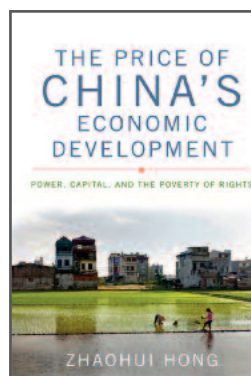
turned into the second strategy of territorialisation in Tibet. The author clearly outlines how Tibetans were prevented from taking advantage of the new liberalised market due to the concurrence of Tibetan traditional social relations and cultural norms, the failure of technology transfer from Han workers, and the sharp contrasts between “scientific” agriculture and traditional use of the land. The interiorised Tibetan negative notion of Chinese-style development as systematically spoiling the land with chemical fertilisers and corrupting the people through urbanisation made Tibetans live in a renting economy that gave up increasingly larger portions of the land to Han immigrants to build greenhouses. The author attentively argues that the reproduction of economic and ethnic imbalance in Lhasa was also connected to the failed applicability of the Chinese popular concept of *suzhi*, the quality of place and people, to the city of Lhasa. In inland China, the increment of *suzhi* is in fact deliberately associated with urbanisation: moving to the city from the countryside means an automatic rise of *suzhi* that, in the case of the small and under-populated Lhasa, dramatically failed to meet Han immigrants’ expectations: based on dominant representations of backwardness, dirtiness, and superstition, Tibetans were and still are considered low in *suzhi*, as is Lhasa, a periphery becoming urban.

In the last part of the book, “Concrete,” the focus is on the enforced urbanisation of Lhasa and its environs that in the last decade has been pursued in order to spread development through building construction. The imposition of new living spaces that affects family relations and traditional use of the domestic space is one of the consequences of the state’s intrusive and pervasive presence in local lives. Once again, the Tibetan failure to “perform gratitude” for this new gift made of concrete is disapproved of, and its acceptance is forcefully imposed.

Constantly shifting policies regulate different programs aimed at restoring old villages, expanding the urban space, relocating people from old houses in the historical centre, and building new ones in the periphery. The author insightfully points out the specific economic dynamics of these housing projects involving both central Lhasa and the neighbouring villages, and defines the sources of investment that sustain them. Although the state provides a substantial contribution towards most of the housing plans, house owners themselves are required to cover part of the funding. Being dependent on both private credit and bank loans, Tibetans’ involuntary participation in the state’s development and urbanisation projects becomes an inescapable condition of indebtedness. The book ends with further reflections on the Maussian theory of the gift, originally elaborated in the context of “archaic” societies, and its applicability to contemporary state-citizens relationships in Tibet.

This work is a notable contribution to the study of the PRC’s long-term development strategies to incorporate peripheral areas within the body of the state and to clearly demark its territory in a way that, as the author notes, sinisterly echoes state terror.

■ Valentina Punzi is currently a postdoc researcher at Università degli Studi di Napoli L'Orientale, Italy ([valentina.punzi@yahoo.it](mailto:valentina.punzi@yahoo.it)).



**Zhaohui Hong,**  
**The Price of China's Economic Development: Power, Capital, and the Poverty of Rights,**  
 Lexington, The University of Kentucky Press, 2015, 296 pp.

## BENOÎT VERMANDER

The author of this work, an expert in economic history, takes an interdisciplinary approach to study the non-economic consequences of the developmental process followed by China since 1978. So it does not take into account such matters as the environmental aspects of that growth but is concerned mainly with the social and cultural costs of the model that has predominated throughout the period. The author notes that even the notion of a “price” or cost does not imply any value judgment: every growth process comes with a price tag. The question is one of assessing the price in relation to the confirmed benefits, especially if the price in question involves a burden imposed on a considerable number of people.

The interdisciplinary aspect of this analysis arises from the tripartite nature of the transitions undergone since 1978: from a planned to a market economy; from an agrarian to an industrial society; from a traditional to a civic culture. The author advances two main theses, the first of which is that these three transitions have combined to form a “power-capital institution” (or, in Chinese, *quanli ziben zhidu* 权力资本制度) made up of an economic structure, a culture, and specific players. This institution manages the transfers from political power to capital and vice-versa; within it the players ensure the maximisation of their profit from the use of labour power by capital; and finally, the overall institution takes the form of specific institutions, norms, values, and discourses. It goes without saying that the relationship between political power and capital has radically changed since 1949, and that the study of the modes of their interconnection has become necessary for understanding the current system in China.

The second thesis that forms the framework of this volume is that this “power-capital institution” has arisen in parallel with a “poverty of rights.” The term applies to civic, economic, social, political, and cultural rights, along with the absence of any space where such rights could be claimed. The nature of the discriminations linked to the poverty of rights has itself developed in tandem with the reform process, and the denial of those rights is the direct cause of both the poverty and the low morale weighing on certain sectors of the population. So the study of the “denials of rights” coming into effect at different stages in the developmental process should have to form an integral part of the history of the process, enabling a comparative approach to it, and influencing in turn its future planning. (Incidentally, it seems to me that one of the most interesting ideas in the work is precisely that the various rights – to property, free expression, social security, etc. – are subjected to denials whose vigour and extent vary according to the stages of any given developmental process).

