

Review of Qingmo Zhongri jiaoyu wenhua jiaoliu zhi yanjiu (Research on Educational and Cultural Interaction between China and Japan during the Late Qing Era). By Lu Shunchang. Beijing: Commercial Press, 2012. (清末中日教育文化交流之研究 / ??著 . 北京 : 商?印?? , 2012 . RMB 32.00元 , 401.)

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that virtually all of the world's successful authoritarian modernizers, including South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and modern China itself, are East Asian countries sharing a common Chinese cultural heritage" (p. 313). Following this clue, one may be prompted to ask, given that the state, the rule of law, and accountable government are cornerstone institutions, can countries with different traditions achieve a good political order with different proportions of these institutions, or is there a golden ratio that they have to approximate, as exemplified by certain Western paradigm countries?

Finally, it is reasonable to ask whether the state, the rule of law, and accountable government furnish all that is necessary for a good political order. Based on human biology, which features both reciprocal cooperation and violent competition, Fukuyama's ideal political world is characterized by a balance of institutional powers. Ideas are extremely important in making political systems, as he fully admits. How can cultural, ideological, psychological, and moral factors help to define, refine, or even transcend this mechanism of mutual checks? This is an issue worthy of more in-depth study.

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The historiography of Asian connections through the study of pre-colonial and early modern maritime trade is longstanding, but academic interest in Asian connections of the modern period is recent. In Prasenjit Duara's words, this new interest is "unable to grasp the continuities and discontinuities that form the present."¹

1 Prasenjit Duara, "Asia Redux: Conceptualizing a Region for Our Times," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 69, 4 (2010): 963.

The emergence of Sino-Japanese history as a sub-field of this burgeoning interest in Asian connections owes much to the work of Hamashita Takeshi, Benjamin Elman, Joshua Fogel, Akira Iriye, and Gilbert Rozman, who have analyzed the histories of China, Japan, and Korea (as well as lost polities such as the Ryūkyū Kingdom; see Hamashita) in detail. These scholars have also mapped out the contours of interactions and similarities between different groups and individuals in the East Asian region. Scholars in China and Taiwan, such as Kan Huai-chen, Kao Ming-shih, Wang Hui, and Zhang Feng have also contributed studies that deepen our understanding of the East Asian region in general and Sino-Japanese interactions in particular. Moving beyond diplomatic and economic relations, these scholars have begun in recent years to take a fresh approach to Sino-Japanese history by examining the cultural and intellectual relationships between the Chinese and Japanese literati of the modern period.

Taking the late Qing period as his point of departure, Lu Shunchang scrutinizes the various encounters and perceptions of Qing literati and students who studied in Japan, as well as how the Japanese perceived their education of the Chinese students. Lu posits that Chinese had always imagined cultural similarities between China and Japan, and that the ignominious Chinese defeat in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) reversed the cultural role of China as patron to that of client of a modern Japan, which had long been a recipient of Chinese culture. Instead of learning from the West, the Chinese now explored the option of learning from Japan, a country that they had regarded as a culturally and politically inferior client state. Sino-Japanese interactions of the late Qing reached another peak after their inception during the Sui-Tang period. Lu's main argument is that Chinese students saw Meiji Japan as a model for Qing China and perceived Japan as a mediator between China and the West.

In particular, Lu discusses Zhejiang students in Japan, whom he views as late Qing pioneers of New Learning and interlocutors of Western knowledge and modern science. By emphasizing the cultural and geographical advantages of Zhejiang Province, Lu explains how the influence of Japan on modern Chinese education became more profound through the transmission of New Learning by Zhejiang students and literati.

Using Japanese newspapers and magazines as his main primary sources, Li postulates that the enthusiasm and support of Japanese politicians for the Western education of Chinese students was the result of a national ambition to engender a sense of goodwill in Chinese students and hence seek future economic benefits and political concessions in China. This explains why, according to Lu, despite an initial interest in acquiring Western learning through their studies in Japan, the Chinese grew suspicious of Japanese

intentions and finally hostile to Japan as political developments unfolded.

