

Book reviews



Greg Austin,
Cyber Policy in China,
Cambridge & Malden, Polity Press,
2014, 203 pp.

SÉVERINE ARSÈNE

In *Cyber Policy in China*, Greg Austin traces the evolution of China's informatisation strategy since 2000. It is perhaps the first such work to gather and analyse in a synthesising manner such a comprehensive set of official documents on the issue. These documents are of varied origins: top leaders' speeches, five-year plans, "National Plan for Informatisation 2006-2020," official and academic reports, and regulatory texts, etc. As Austin explains in the first chapter, these official documents certainly do not provide clear views of how the central government's vision is realised on the ground subject to interactions with local leaders, private enterprises, and civil society. However, they reveal the "information society" vision the state leadership cherishes. The concept has been much bandied about over the past 30 years in international reports and has led to numerous development plans for digital infrastructure across the globe. It was also adopted in China in the context of the Communist Party seeing in the digital sector a source of threat, in that it might be accompanied by the growth of political dissidence, risk of cyber war, or possible economic backwardness.

The second chapter looks at the historical background in the domain of information technologies. The Maoist era was characterised by a freeze on innovation and obstacles to information circulation. With the advent of economic reforms, the leadership has in fact set store by the development of an "information economy" in order to speed up China's modernisation. This has given an impetus to electronics and information technology, making no provision, however for the notion of free flow of information. In the 1990s, the State Informatization Leading Group (SILG) of the State Council was set up, a massive network of national operators such as China Telecom was developed, contacts and cooperation with foreign companies and scientists proliferated, and private firms engaged in online services flourished (Sina, Alibaba, Netease, etc.). However, technologies and control mechanisms were put in place at the instance of the Ministry of Public Security.

The third chapter deals with measures taken in the 2000s to develop "e-government" in order to raise administration efficiency with the help of information systems, development of public services, and public consultation campaigns. The chapter also highlights efforts by the authorities to build confidence in an environment of rising cyber-crimes and attacks on private per-

sons. But these measures were applied most unequally on the ground and inevitably confronted policy limits such as protection of "state secrets," which could include anything from top leaders' wealth to the casualty figures in the 2008 Sichuan earthquake. Meanwhile, with the rapidly growing Internet, the government faced an "information society" no longer limited to just an "information economy." In response, the leadership has on several occasions overhauled the governance apparatus, especially with the increasing might of the SILG and the formation in 2014 of the Central Leading Group for Cybersecurity and Informatization, while at the same time the Ministry of Public Security was assuming an even higher profile through these leading groups and through the Golden Shield Project aimed at filtering online information so as to censor and identify dissidents. However, Austin believes that the considerable information flows in China constitute an inexorable force that can only diminish the space for secrecy that the Chinese state can still enjoy.

The fourth chapter is devoted to China's policy of supporting innovation in the domain of information technologies. Relying notably on World Bank expertise, China's leadership has progressively been attaching priority to issues such as enhancement of institutions (including the rule of law), training of qualified human resources, overhaul of the research and development infrastructure, and even acquisition of foreign know-how. The private sector, too, has received encouragement to grow. Since 2005, noting that innovation was mainly concentrated in the Academy of Sciences or foreign enterprises or was financed by foreign venture capital, and that China possessed few patents, the leadership has emphasised "indigenous" innovation and the formation of an "innovating class." Austin predicts that China could henceforth be at the cutting edge in areas free of bureaucratic oversight or which do not touch on state secrets, where the private sector has the initiative and where foreign investment and free information exchange are possible.

Finally, the fifth chapter deals with the issue of cybersecurity from the Chinese leaders' viewpoint. Around 2000, noting that informatisation of society was irreversible and threatening Chinese territorial sovereignty, and that it would take a predominant place in armed conflicts, the Central Military Commission headed by Jiang Zemin accorded urgency to developing capacities of defence and dissuasion in the digital domain. In 2004, the People's Liberation Army was vested with "new historical missions," expanding its role to the protection of national interests in areas as diverse as the economy, science and technology, social life, culture, information, and ideology in addition to defence proper. Despite progress deemed rather slow, China has advanced considerably in the areas of space conquest, cyber-espionage, and the capacity to mount a precise offensive digital attack, this last leading to much disquiet in the United States. Meanwhile, the author stresses that China and the United States share a strong interest in maintaining stability and digital security given their economic and technological interdependence (especially via Taiwan) and that a strategy is needed to manage the imbalance in power between the two major powers in this area, otherwise China as well as the United States will embark on a course of digital armament, something neither desires. Meanwhile, China has been aggressively defending the principle of digital sovereignty and cybersecurity

through numerous multilateral initiatives, from the United Nations General Assembly to ICANN (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers), not to mention APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation).

In the last chapter, Austin explains that the digital domain is not an issue of public policy like the others. In his view, the adoption of information technologies should lead to thorough changes in the regime, perhaps like Singapore, deemed a model single-party regime that has succeeded in putting in place a modern information society (which I see as a problematic assertion, given the limits on free expression in the city-state). Austin's conclusion nevertheless ends on an optimistic note, wagering that China's leadership will have opted for wise solutions by 2025.

The book contains a chronology, a table of abbreviations, a selected bibliography, and an index, all of which make for a veritable introductory manual on China's digital policy that is accessible and easy to use.

However, I remain perplexed over the general argument put forward in the first chapter to justify the book's structure. As it focuses on the Chinese leadership's ethical choices and values in the area of the information society, Austin has decided to deal with the subject in a normative manner, evaluating at the end of each chapter the Chinese strategy in light of "nine ideal values for information society policy" (p. 9). These values are divided into three groups: first, "national information ecosystem," which includes freedom of information exchange, protection of information exchange, and trusted information; second, "an innovative information economy," including "transformation intent," an innovation system, and the existence of an innovative class; and finally, a "global information ecosystem" covering the notion of strategic stability, the need to bridge military divides, and the need for an interdependent informatised security (p. 16). Even if inspired by international works and reports, these nine values seem to have been chosen arbitrarily. They add nothing to analyses of the Chinese leadership's dilemmas, which have been very well dealt with in the book. Therefore, this approach seems to be quite superfluous in a book that otherwise contains a clear and sufficiently complete synthesis of China's digital policy.

■ Translated by N. Jayaram.

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Hu Angang,
China in 2020: A New Type of Superpower, Washington D.C.,
Brookings Institution Press, 2011,
213 pp.