This volume sets out these two theses in two parts, *The Haves* followed by *The Have-Nots*. The first is focused on the emergence and development

of the power-capital institution, studying it in three successive modes: as a political economy, as a coalition of entrepreneurs, and as a social culture. The alliance between political power and capital, whose main stages of development over the period in question are swiftly outlined by the author, took place in such a manner that ruled out the normal political expectations from a numerical increase in the size of the middle class. The author develops his theoretical perspective still further by analysing the "power-capital economy" as a system distinct from both a market economy and a centrally planned one, but functioning in a perpetual oscillation between the two, thus constituting itself as a semi-autonomous economic mode. He therefore argues for the need to see the socio-economic functioning of the Chinese economy as tri-polar. The ambiguity of this system largely explains the ambiguous nature of the strategies of the "entrepreneurs" at the heart of the power-capital institution. Moreover, the nature of the alliances set up by them has prevented the possibility of any progressive maturing of a civic culture worthy of the name. The dominant culture, writes Zhaohui Hong, is that of the "3 Cs" (Confucian, Communist, and Culture of Power and Capital). Here, too, he argues for an analysis based on a systemic analysis of these three dimensions taken as a whole in order to study the cycles of China's political culture and foresee its implications.

The second part focuses on the *Have-Nots* and is based on analyses of the different sectors. Its first chapter deals with China's urban population. Here the author goes beyond establishing a global link between poverty and restrictions on rights by arguing for affirmative action programmes targeting clearly identified groups, especially among the urban population. This line of analysis is extended to cover the various restrictions on rural property rights as well as on the legal and social status of migrant workers. The last chapter goes into considerable detail in order to throw light on the situation of "house churches," emphasising once again the restrictions on the exercise of the right to religious freedom. This chapter also contains a fairly strong programmatic side, urging the leaders of the clandestine Protestant churches to show more pragmatism and to make better use of the remaining space for initiatives.

The rather brief conclusion acknowledges the way in which "the power-capital institution" analysed in the first chapter of the book was perhaps the inevitable outcome of the reorganisation of the social strata and other restructurings at a time of unparalleled socio-economic transition. In this respect, the author does not argue for their demolition but rather for their integration into a legal framework with public supervision, and a progressive programme for increased democracy. China will be unable to reform itself without dissociating political power from capital, and this dissociation must be conducted within a reformed legal framework.

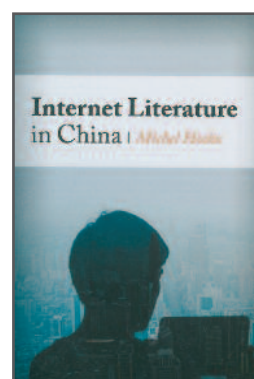
The main interest in this work lies in the systematic character of its analysis. This overall systemic approach is not without its risks: its nuances often get bogged down by a theoretical formula that dominates the whole without helping to shape all its developments. Moreover, the stress placed on the elites on the one hand and the disadvantaged on the other does not give due importance to developments and strategies specific to the middle class: the latter is said to have struck an implicit bargain with power in order to garner for itself some of the proceeds of growth – but the analysis hardly goes further than that. This observation should be extended through a study of the "social ruses" and cultural trends also operating within that middle class. After all, would this not be the very section of the population that is contributing to the extension of the rights conceded by the political power (albeit indirectly and only partially), reducing thereby the global "price" of

the growth process and creating some of the cultural and social resources omitted from this book's analysis? Because of this omission, the pages on the "civic culture" such as it exists in present-day China are perhaps too pessimistic, although that assessment may be open to question.

In any event, this book will certainly prove to be a valuable reference work (even if only to provoke queries) for any reader concerned with testing the models that attempt to give an account of the implicit "social contract" currently in force in China today, and to assess its durability as well as its weaknesses.

■ Translated by Jonathan Hall.

■ Benoît Vermander is a professor at the School of Philosophy at Fudan University, Shanghai (mdwei@fudan.edu.cn).



**Michel Hockx,**  
**Internet Literature in China,**  
New York, Columbia University Press,  
2015, 251 pp.

## SHUANG XU

*Internet Literature in China* is the fruit of Michel Hockx's work over the last decade. In this volume the author examines the new literary form in the broad context of Chinese "postsocialism," which he characterises as a "condition of ideological contradiction and uncertainty" (p. 13). His observations are based on his reflections, which combine literary and social questions. He asks how Internet literature brings about innovations in Chinese printed literature, as well as in the electronic literature that is already well developed in the West. And how does its publication manage to defy the government censorship system as it transgresses its boundaries? The author sets out to probe the phenomenon of Internet literature in order to examine the process of social transformation in China, and to offer "a general overview, useful not only for specialists but also for general readers interested in present-day China and its culture" (p. x).