The analytical lens that Lu uses is education; he explicates in detail how Chinese study groups consisting of court officials and provincial literati remained interested in acquiring rare classics that had been lost in China. He also discusses how they keenly observed and adopted the Japanese school system and curriculum at all academic levels, from elementary school to tertiary institutions. From a close reading of private letters and official documents of Chinese observers and students in Japan, such as Wu Qingdi, Zhang Dayong, and Cheng Enpei, Lu shows how the Chinese literati were impressed by Japanese determination and efforts at modernization through reformative education. Further, Fan's *The World of Education*, an academic journal whose editors translated Japanese articles for Chinese readership, was one of several initiatives of the Zhejiang literati to expound the virtues of modern Japanese/Western education. Zhejiang students in Japan published *The Official Paper* (*Guan-bao*), an official newsletter that records both the operations and reports of the Qing Student Supervision Department in Tokyo, as well as the paperwork and routines of Chinese students in Japan, who were usually supported by Qing funding and scholarships. To further illustrate the prominence of Zhejiang students in Japan in future cultural and political developments in modern China, Lu highlights the impact of renowned personalities such as Lu Xun, Chiang Kai-shek, Jiang Baili, Qiu Jin, and Zhang Zongxiang—Zhejiang natives who had received at least part of their education in Japan. According to Lu, the educational background of these Zhejiang natives explains why some students were ambivalent toward Japan while others were cynical about Japanese motives.

The book under review succeeds in its narrative of Sino-Japanese interactions on several counts. First, the book is a useful and welcome addition to an important area of inquiry in East Asian history: education. Chinese, English, and Japanese scholarship lacks a systematic analysis of education and exchanges on education between China and Japan other than the common tenet of mutual cultural borrowings and influence, and especially lacks an in-depth analysis of Japanese-influenced education in modern China. Second, the book provides an engaging and readable account of how Qing Chinese steered the direction of their modern learning from the West to Japan, although Lu does not explain how the Chinese appropriated Japanese contextualization of New or Western Learning. Finally, and most importantly, this comprehensive book has linked “the continuities and discontinuities that form the present” with a discussion of how old Chinese classics and learning remained relevant and perhaps even fundamental to the acquisition and implementation of New Learning through the medium of Japan. The book grapples with the question of mutual perceptions of China and Japan, elabo-

rating on why the Chinese saw the Japanese as both benefactors and malefactors, as well as on how the current Chinese perception of Japan as a malicious neighbor has its origins in the cultural and educational interactions between China and Japan during the late Qing period.

As a lay reader, however, I am not convinced of the book's claim that Zhejiang's liberated culture and geographical proximity to Japan were the main reasons why Zhejiang students, not those from other parts of the nation, had spearheaded New Learning and major socio-cultural changes in modern China. The gentry and literati of other parts of China, most notably Guangdong Province, also contributed in significant ways to the political and social changes that swept modern China. A comparison and discussion of such contributions warrants a separate analysis that this review cannot cover in detail, however. More significantly, the book repeats the longstanding claim of many Chinese scholars that Qing China's defeat in the First Sino-Japanese War demonstrates the failure of the Foreign Affairs Movement to introduce Western science and technology; according to these scholars, the failure necessitated more radical cultural and educational changes after the war in order to follow Japan's lead in modernizing and coping with foreign imperialism. However, Benjamin Elman rightly points out that such a narrative is misleading because it forgets and represses earlier adaptations of new scientific and technological learning.² Education in Qing China had witnessed certain changes due to the influence of Catholic Jesuits, Protestant missionaries, and Western advisers prior to the war. Finally, the book does not connect Chinese educational reforms with the abolition of the civil service examination in 1905, ignoring the role of these reforms as key to both the "New Governance" policies of late Qing China and the new Ministry of Education's preference for science education and textbooks based on the Japanese scientific system.³ The inclusion of this point would have strengthened the book's argument that Japan was the main mediator between the West and Chinese literati and officials during the late Qing period, having replaced the Christian missionaries and Western advisers in this role. Another interesting point that the book could have raised was the promulgation of government schools and implementation of state curricula in late Qing China, which the imperial state had never attempted before; prior to the late Qing period, the state had left the provision of education largely in the hands of affluent households, monasteries, temples, and private academies.

2 Benjamin A. Elman, "Naval Warfare and the Retraction of China's Self-Strengthening Reforms into Scientific and Technological Failure, 1865–1895," *Modern Asian Studies* 38, 2 (2004): 285.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 323.

Despite its shortcomings, the book is an eclectic study in its coverage and scope of an often-neglected topic. The book is an important contribution to the syncretic examination of early Meiji Japan's educational system and Chinese perceptions of it in the monumental period of the late Qing. The book could also be read as a commentary on the intermediary role of the Japanese in transmitting Western knowledge to China during this period.

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