MAOLIANG BU

The economic rise of China has not only inspired new books on how to understand China's economy and its influence on the rest of world, but has also been accompanied by pessimistic views on China's impending collapse. A recent example is David Shambaugh's article "The Coming Chinese Crackup," published in *The Wall Street Journal*. Given that these books and views are fairly mixed and mainly published by non-Chinese scholars, it is of increasing importance to explore the perspectives and hear the voices of native Chinese scholars. Hu Angang's book *China in 2020* serves this aim well. As mentioned in the introduction by Dr. Cheng Li, "(...) arguably no scholar in the PRC has been more visionary in forecasting China's ascent to superpower status, more articulate in addressing the daunting demographic challenges that the country faces, or more prolific in proposing policy initiatives designed to advance an innovative and sustainable economic development strategy than Hu Angang."

China in 2020 covers two themes of particular interest: Chinese optimism and exceptionalism. Hu has been consistently optimistic about China's socioeconomic transformation. He declares that if current development trends continue, the day when China overtakes the U.S. in a variety of respects – not only in economic power but also in human capital, science, and technology – is not far off. The sources of his confidence in China becoming a superpower are detailed in different chapters of the book: economic power (Chapter 2), human resources and capital (chapters 3 to 5), science and technology achievements (Chapter 6), and the ability to address climate change (Chapter 7). All of these optimistic assessments are supported and explained by a wealth of information and statistics, in the accessing and collecting of which Hu has an incomparable advantage and rich experience. Hu founded and leads the Center for China Studies at Tsinghua University, which has carried out considerable work on China's national reports (*guo-qing baogao*) covering various social and economic aspects over the long term (since 1998). More importantly, Hu's confident optimism regarding China is built upon a deep understanding of the patterns and efficiency of China's resource allocation, often covered by eyeball-catching topics that are overlooked by observers both inside and outside of China.

As for the second theme, it is widely acknowledged that an emerging superpower will destabilise the existing international system. However, Hu points out that China's rise to superpower status will be an exception, which he names a "new type of superpower." He believes that China has neither the resources nor the intention to replace the U.S. and become sole leader of the world within the waves of globalisation. On the contrary, China needs to cooperate with the U.S. in order to meet global challenges. Furthermore, the book covers a great deal of the thinking behind China taking more re-

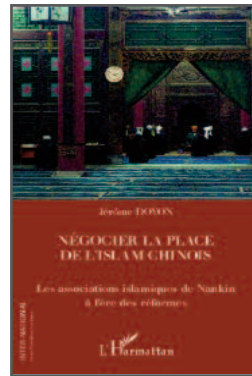
sponsibility and making greater contributions to international society in terms of economic development, as well as culture, science, and ecology. Hu's view of Chinese exceptionalism will no doubt encounter continued scrutiny. However, one more interesting issue regarding this "exceptionalism" is that it represents the view of a significant portion of China's mainstream intellectuals. In contrast to individual scholars with sharp and independent opinions, these mainstream intellectuals serve more as volunteer expounders of China's story to the rest of the world in a pleasing way with persuasive data and up-to-date descriptions of national strategies. Hu's book is a good example of these writings, and provides an opportunity to acquire a more nuanced and balanced understanding of influential Chinese scholars.

It should also be noticed that an insider's view does not necessarily mean lack of criticism. In fact, Hu Angang has raised many frank suggestion and comments that have been effectively adopted by senior government leaders. However, non-Chinese readers may find difficult to understand this type of criticism. The difficulty does not lie in linguistic translation, but in an adequate understanding of the Chinese system, which again demands an insider's view. Nevertheless, the views of Chinese insiders are receiving increased attention, as evidenced by the 2015 May/June issue of *Foreign Affairs* (entitled *Embracing China's "New Normal": Why the Economy Is Still on Track*), which unprecedentedly published several articles by Chinese scholars, including Hu Angang.

My concern about this book is that Hu's approach takes the perspective of cooperative rather than non-cooperative game theory. Both of his two main views of Chinese optimism and exceptionalism would be more convincing if taking account of a non-cooperative reaction from the rest of world. As for optimism, whether China can become a superpower will depend not only on China itself but also on how the rest of world responds to it. Similar logic can be found in the development of trade theory, which already shows that the large country model is very different from the small country model. As for exceptionalism, there is a need for non-cooperative analysis to anticipate how China would respond to non-cooperative actions by other countries against China's development in a dynamic model setting. Furthermore, can China remain exceptional in terms of taking more cooperative action? The answers to these questions are not discussed sufficiently in the book.

The opinions and ideas of Chinese authors have long been inaccessible to non-Chinese speakers. Some Western readers may be tired of outsiders' views and increasingly interested in works by insiders. The Brookings Institution Press, and particularly Dr. Cheng Li, have done a great service in creating the Thornton Center Chinese Thinkers book series. If you would like to learn more about the views of a leading proponent of Chinese optimism and exceptionalism, you should definitely not miss Hu Angang's book, *China in 2020*.

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Jérôme Doyon,
Négocier la place de l'islam chinois. Les associations islamiques de Nankin à l'ère des réformes (Negotiating the Place of Chinese Islam: Islamic Associations in Nanjing during the Reform Era), Paris, L'Harmattan, 2014, 249 pp.

RÉMI CASTETS

This book is the result of research conducted by Jérôme Doyon for his Master's thesis. The young scholar, currently pursuing his doctorate, carried out expert field work in early 2011 in Nanjing municipality.

The author chose to focus on the role, functioning, and interactions of local branches of the Islamic Association of China (IAC) in Nanjing (IAN) and Jiangsu (IAJ). He starts off with the observation that the Chinese state's control over its Muslim populations operates in the special contexts of each region and leads to diverse configurations. This original monograph adopts a "micro" analysis framework, making a break with the top-down approaches often pursued in the study of state control measures relating to religion. The information collected by the author helps reconstitute, based on recontextualised subjectivities, the ways of functioning of the IAC's local branches and the challenges they face.

It is rare to come across Western scholars' work regarding the complex mechanisms of interactions among believers, different strata and compartments of the Chinese administration, and the IAC. This is a sensitive subject especially in areas with Muslim majorities in the northwest of China. The author opportunely explored a much less sensitive context in Nanjing by interviewing academics, clerics, the laity, IAC members, and officials.

The book's interest lies in taking the reader into the lives of the IAC's branches in Jiangsu. Doyon sheds light on the motivations of their officials and interlocutors (the local and central administration, the Communist Party, local laity, and those from other provinces) and presents a broad picture of the constraints and resources they deal with. The finesse of his analysis lies as much in his reliance on solid knowledge of conceptual frameworks of social sciences as of works published in recent years on the oversight of religion in China.