The work opens with an overall presentation of the development of Internet literature in China (Chapter 1). The birth of this new literature in the 1990s is compared with the profusion of literary magazines at the beginning of the twentieth century. According to Hockx, these two phenomena have some common features: literary innovation linked to new technologies, the formation of new communities around literary production, and the coexistence of differing literary tastes and divergent linguistic and cultural registers. He believes that Internet literature is in the process of establishing its own norms and values, which are not identical to those of its printed counterparts. The chapter ends with a study of the first literary website in China, "Under the Banyan Tree," which throws light on the methods of producing online publications, and on the actual practices of a literary community based on digital interactions. He also follows

the trajectories of different online writers to bring out a new form of literary canonisation, and the potential for creating new literary genres.

The second chapter takes a closer look at literary innovation in the work of three active Internet authors. Chen Cun (b. 1954) was one of the first recognised writers in printed literature to enter the digital scene in the late 1990s. He still follows this avant-garde experimental path in his own online forum, the "Minority Vegetable Garden" (*xiaozhong caiyuan* 小眾菜園), where he publishes matters that are taboo in printed literature, such as "Random Notes on Sex" (*xing biji* 性筆記), and where he attempts to break free from the stifling conventions in fiction in favour of a more direct form of written expression. Moreover, his forum includes a selective literary circle, modelled on the tradition of Tao Yuanming (365-427). The second writer, Wen Huajian (b. 1972), is the author of the first novel in the form of a microblog (*weibo xiaoshuo* 微博小說), a new literary genre that later developed under the name of "micro-fiction" (*wei xiaoshuo* 微小說). In terms of both form and content, his writings probe the boundaries between serious and obscene literature, as well as those separating fiction, virtual reality, and the real world. The third example, Han Han (b. 1982), has revived the genre of the satirical essay (*zawen* 雜文) characteristic of Lu Xun's style, thanks to the social criticism in his blogs. The powerful media impact of his frontal attacks on the established publishing system has enabled a defence of authors' rights against piracy in the case of certain digital publications. He also explores the possible use of mobile phone apps in order to widen the field of independent literary publication.

The following chapter focuses on online fiction and the censorship policy aimed at moral and political offenses. Taking the Qidian 起點 website as his example, Hockx begins with a description of its general organisation. He emphasises that its economic model is closely linked to the interactions between author, reader, web administrator, and editor. He points out that creating a website involves re-interpreting certain literary ideas, such as the term *wenxue* 文學 (literature) or *qihuan* 奇幻 (fantasy). The chapter goes on to consider state control over the online fiction read by millions of readers outside the system of printed publications. Hockx broaches this issue by opting for the "obscene and pornographic" fiction that presents a threat to current legislation. His study of two websites, Feilu 飛路 and Heilan 黑籃, lays out in detail some of their strategies for bypassing censorship measures.

The final chapter studies Internet poetry from different angles: aesthetic development, moral transgression, and the re-appropriation of poetry's social function. His study of two influential websites for poetry in China, Poemlife (*shi shenghuo* 詩生活) and Chinapoet (*Zhongguo shi wang* 中國詩網), reveals the appearance of poetic creations in the classical style. The author stresses that the hybrid combination of modern and classical styles calls for the creation of a new critical discourse to respond to this poetic innovation. Moreover, the originally "dissident" Jintian 今天 website seems to have won acceptance in China thanks to the creation of new transnational spaces. His case study of the avant-garde group *xiabanshen* 下半身 (lower body) returns to the question of moral transgression. The separate careers of two women poets – one having achieved canonical status (Yin Lichuan) and the other being permanently censored (Datui) – raises the question of the boundary between *literariness* (p. 162) and obscenity. The chapter ends with a study of the formal innovations of online poetry: the animated *textual morphs* (p. 168), the Chinese version of electronic poetry, the English *sinographic* poetry (p. 175), and the visual poetry of Da-juin Yao.

The volume includes copious endnotes classified according to chapter, a bibliography, a traditional index, and an explanation of how to use online sources. In addition, owing to the ephemeral nature of some of the documents, the reader is given access to an archive of digital references in the Zotero Group Library. The book is easily consulted and very practical to use. My only regret is the absence of a glossary and of Chinese characters for proper names.

To the best of my knowledge, Michel Hockx's book is the first Western study to provide a global introduction to online literature in China. In this respect it complements two other recently published works: Jin Feng's study of romantic novels (*Romancing the Internet: Producing and Consuming Chinese Web Romance*, Leyden, Brill, 2013) and Heather Inwood's work on poetry (*Verse Going Viral: China's New Media Scenes*, Seattle, University of Washington Press, 2014). Hockx's book is extremely informative, and it also provides the first methodological steps towards a study of Internet literature in China. In sum, this is an important contribution, not only to Chinese studies but also to the study of digital literature elsewhere in the world.

■ Translated by Jonathan Hall.

■ Shuang Xu is an associate professor at Paris Diderot University, East Asian Languages and Civilisations Department, and researcher at the Centre de recherche sur les civilisations de l'Asie orientale (UMR 8155) ([shuang.xu@univ-paris-diderot.fr](mailto:shuang.xu@univ-paris-diderot.fr)).