Review

Reviewed Work(s): The Living Tree: The Changing Meaning of Being Chinese Today. by Tu Wei-ming

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reproductions and charts—which this reader has recently found in an academic volume.

All of the accounts here are vivid; some are haunting. Having witnessed the fall of Beijing, Liu Shangyou struggles south along the Grand Canal, disconsolate and beset by bandits, to return home to his family in Jiangsu to await the arrival of the Manchus in Jiangnan. In another account, one Huang Xiangjian journeys from Suzhou thousands of miles across China to provide comfort to his father, a magistrate in Yunnan still loyal to the Ming. In the last chapter a semiliterate eunuch describes the last days of the last Ming emperor, besieged by Burmese generals and Manchu pursuers. Other passages are quite astonishing. In one chapter an elite Ming family witnesses the collapse of Nanjing; the uncle of the author describes with what one assumes to be regret the looting of the Ming imperial palace, only to pull from the sleeve of his gown two palace fans and two boxes of palace incense, while saying "there were so many people I couldn't get my hands on more" (p. 60). While it may be too much to say that the dominant portrait of the Qing conquest is of a relatively smooth transition, a "minor blip in the long electrocardiogram of Chinese history," the articles here do demonstrate that the mid-seventeenth century was a time of more personal trauma then most political histories would acknowledge.

Perhaps also the pieces suggest the different meanings of events of the mid-seventeenth century have had for different observers. Some chapters do this explicitly; in one of the most effective of these, the battle between the forces of Zheng Chenggong and the Dutch for Fort Zeelandia in Taiwan is described both from a Dutch and a Chinese perspective. In another chapter, four accounts of the fall of the lower Yangtze city of Changshu, each from a source of a different genre, are translated and compared. Implicitly at least, the book suggests another set of comparisons. It is worth noting that many of the accounts translated here were published first in the twentieth century. While studies of provenance are for the most part beyond the scope of this volume, it seems likely that the long suppression of these traumatic testimonies was a consequence of Manchu censorship. It in no way robs these accounts of their significance to note the interests of twentieth century scholars which leads them to unearth, edit and publish these volumes. As Struve notes, we should not, because of our repugnance for the jingoistic anti-Manchuism of the Republican revolution, ignore the scholarly efforts of the period. Nor should we be surprised at the themes comparative readings often suggest. One of the pieces here, the "Massacre of Yangzhou," had a political impact on the 1911 revolution. Read today, it seems eerily reminiscent of accounts of the rape of Nanjing nearly three hundred years later. In this respect, *In the Tiger's Jaw* serves to highlight unsuspected elements of continuity and discontinuity on the level of personal experience throughout the Qing period.

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The Living Tree: The Changing Meaning of Being Chinese Today. Edited by TU WEI-MING. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994. xvi, 295 pp. $37.50.

This is a collection of eleven papers from a conference on the meaning of being Chinese held in Honolulu, Hawaii, in 1990. All but two of the papers were published in an issue of the journal *Daedalus* in the spring of 1991. The aim of this book, as stated by the editor, is to explore the meaning of being Chinese as a complex process

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and to avoid static definitions. This anthology includes papers by historians Tu Wei-ming, Mark Elvin, Vera Schwarcz, Wang Gungwu, and L. Ling-chi Wang, by the sociologist Ambrose Yeo-chi King, by anthropologists Myron L. Cohen and David Yen-ho Wu, by the legal scholar Victor Hao Li, and by literary scholars Leo Ou-fan Lee and Zhu Hong.

One central theme of this book is the role that the "core" and the "periphery" play in the formulation of Chinese identity. The particular meaning of the "core" and the "periphery" depend on the context in which the terms are used. These terms sometimes designate geographical locations, with China as the core and areas outside of China forming the periphery. The core and the periphery can also represent states of mind. For example, the core might be concepts and values such as "Chinese tradition," "Chinese culture," "patriotism," or "Chinese life-style," and the periphery would then be deviations from these values and practices. One's location on the geographical continuum between core and periphery need not dictate one's relationship to "Chineseness" as a state of mind. One might live in China and yet feel alienated from the core of Chinese traditions, culture, history, or politics. One might, on the other hand, live on the geographic periphery and feel strong affiliation with what one defines as "Chineseness." Being physically removed from China might even provoke a deeper search for the meaning of being Chinese and a stronger sense of being Chinese.

This book makes the point that the formulation of identity is a complicated, and often unpredictable, process. It also emphasizes that the construction of one's identity is always the product of interactions between individual self-definition and definition by others.