In the first chapter, Doyon notes the IAC's role in the management of religious sites in Nanjing, evaluating to what extent it forms part of the continuities of associations that preceded it, as well as the extent to which it departs from them. He mentions the specificities of the local context: ethnic and sectarian homogeneity, the IAN's financial resources, and absence of political conflict or financial disputes with the administration, etc. This context explains to a great extent the modes of control and financial management adopted by the IAN and IAJ. Given the meagre potential for financing of the small local Muslim community and of funding being linked to income from the IAN property and governmental connections, the IAN has acquired a major degree of control over the finances and activities of local religious sites. It is worth noting that the IAN and IAJ face less pressure from the state and enjoy greater elbow room given the relaxed local political context.

In the second chapter, Doyon deals with the association's internal functioning, the process for the selection of its officials, and the intermingling of personnel in the AIC's different strata. He describes the relations with administrative organs deputed to control them and political entities able to provide a platform for their members. He notes the asymmetry in their relations with the state and raises the issue of their representative character. He describes the circles closely linked to the administration thanks to the process of selecting members, financial dependence, and due to systems of concerted action or decision-making with the Religious Affairs Bureaus and United Front Departments. This state of affairs is meant to instil an internalisation in the IAC of the politico-ideological line of the state and the Party. Moreover, this phenomenon explains the filtering out of believers' "unrealistic" demands in the framework of the process of mediation or representation. The author describes this form of *modus vivendi*, which, while being asymmetrical, is compensated through a satisfactory "give-and-take" for all concerned. The interactions between the IAC's local branches and the administration rest on sharing networks and exchanges of services. The presence of ethnic Hui academics, clerics, political, and administrative personnel in the IAC local branches gives birth to networks and competence pools helping push requests (authorisations and financing of new infrastructures or religious events). Thus, even if IAC local branches are seen by local populations or religious personnel as pro-governmental entities, they draw legitimacy from their ability to collect state funding or obtain authorisation for activities likely to be problematic in other Muslim regions. This covers activities in the "grey area," meaning those on the margins of orthodoxy and legal framework as well as those taking place outside the mosques. In sum, Doyon depicts the associations as pressure groups, mediators, and the state's intermediaries to reach the laity, all rolled into one.

In the last two chapters he envisages, in light of the relationship with the Party-state again, the function of institutionalisation of communities and of definition/control of practices or identities within the Muslim community. He invokes also the role of the IAN and IAJ in the control of religious sites, the curbing of activism in the communities, education of religious personnel, and information of the administration. Citing concrete instances, he stresses the IAC's socio-charitable as well as diplomatic role.

The book contains a few anecdotal imprecisions that Islamologists can pick out (for example, the festival Kaizhajjie or Id al-Fitr is presented as occurring at the start rather than at the end of the month of Ramadan). Nevertheless, this insightful work containing rich information and analysis constitutes a necessary source for those interested in the functioning of the IAC's local branches, the Chinese state's religious policy, or Jiangsu's Hui communities.

■ Translated by N. Jayaram.

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Victor Nee and Sonja Oppers,
Capitalism from Below: Markets
and Institutional Change in
China, Cambridge, MA, and London,
Harvard University Press, 2012, 431 pp.

BERNARD GANNE

This work by Victor Nee and Sonja Oppers is an important book. Considering that approaches to the Chinese economy and its transition to the private sector remain deeply marked by an analytical system centred on the primacy of the role of the state and how it orchestrates development, this book explores a different facet of this expansion, that of the private economy that has formed "from below." What are the ways in which the private sector has been established? How have entrepreneurs managed to overcome the barriers resulting from socialist organisation centred on the state? Which institutions have enabled private economic actors to cooperate and compete with the dominant state sector of public companies during the transition phase? This is the subject of Chapter 1. Standard economic theory, which focuses primarily on top-down regulation, pays little attention to the fact that economic actors, particularly entrepreneurs, by their very actions gradually create their own operating standards and their own institutional frameworks. It is therefore appropriate to tackle the problem at the base and from the other direction – that is, from the behaviour of entrepreneurs rather than from the standards set by central government institutions – to better see the latent regulations and hidden standards that have marked the construction of the private sector in China (Chapter 2).

The task of the authors has been to observe this phenomenon as close to the field as possible. In an area described as the epicentre of "capitalism from below" – the Yangtze River Delta Region, where the development of private enterprises has been particularly significant – Victor Nee and Sonja Oppers established a sizeable investigative procedure aimed at entrepreneurs. More than 700 private companies in business for more than three years were the subject of studies in 2006 and 2009, through a highly comprehensive economic, social, and relational survey. The result is an 84-page annex to the book, which observes how a range of decisions made by entrepreneurs and their attitudes to finance, to other entrepreneurs, to work, to personnel, and to various local or national political players, etc., have led to the emergence of new standards of behaviour, both informal and institutional, in parallel or even in contrast with formal arrangements (Chapter 3). Supplemented by qualitative interviews, the surveys were conducted through the Market Survey Institute of the Shanghai Academy of Sciences. They involved companies located in seven cities: Shanghai, three cities in Jiangsu (Changzhou, Nanjing, and Nantong), and three cities in Zhejiang (Hangzhou, Ningbo, and Wenzhou).

Focusing first on the careers of entrepreneurs and the creation of their businesses, Chapter 4 shows how these new private players initially received little help from the state politico-economic apparatus: in fact, they fended

for themselves by creating “innovative informal arrangements” (p. 107) and mobilising small groups held together by shared conceptions of finance, business, etc., and therefore driven by their own values and norms, which made it possible for them to survive and exist outside the dominant system of state enterprises. After being considered somewhat “deviators” (p. 108) for a time, these entrepreneurs were subsequently able – because of their success – to see their practices recognised and their new forms of institutional organisation adopted. However, it should be noted that such behaviour was exercised with great caution and avoided any head-on clash with the “rules of the game” (p. 131) of the prevailing socialist mode of production. Chapter 5 (“Legitimacy and Institutional Change”) shows the subtle game played in practice by many companies, which adopted to the letter, but sometimes as pure formality, the officially-issued rules of organisation, even if they did not attempt to give them any actual content, or indeed, were better able to take advantage of them by diverting them from their stated aims.