Wang Gungwu, David Yen-ho Wu, and L. Ling-chi Wang, in particular, give three excellent perspectives on the changing meaning of being Chinese by examining the experiences of overseas Chinese. Their papers successfully integrate the concepts of core and periphery as a geographical designation and as a state of mind. David Yen-ho Wu gives a cogent account of the formation of Chinese identity by juxtaposing the experience of Han Chinese who moved to the outlying provinces of China with the experience of Chinese immigrants in Southeast Asia. Wu describes a group of Malaysian-born people of Chinese descent who give no outward appearance of being "Chinese." Nevertheless, they continue to identify themselves as Chinese for a variety of reasons. Similarly, Wu describes ethnically Han Chinese who moved to the outlying provinces and adapted to local customs, but maintained their view of themselves as Chinese.

Myron L. Cohen's lucid paper on the peripheralization of Chinese traditional identity provides further insight into how local cultures were adapted and reinterpreted to forge a common Chinese self-identity. Their self-identification was reinforced and provoked by categorizations made by others. For instance, Wu refers to the role of the host and Chinese governments in encouraging or discouraging Chinese identity among immigrants. Policies towards ethnic minorities by the Chinese and Malaysian governments promoted changes in the way that individuals emphasized or minimized their Chinese identity. L. Ling-chi Wang also uses the history of Chinese immigrants in the United States to make clear that changes in self-identification cannot be separated from changes in the larger political-historical environment. Victor Hao Li's reflection on his experience residing outside of China is a wonderful addition which adds a thoughtful and personal perspective to these studies.

Two aspects of this book require further consideration. First, the meaning of terms

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such as "culture," "Chinese values," "things Chinese," and "Chineseness" are as contentious and "non-static" as the meaning of being Chinese. A discussion of the changing meaning of being Chinese today and of the many meanings of being Chinese should proceed with a keener sense that these terms have no clear definition. It is sometimes not clear what terms such as "Chineseness," "Chinese tradition," and "Chinese values" mean to a particular author on a particular page. As David Yen-ho Wu points out in his essay, the meaning of these terms depends on the relationship among such elements as time, place, self-identification, and categorizations made by others. Second, it is surprising that this anthology does not include any systematic examination of the lively contemporary discourse on the meaning of being Chinese taking place in Hong Kong and Taiwan. These are, after all, branches of the "living tree" that are currently undergoing complex, challenging, and meaningful changes.

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Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States, 1945–1992: Uncertain Friendships. By NANCY BERNKOPF TUCKER. Twayne's International History Series. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1994. xviii, 337 pp. $29.95 (cloth); $17.95 (paper).

While historical accounts of United States policy in East Asia since World War II have focused greater attention on U.S. relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC), Nancy Bernkopf Tucker's thorough diplomatic study contains sufficient evidence to support her thesis that Taiwan and Hong Kong are equally important to American political, ideological, economic, and strategic interests. Despite poor leadership in the early years of Chiang Kai-shek's political career, Tucker commends Taiwan for its commitment to modernization, elimination of corruption, land reform, greater equitable distribution of wealth, and democratic governance. The author maintains that these developments in Taiwan, as well as American economic investments and military exigencies there and in Hong Kong, are sufficient reasons for U.S. strategic involvement.

Based on available documentary and secondary sources, Tucker takes the reader in considerable detail through innumerable episodes involving the United States in Taiwan affairs. Despite complexities and contradictions in historical data, she has adroitly formulated a meaningful periodization for both Taiwan and Hong Kong. In the years 1950–65, U.S. policy evolved from nearly abandoning the Nationalists to alliance. Despite manifestations of harmony, Tucker describes continued differences between the U.S. and the Republic of China (ROC), the former emphasizing self-defense and the latter planning to recover the mainland. The tension due to these antithetical interests, however, was more severe than suggested. In 1962, angered division and suspicion developed between the "allies" as the ROC escalated a serious war scare through preparations for a mainland assault and heightened pressure on the U.S. for appropriate equipment and fuel. Nothing occurred only because the U.S. refused to grant Taiwan the necessary means to effect an invasion.

The second period, 1965–72, rightfully titled "Shifting Priorities," began with the death of Ch'en Ch'eng and the consolidation of Chiang Ching-kuo's power. Events of these years were also effected by the worsening of U.S.–Soviet relations and a gradual reduction of American military presence in East Asia, resulting in a U.S. shift toward

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