It is the industrial clusters – in particular those in Zhejiang – that by forming themselves around a significant number of private entrepreneurs have in fact contributed to having these new practices recognised (Chapter 6). Bringing together entrepreneurs located in the same territory, involved in similar specialised production, facing the same constraints, and sharing common perspectives, these clusters have made it possible to fine-tune different modes of production and sale through the development of industrial and commercial relations between firms, and through exchanges of information and self-help of all kinds, including financial. These clusters were marked by the inauguration of a different system of cooperation/competition, and the establishment of different institutions serving businesses, somewhat in the manner of Italian industrial districts (Chapter 8).

Continuing to play it safe, it is mainly on the level of employment and the job market that private companies have proved the most conformist. Although they have benefited from specific recruitment networks, they have been especially careful to adopt or even copy the recruitment and management policies that are the norm in large state enterprises, always taking care to abide by the major official guidelines that encourage companies to develop high value-added policies in professional recruitment (Chapter 7).

This book also shows that the relationships between the public and private sectors, and between the Communist Party and the entrepreneurs, are actually more complex than they appear, and that while new links have indeed been forged, this does not mean there is a “red capitalism” regulated by the political sphere. It is certainly in the interest of entrepreneurs to approach the political authorities to establish favourable “institutional arrangements” (p. 225), gain access to loans, conclude contracts, obtain land, etc. But observations carried out in the cities of the Yangtze River Delta show that the mobilisation of this political capital does not seem to have a decisive effect on profitability. It is actually by organising to face growing competition, both national and global, that private companies have learned to build and establish their own operating systems in practice. The political elites have intervened only afterwards in order to legitimise the existing dynamics and have learned, very pragmatically, how to profit in new ways from the tremendous growth driven by the private sector, if only by transforming these productivity gains into taxable income, and by institutionalising the genuine advances and innovations thus brought about. The market has thus contributed to “decouple” (p. 258) the new entrepreneurs from the old centralised system of control, which needed re-balancing (Chapter 9).

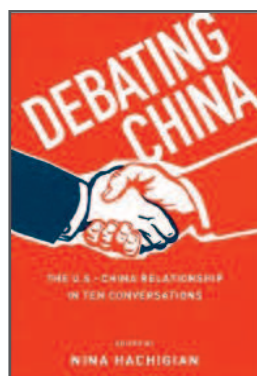
What conclusions can we draw from this series of in-depth observations? In contrast to approaches that remain polarised around the central role played by the state in the economic and institutional changes taking place in China, one cannot help seeing that private entrepreneurs are no longer confined, as they were initially, to secondary peripheral areas, or to a kind of marginal cultural enclave operating on a local basis. Currently generating 70% of China’s GDP, they are by now the main engine of China’s development and the source of the institutional change that is taking place in a very tangible way from the ground up in the economic sector. It has taken more than 20 years for China to make these adjustments. Hence the importance of seriously and carefully scrutinising these endogenous patterns of development.

In seeking to extend from the Yangtze Region to China as a whole, the book’s concluding extrapolation is perhaps a little hasty. However, the arguments it puts forward, the detailed studies it makes use of, and the fields of thought it opens up make *Capitalism from Below* a reference work that is unquestionably a milestone. First of all, it is the result of a great deal of solid work, moving equally well from theory to practice and from analysis to synthesis, handling large batches of both quantitative and qualitative data, underpinning its arguments with very concrete comparisons and examples, and determinedly maintaining its objective. In so doing, the book calls into question many received ideas, including the obviousness of highly macroeconomic approaches, which focus too exclusively on the role of the state. In the extraordinarily rapid development that China has experienced over the last 20 years and the no less surprising emergence of the private sector, the book gives full credit to the role of economic actors without underestimating the specific political context in which they find themselves and with which they interact.

This is a fundamental and very successful book that will give food for thought to everyone, especially economists who are China specialists. Indeed, it is perhaps too successful, and this might be the criticism one could make in conclusion. Along with the constant concern of the authors with foregrounding the coherence of the private sector, is it not also essential to reflect on the specific forms of configuration that it takes on? To take just one example, does the originality of the Zhejiang clusters not also primarily lie in the very specific and highly original forms of organisation they were able to put in place in many sectors – particularly in trade – in response to the challenge of the globalised market? Is there not in fact a specifically Chinese way of developing clusters and their private sector, which admittedly includes their relationship with persistent forms of centralised public economy, but which would explain more precisely both their success and their weaknesses? This is a configuration that is more complex than its connection with politics, and which would make it possible to better identify the originality of China’s development of “capitalism from below” and the successful exporting of this cluster model, which can be seen today in a number of other countries from South Africa to Italy.

■ Translated by Michael Black.

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Nina Hachigian (ed.),
Debating China: The US-China
Relationship in Ten Conversa-
tions, Oxford, Oxford University Press,
 2014, 272 pp.

HUGO MEIJER

During the 1970s, diplomatic interactions between the United States and the People's Republic of China (PRC) were largely limited to key strategic issues, most notably counterbalancing the Soviet Union and cross-Straits relations. After the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1979, and increasingly so in the post-Cold War period, the intensification of relations between the U.S. and China has resulted in a rapid broadening of the bilateral diplomatic agenda. U.S.-China relations have expanded from the diplomatic arena to exchanges involving security, trade, tourism, business, culture, education, health, environment, science and technology, etc. In the twenty-first century, the depth and breadth of the bilateral diplomatic agenda encompasses an extremely broad range of bilateral, regional, and global issues that are discussed and negotiated in bilateral, regional, and multilateral settings (the UN, the G-20, the WTO, the East Asia Summit, etc.) Relatedly, the cooperative or competitive dynamics between the U.S. and the PRC vary from one issue area to the other.

Nina Hachigian's book aims to provide a portrait of these competitive and cooperative forces at play in the U.S.-China relationship by means of a dialogue – in the form of exchanges of letters – between Chinese and American scholars and policy experts. In each chapter, two specialists, one Chinese and one American, discuss one of the following nine major issue areas on the U.S.-China diplomatic agenda: economics, human rights, media, global roles, climate and energy, development, military affairs, Taiwan, and regional security. In light of the significant strategic distrust that characterises the most important bilateral relationship of the century, *Debating China* also seeks to offer a venue for enhancing mutual understanding between the two sides.

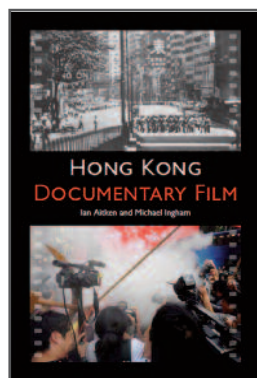
After the introductory chapter by Kenneth Lieberthal and Wang Jisi, which provides an overview of the main international and domestic factors that are driving the U.S. and China toward conflict, rivalry, or partnership – and in which the two authors stress the deep-seated mistrust between the two countries – the first issue area examined in the book is the economic dimension of the Sino-American relationship. Barry Naughton and Yao Yang critically discuss the two countries' economic models and the main concerns in the field of bilateral trade and investment, ranging from intellectual property rights protection, to rebalancing the American and Chinese growth models, to the recent economic reforms in the PRC. Zhou Qi and Andrew Nathan assess the role of "values" and ideology in U.S. and Chinese foreign policy as well as their diverging conceptions of democracy and human rights as either civil and political rights or economic and social rights. The transformative impact of the media, including Internet and online blogs, on the domestic societies of both countries, and their implications for U.S.-China

relations, are analysed by Wang Shuo and Susan Shirk. The authors converge in their assessment that the media are providing fertile soil for the growth of anti-foreign nationalism in China that could push the country into confrontations with the U.S. and its neighbours, but they disagree on the relative role of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in this process. Yuan Peng and Nina Hachigian explore how both countries see their respective global roles and responsibilities in the contemporary international system. While disagreeing over the likelihood of America's decline and decreased relative power, they candidly discuss the extent to which the U.S. is willing to share power with the PRC, and whether Beijing is willing to take on greater responsibility in managing global issues. Kelly Sims Gallagher and Qi Ye show how environmental issues have also become an area of growing interaction between the world's two largest polluters, with converging interests but differing domestic challenges in tackling pollution and the development of clean energy. The main differences in the Chinese and American approaches to development and foreign aid are highlighted in the chapter by Elizabeth Economy and Zha Daojiong. While the former offers significant criticism regarding China's practices in the field of foreign aid and development policies (including on corporate social responsibility and the role of state-owned enterprises), the latter stresses that China's practices have substantially improved over the years and have evolved in line with, and as a function of, its development path. Christopher Towney and Xu Hui's chapter on the military dimension goes to the heart of the strategic distrust that permeates the Sino-American relationship and trickles down into other issues on the diplomatic agenda. They candidly demonstrate profoundly diverging views and disagreements on key areas such as the two countries' capabilities, intentions, and strategies in the modernisation of their armed forces, on their position on territorial disputes, on the status of Taiwan, etc. The latter topic is analysed in depth by Jian Qingguo and Alan Romberg in the chapter on Taiwan and Tibet. While agreeing that Taiwan might be the most likely trigger for a U.S.-China conflict, their exchange also shows apparently irreconcilable perspectives on each other's intentions vis-à-vis the future status of Taiwan and its role in their respective regional strategic postures. In the last chapter of the volume, Wu Xinbo and Michael Green further exemplify the divergence in the two countries' assessments of their regional security roles and challenges, from the North Korea quandary, to territorial disputes around the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands and in the South China Sea, to the two countries' "hegemonic" ambitions in the region.

The original format of the book offers a fruitful venue for exploring the mutual perceptions and areas of agreement and disagreement among scholars and policy experts from both countries. Overall, the chapters of the volume collectively bring to light the trust gap in the bilateral relationship on a variety of issues, ranging from exchange rate policies, to human rights, to investment and aid, to maritime issues. However, the most significant area of suspicion and concern is, unsurprisingly, in the security realm – what is labelled as "strategic distrust." As stressed in the conclusion by former Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg, the volume sheds light on the deep uncertainty and mistrust that characterise both countries' perceptions of the other's motives and strategies. Instances of recurrent apprehension include whether the U.S. is intent on containing China, whether China seeks to extrude and/or to challenge the hegemony of the U.S. in the Asia Pacific, the rationale for each country's policy vis-à-vis Taiwan, and the military modernisation of both countries. On the other hand, while acknowledging the limits to collaboration stemming from deep strategic distrust, the volume's contributors all advocate greater cooperation in the bilateral

relationship. Specifically, they put forward a range of policy recommendations and suggest pragmatic steps aimed at reducing areas of friction and expanding areas of cooperation on issues of common concern (from the environment and climate change to proliferation, piracy, and financial stability, etc.). Indeed, none of the American and Chinese contributors believes strategic confrontation between the world's preeminent power and its rising competitor is inevitable. The underlying key thread running throughout the pages of the book is the question of to what extent – and how – strategic distrust can be tamed to facilitate U.S.-China cooperation in bilateral, regional, and global issues, thereby avoiding a military confrontation. It is the balance between these conflicting forces and contradictory logics at play in the U.S.-China relationship – those of strategic distrust versus common interests and cooperation – that might well decide the prospects of great power conflict, or its absence, in the twenty-first century.

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Ian Aitken and Michael Ingham,
Hong Kong Documentary Film,
Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press,
2014, 237 pp.

JUDITH PERNIN

Until recently, even the best informed cinephiles and scholars would have been hard pressed to name any Hong Kong documentaries or academic work on the subject. The colonial nature of public audio-visual institutions before the handover in 1997 and Hong Kong cinema's commercial orientation certainly accounted for the low visibility of local productions, dominated as they were by imperatives other than the purely cinematographic. Moreover, Chinese language cinema's transnational dimension and Hong Kong's particular status vis-à-vis the People's Republic of China also made for poor appreciation of its contribution to the history of this form. The works of PRC scholars do consider the contributions of Hong Kong studios dealing with mainland China, but hardly anything is said about truly local productions and even less about those put out by colonial institutions.⁽¹⁾ In any case, most of these documentaries are difficult to come by, having been lost or damaged following the transformations of Hong Kong's audio-visual industry.

Given that documentary cinema is to a large extent linked to politics, its history cannot be written without considering public cinematographic and televisual institutions, nor without referring to the more general context of their place of production. This is precisely what Ian Aitken and Michael Ingham set out to do in this book by focusing on the history of Hong Kong's audio-visual structures, and by featuring film analyses that illustrate the form's diversity.

For instance, in the first chapter, Aitken retraces the origins of *A Page of History*, Lai Man-wai's film made from newsreel footage shot throughout the 1920s and edited together in 1941. The film, in homage to Sun Yat-sen, often appears in mainland publications for its account of the Northern Expedition. It is re-examined here in light of new research on its conditions of production and distribution, relying on two versions of the film preserved in Beijing and Hong Kong and restored early in the last decade. Chapter 2 deals with among others "Picturesque committed films" by local private companies that championed Leftist ideas in the period 1947-69. Analysis of the documentary *Water Comes Over the Hills from the East* (Lo Kwan-hung, 1965) shows how the director adapted a historical water shortage crisis to glorify the Chinese government.

Such a clearly partisan dimension comes through entirely differently in official productions, i.e. colonial ones, considered in the next two sections. Chapter 3 examines the Hong Kong Film Unit (HKFU, 1959-1973) based on studies by Aitken of colonial film and of John Grierson.⁽²⁾ As the progressive leader of the British documentary movement in the 1930-40s, Grierson was also instrumental in setting up or influencing the Commonwealth public documentary institutions, including those in British colonies. But Aitken shows that unlike in Australia, New Zealand, or even India, HKFU productions had the sole objective of promoting Colonial Office "propaganda and education" (p. 76). HKFU's news and educational documentaries were duly screened between advertisements and full-length films in cinema halls or shown by mobile teams in refugee camps. Aitken draws attention to these films' wilful myopia in avoiding any direct reference to China, even during such tragedies as the Great Leap famine (1959-1961), although that very event had led to the massive influx of refugees to Hong Kong. Local social and political problems such as the 1967 riots were also ignored in *Hong Kong Today* news, more proof that, "This can hardly be said to constitute an attempt to use the official film in an interventionist, reform-oriented, 'Griersonian' way" (p. 83). Moreover, as the colonial government had not thought it necessary to endow the territory with substantial cinematographic structures, more prestigious "public relations" documentaries vaunting the Hong Kong success story for the local and overseas markets were actually made in collaboration with foreign companies such as Singapore's Cathay. This was the case with *This is Hong Kong* (Noni Wright, 1961), a film whose fame is assured thanks to its appropriation in *One Way Street on a Turntable* (Anson Mak, 2007) more than due to its own quality.

Chapters 4 and 5 offer an account of the evolution of television documentaries while Hong Kong was transiting from being a colony to a Special Administrative Region of China. Aitken focuses on the way in which politics translate into RTHK's public service productions and the programmes of ATV and TVB chains, whose commercial interests were becoming increasingly indistinguishable from those of China. The complexity of Hong Kong television stations' stances especially around 1989 is brought out through several documentaries such as the outstanding *Spring of Discontent* (TVB), a surprising film in the Direct Cinema style on the democratic movement

1. Fang Fang, *Zhongguo jilupian fazhan shi* (A history of the development of Chinese documentaries), Beijing, Zhongguo xiju chubanshe, 2003, 553 pp.; and Shan Wanli, *Zhongguo jilu dianying shi* (History of Chinese documentary films), Beijing, Zhongguo dianying chubanshe, 2005, 455 pp.

2. Studies carried out with a network of researchers on colonial documentary films: see <http://documentary-film.af.hkbu.edu.hk> (accessed on 3 July 2015) and two articles by Ian Aitken: "The Development of Official Film-Making in Hong Kong," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, Vol. 32, No. 4, 2012, pp. 589-609; and "Television documentary film in Hong Kong: The case of Hong Kong's two terrestrial television broadcasters," *Studies in Documentary Film*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 2015, pp. 95-113.

in Tiananmen Square broadcast just two days before the bloody repression of 4 June 1989. The more conventional *Hong Kong Case* (RTHK, 1989) goes over the colony's history and the handover process. Ordinary Hongkongers and noted politicians voiced their opinions on the future even as the colony was recovering from the Tiananmen trauma. Among those interviewed were pro-democrat leader Martin Lee and current Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying, then secretary general of the Basic Law Drafting Committee.

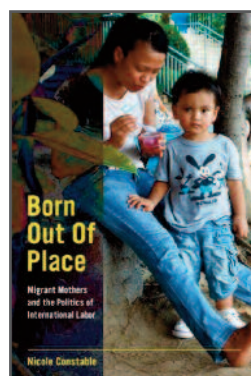
The book ends with two chapters by Ingham on independent documentaries (1973–2013), on which he has already written, especially in one of the rare collective publications on Hong Kong screen arts.⁽³⁾ His panorama of diverse initiatives and structures that led to the rise of independent documentaries in Hong Kong forms a necessary companion to the rest of the book, as it shows that more personal voices exist in addition to those of commercial and official productions. In contrast to the preceding chapters, Ingham chooses an auteur approach befitting the personality of directors as diverse as Shu Kei, Evans Chan, Anson Mak, Louisa Wei, Cheung King-wai, and Tammy Cheung. Each film analysis is rooted in its own references, either to theatre, film essay, direct cinema, or experimental film, stressing that while these works all discuss local politics, they also introduce a more social and artistic dimension to Hong Kong documentaries.

A filmography of works discussed as well as a list of public institutions or private companies mentioned would have been a useful addition to a book that one hopes will encourage more scholars to write on the subject. Despite the limitations of a publication covering such vast ground, *Hong Kong Documentary Film* not only fills a gaping void in studies on this film form, but also responds to the pressing need to examine the history of Hong Kong documentaries from a local viewpoint without excluding television productions or the colonial dimension of some of these films.

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3. Esther M. K. Cheung, Gina Marchetti, See-Kam Tan (eds), *Hong Kong Screenscapes: From the New Wave to the Digital Frontier*, Hong Kong, Hong Kong University Press, 2011, 316 pp. Michael Ingham is also the author of "Twenty years on: Hong Kong dissident documentarians and the Tiananmen factor," *Studies in Documentary Film*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2012, pp. 81–97, and of "A Personal Vision of the Hong Kong Cityscape in Anson Mak's Essayistic Documentary Films *One Way Street on a Turntable* and *On the Edge of a Floating City, We Sing*," in Camille Deprez and Judith Pernin (eds), *Post-1990 Documentary: Reconfiguring Independence*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2015, pp. 151–171.



Nicole Constable,
Born out of Place: Migrant Mothers and the Politics of International Labor,
Hong Kong, Hong Kong University Press, 2014, 260 pp.

SIUMI MARIA TAM

This book is a recent addition to Constable's series of research on migrant women as foreign domestic workers (FDWs) in Hong Kong. Like the other publications before it, this book contains rich ethnographic data as well as serves as a sympathetic call for attention to the plight of migrant women workers from Southeast Asia. But quite unlike the rest, this book focuses on the particular difficulties of FDWs as mothers who become pregnant and give birth to babies in Hong Kong. By weaving ethnographic observations and theoretical arguments, the book offers details of the challenges that mothers and children face, some of the choices they have, the different paths they take, and the roles of the fathers and social institutions in shaping them. These together put forward a convincing case of transnational migrant labour as not an individual woman's choice, but rather a co-production of personal, familial, institutional, and global factors.

The book is divided into eight chapters. In the first chapter, "A Very Tiny Problem," Constable outlines a broad framework of the significant actors in the making of the FDWs' world, in particular how government policy has constructed a frame, literally, that cages migrant women workers physically, socially, and culturally, as well as emotionally. The resultant problems are sometimes temporary, but when a child is involved, the problem is complicated and lasts a lifetime. Although in mainstream society, migrant women workers and their problems could be considered a matter of human rights and thus attract the attention of NGOs and some sympathy from the more liberal-minded, FDWs' pregnancies and babies are often shunned, trivialised, and largely ignored. This could partly be due to the small number of babies involved, but more importantly it is related to a mentality that sex is an individual and moral issue. If FDW single mothers are labelled as "adulterers, prostitutes, and 'bad girls'" (p. 10) they will not be pitied. Coupled with this, migrants in general are considered poor and unwelcome, as well as powerless and easily victimised. These stereotypical images of FDWs are not limited to their employers, but exist among almost everyone involved in the network of transnational migration. These include, for example, employment agency staff, immigration and court officials, and ironically even social workers at NGOs and the FDWs themselves. The co-agency and intersubjectivity of this network obviously has a class basis, and the chapter succinctly puts forward a complex case of how class is interwoven with ethnicity, gender, and family duties, as well as women's sexuality.

Chapter 2 reviews the academic literature on migrant domestic workers, dividing them into two broad categories: the first one emphasises the negative side of things – exploitation, abuse, and oppression in global capitalism – while the other sees migration as a resource, noting how migration brings about new agency, pleasure and desire, etc. (p. 23). Constable argues that it

should not be an *either/or* choice when a scholar studies a complex issue such as transnational migrant labour. Rather, she believes that one should take a stand of *and*, examining both the structural constraints and the personal creativity involved in the process. She describes her theoretical and methodological approach as public anthropology with “micro-feminist-ethnographer-activism” (p. 21).

Along this line, Chapter 3 discusses the difficulties that migrant women face, on the one hand as domestic workers, and on the other as mothers, wives, and daughters. These sometimes complementary, causal, but at times contradictory roles of the FDWs are shaped and produced by the two-year renewable contracts based on which FDW’s visas are granted, in addition to “employment policies and practices, overcharging by employment agencies, the two-week rule, and the live-in requirement” (p. 21) imposed on FDWs through working conditions in Hong Kong society. At the same time, they are still under the moral, emotional, and socioeconomic expectations that link them to their places of origin. These paradoxical and interwoven tensions are what Constable describes (p. 56) after Rachel Silvey (*Indonesia*, No. 87, 2009, p. 54) as the “gendered tensions of modernity.” That female morality and sexuality are symbols of family and national honour, and hence a factor of female social and cultural restriction, has been a subject of discussion in feminist literature. Constable places her discussion of the FDWs’ dilemmas in this context, and argues that the dominant beliefs in their countries of origin – Islam for the Indonesians, and Roman Catholicism for the Filipinas – have reinforced this restriction.

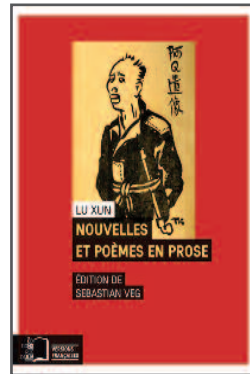
In chapters 4 and 5 this discussion is extended to a pair of overlapping issues – Chapter 4 on the role of men, the fathers of these women’s babies, and Chapter 5 on sex and babies in the migrant women’s lives. Starting with the seemingly obvious question of why FDWs even engage in intimate relations with men and get pregnant under the very restrictive employment policies, Constable traces how a lack of information on contraception, the patriarchal mentality to appease men’s needs, the low sense of responsibility of men, and resignation to luck or God’s will, all contribute to these unwanted pregnancies and the subsequent problems that women have to face alone. Notwithstanding the multiple voids in the migrant women’s lives, these relationships paradoxically offer “hope of family and security in a precarious world” (p. 22).

With these paradoxes in mind, Constable then describes the large range of situations that FDW single mothers find themselves in. Chapter 6 tells stories of a relatively “privileged” group – women who married local men and hence their children were legal citizens, and women who were able to keep their contracts during and after childbirth. Chapter 7, on the other hand, presents the stories of those considered less fortunate – asylum seekers and overstayers who live in constant fear of repatriation, and hence in a miserable, vulnerable, and even dismal state. Under Constable’s sympathetic pen, the stories of these women and their babies can move the reader to tears.

Chapter 8 examines the possibilities of going home. At stake are the woman’s and her family’s reputations among their neighbours, and while family solidarity helps ease the initial stage of return, poverty and lack of opportunities in the home country frequently lead to bad endings. Constable explains her own process of coming to understand the reasons why FDW single mothers prefer to remain in Hong Kong. A woman who has chosen migration, whether to fulfil her duty to her family as a daughter, wife, or mother, or for personal freedom and enjoyment in a metropolitan city like Hong Kong, enters what Constable calls “the migratory cycle of atonement” (p. 230), and often she does so repeatedly (p. 231).

The book, while offering rich ethnographic data and engaging stories and personal narratives, would make an even better contribution to the anthropology of globalisation if it provided more systematic theoretical discussion, for example on how migrant women’s lived experiences are interwoven with social class and ethnicity. And while appreciating Constable’s empathy as an activist and public anthropologist, readers may find the language patronising at times. Nevertheless, the book is well written and is an excellent addition to the literature on women’s transnational labour.

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Lu Xun,
Nouvelles et poèmes en prose
(Short Stories and Prose Poems),
translated and edited by
Sebastian Veg, Paris, Éditions Rue d’Ulm, “Versions françaises” series, 2015, 664 pp.

YINDE ZHANG

David Damrosch attaches great importance to translation in his definition of world literature, identifying the latter as a mode of reading involving an “elliptical refraction of national literatures” rather than as an established list of canonical works. Translation has a major role to play in our current situation in which the integration of Chinese literature into world literature has yet to be achieved. This volume translated and edited by Sebastian Veg is all the more welcome in this respect because while there have been previous translations into French of Lu Xun (1881–1936), a key figure in twentieth-century Chinese literature, they suffer either from randomness or non-existent availability, or from ideological distortions.

This book, in addition to the pleasures of its fine quality paper and its manageable square format, is also exceptional in the way it combines in one volume Lu Xun’s three collections entitled *Cries* (*Nahan*, 1923), *Wanderings* (*Panghuang*, 1926), and *Weeds* (*Yecao*, 1927). Sebastian Veg justifies this unprecedented inclusion on the grounds of the intrinsic coherence of this body of work within the author’s overall opus. For him, these short stories and prose poems are distinct not only from the journalistic and polemical essays that dominate his later output, but also from the other literary genres that he practiced, such as the tale or the autobiographical memoir (p. 9). This volume includes translations of the short stories that were published in 2004 and 2010, but are now out of print, and it combines them with 23 newly translated prose poems. These are all brought together in a scholarly edition supported by a substantial critical apparatus that provides detailed notes, an inserted commentary on each of the included texts, and an elaborate afterword dealing mainly with *Weeds*. As an expert in literature, intellectual history, and Chinese political debates of the twentieth century, Sebastian Veg imparts to this masterly volume his deep and extensive

knowledge of Lu Xun's work, which he illuminates in its various discursive, symbolic, and contextual aspects.

The first striking feature here is the quality of Sebastian Veg's translation. He sticks firmly to a "literalist approach to translation," which he considers necessary in view of Lu Xun's own idiolect. This consists of a modern Chinese "in the process of its creation" through juxtaposing the classical Chinese lexicon (*wenyan*) with the vernacular (*baihua*) influenced by a Westernised grammar. The translator believes that Lu Xun's "lexical and syntactic roughness" constitutes the essence of his newly created language, and that is what must be retained (p. 11). This position is not a neutral one (in this respect, see the discussions in *China Perspectives* between Isabelle Rabut, Noël Dutrait, and the translator himself). The need for "faithfulness to the letter of the text," re-emphasised by the translator (p. 10), leads to a strain on the foreign term, valued by Antoine Berman and probably by Lu Xun himself, without in any way lessening the constraints imposed by the host language. Due to the pressures of its constant concern to reconcile the style of the original with the need for readability, especially in the case of the two collections of short stories, the new edition is in effect a revised version, purified not of the harshness of the originals but of specific "typographical mistakes, and erroneous or clumsy translations" (p. 9). This rigorous precision is particularly evident in *Mauvaises herbes* ("Weeds"), which is presented as a homage to the late Pierre Ryckmans (1935-2014), the previous translator of these admirable pieces under the title of *La Mauvaise Herbe* ("The Weed"), which has long been out of print. To translate in the wake of the great Belgian sinologist is certainly to run a risk. This is energetically taken up by Sebastian Veg, not so much to mark out his own distinct approach as to attempt to recreate a heterogeneous style, indeed a whole genre, insofar as these "prose poems" (*sanwen shi*) contain a juxtaposition of rhythmic prose, popular poetry, and poetic drama, in addition to a mixture of archaic or religious expressions, strange metaphors, and everyday speech patterns. This version makes palpable the coexistence of lyricism and prosaic expression in the original works. For example, "My love sorrows" (*Wo de shilian*), a poetical parody written in the style of the popular satirical poems of the Tang dynasty, is rendered in free but rhyming lines that match both the letter and spirit of the original. The recurrent images, such as fire, ice, and gloom, are expressed in the very same words throughout their different contexts. On the other hand, the syntactical handling appears to be more open to a certain give and take, especially as it is difficult for a translation to bring out particular turns of phrase that have a foreign origin. The inversions for which Lu Xun shows a fondness for poetic reasons are inevitably "normalised": the placing of the circumstantial modifier after the main proposition, which is typically European and unusual in Chinese, had to be given its normal position in the French. Thus, 但我總記得見過一篇好的故事, 在昏沉的夜, becomes "Mais je me souviens que j'ai vu cette belle histoire, **au milieu de la nuit trouble**" (But I remember that I saw this beautiful story, **in the midst of the dark night**) (p. 533), and the line: 有所不樂意的, 在天堂裡, 我不願去, becomes "Il y a quelque chose qui me déplaît **au paradis**, je ne veux pas y aller" (There is something that I dislike **in paradise**, I do not wish to go there) (p. 514). This import-export traffic in the translation tends to modify the terms of faithfulness, bringing them closer to that of a double agent.

In reality, a translation has to respect both the original and the target languages, and this involves the subjective choices of the translator as he operates across the interdependent realms of translation and interpretation. Here the scrupulous textual deciphering that subtends the translation is

further clarified by the critical commentary, which brings out the translator's philological and hermeneutic concerns. Sebastian Veg's choice of the plural for the title of *Mauvaises herbes* ("Weeds"), unlike the singular adopted by Pierre Ryckmans, is to be explained, as he himself suggests, by the fact that each text in the collection can be read separately as "a weed" (p. 9). The reader's grasp of the individuality of these texts is systematically supported, as each one is accompanied by a commentary that gives precise information on its date of composition, source material, and editorial variants. This exegetical apparatus, which provides indispensable clarification of obscure references and metaphorical allusions, also invokes a supporting network of intertextual readings and throws light on the writer's creativity, woven out of a play of echoing voices, resonances, and obsessions. Sebastian Veg's interpretation takes full account of our contemporary concerns by considering these matters from a number of angles, such as democracy, the relationship between literature and politics, and the writer's independence, all of which broaden our reflections on a writer who has fallen victim to instrumental canonisation. His comments also draw on a wide range of criticism: Leo Ou-fan Lee, Wang Hui or, more recently Eva Shan Chou, Gloria Davies, and Nicholas A. Kaldis, to mention a handful of the writers of important works on Lu Xun. But Veg's approach depends above all on his attention to the texts, and this underpins his treatment of their manifold political, psychological, and aesthetic aspects. As a result, his reflections on the complex nature of Lu Xun's stance, which are developed further in the afterword, are fully supported by his luminous analyses of the signifying networks around fire and ice, darkness and light, heaven and hell. The image of the poet who chose to "wander in the midst of nowhere" ("Les adieux d'ombre," p. 514) takes on a clear profile thanks to the dual effects of these translations that also interpret. Here the ethos of the non-conformist writer receives inspiring and updated insight because, to cite Chan Koonchung, the author of *The Fat Years*, which refers specifically to Lu Xun, we find ourselves granted the good fortune to live in a past future China, between the beneficent hell and the false paradise, in the best of all impossible worlds.

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