

Minghui Hu and Johan Elverskog, eds. *Cosmopolitanism in China 1600-1950*. Amherst, New York: Cambria Press, 2016. Cambria Sinophone World Series. ISBN 9781604979008. 332 pp.

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Cosmopolitanism in China 1600-1950 has its seeds in a conference held in 2012 at UC Santa Cruz that brought together scholars from the Institute of Modern History at Academia Sinica, Taiwan and scholars from universities in North America, mainly from the fields of history and religion. A selection of the fruits of the conference has now been polished and packaged in this handsome volume consisting of altogether eight research articles, organized chronologically and by topics, accompanied by a short introduction by the editors plus a useful index.

The volume maintains two main points. The first is that cosmopolitanism in China is not a new phenomenon developed in the late nineteenth century when foreign ideas and theories were the focus of Chinese intellectuals' discussions. Quite the contrary, it is argued that cosmopolitanism had been operative from the Qing dynasty up to the Early Republican period, and was challenged and brought down by precisely those radical thinkers and activists who struggled to make China a part of the family of nations. The second main point concerns the notion of cosmopolitanism itself: the editors stress the necessity of going beyond a general sensitivity towards cultural diversity and the promotion of all-inclusive universality; in fact they affiliate themselves to the notion of cosmopolitanism famously formulated by Pollock, Bhabha, Breckenridge and Chakrabarty as "ways of living at home abroad or abroad at home—inhabiting multiple places at once, of being different beings simultaneously, of seeing the larger picture stereoscopically with the smaller" (587). Hence, their reinquiry into Qing culture searches for evidence of crucial cultural exchange and engagement, of true ethical, intellectual and moral commitment to the other, of intellectual visions that surpass the local and create something new that transcends the old, all within a process of trial and amendment.

Although the so-called New Qing History school and its ambitious project of re-assessing the last dynasty by decentering China in Qing history is seldom referred to by *Cosmopolitanism in China*, the volume nevertheless follows the former's narrative lead and might just as well be read as an implicit re-evaluation of communist and nationalist historiography. This, however, makes only half of the story. The volume's explicitly formulated aim—"to shed new light on Chinese history but also to problematize some of the theorizing about cosmopolitanism" (3) is evidently unbiased and addresses a much broader topic. The volume is arranged chronologically around four thematic sections, each containing two articles. The first section, "Cosmopolitan Empire," is devoted to the Qing state and addresses the question of why this largest early modern territorial state in the world could function so successfully. "Academic Visions" deals with the intellectual world of High Qing in general with a particular focus on the Qing scholar Gong Zizhen and his pluralist and inclusive visions. Gong's cosmopolitan vision is also the core of the third section on "Contact and Exchange". Here the authors look into relations among the Chinese, Korean and Japanese elites by examining "brush talk," which was rendered possible at the time by a shared corpus of Chinese classics that facilitated an artistic, intellectual, and symbolic space of Confucian cosmopolis. The last two articles, bracketed by "Culture and Politics," examine how scholars appropriated Qing cosmopolitanism into the twentieth century, into a new age of capitalism, imperialism and nationalism. They examine Japanese and Chinese historians' engagement with the European idea of Sino-Babylonianism on the one hand, and on the other hand, look into the political and intellectual contexts where "culture" and "civilization" had become fundamental discursive concepts.

Following historical patterns of how expressions of self-identity among ruling Manchus and Chinese Muslims had been at work through history—ranging from a kind of survival imperative to a competition between assimilation and maintenance of cultural distinctiveness—James Frankel shows in "Making Manchus and Muslims" how cosmopolitan identities of individuals and communities were shaped during

High Qing. The author adopts “simultaneity” as his theoretical framework and deploys the predominant presumptions of ‘Sinification’ and religio-philosophical syncretism by juxtaposing the Manchu emperor Kangxi with the Chinese Han Kitab scholar Liu Zhi as embodiments of Manchu Son of Heaven and Chinese Muslim simultaneity. An interesting and perhaps astonishing observation Frankel is sharing here is that, while both men had deeply internalized the universal claims of Confucianism, they might have done so with different objectives: while Liu Zhi supposedly was securing an ethno-religious niche, averting persecution and assimilation at the same time, Kangxi’s chief concern was to establish political hegemony over a multicultural and multi-religious empire. However, their cosmopolitanism worldview was not simply a strategy to make ends meet but as Frankel convincingly concludes: “Both demonstrated a serious commitment to the other through their apparent embrace of Confucian universalist values and in their simultaneity, integrated and synthesized Chinese and non-Chinese cultural elements in their thought and deeds” (47).

Frankel’s chapter on Confucian cosmopolitanism is followed up by R. Kent Guy’s article that employs “quotidian cosmopolitanism.” Guy examines how the then Henan Governor Tian Wenjing (1662-1732) dealt with the rather down-to-earth-problem of water regulation and flood control in his province. This examination of the whole hydraulic undertaking is instructive because it throws into relief the workings of the bureaucratic machinery of the Qing state and demonstrates how the Qing provincial administration is placed within a complex entanglement of different interests and stakeholders, loyalties and agencies. It ultimately boiled down to the threshold question of how and who should settle the bill: the problem of levees and levies. The Governor and banner man proved himself a pioneer in modern public financial management. He put welfare and relief responsibilities from public into private hands, and gave precedence to imperial interests in his planning, instead of—as would have been expected—acting as a spokesman of the degree-holding elite who insisted on being exempted from *corvée*. The plausibility of Guy’s research lies above all in his detailing and bringing to life High Qing subtleties and everyday-savvy when displaying the context of the time, thereby delivering an exemplary model of indeed “seeing the larger picture stereoscopically with the smaller” as stated by Pollock et al.

The next two articles focus on Gong Zizhen (1792-1841) and his pluralistic cosmopolitan visions by applying the lens of specialized methodologies and Buddhist perspectives. Chang So-an and Minghui Hu in their effort to “rectify the names” deconstruct High Qing scholarship labels (e.g. “evidential scholarship”) and unfold instead a time of transition when—driven by a unifying cosmopolitan vision of scholars like Dai Zhen (1724-1777) and Gong Zizhen—instrumental knowledge developed into highly specialized methodologies. When the nineteenth century normative shift saw the rise of modern disciplines, the authors conclude, “the cosmopolitan vision of the classical world that initially inspired these methodologies, and that which they sought to illuminate, were lost” (111).

Stephen Roddy in his exploration of Buddhist cosmopolitanism traces Gong Zizhen in his capacity of an erudite Buddhist who not only urged his contemporaries to expand their inquiries beyond the Confucian classical canon but made use of “heterodox” texts in order to supplement and reevaluate the classics. Following the tracks of Gong Zizhen’s personal life and his sympathetic engagement with distant others, as Roddy skillfully accomplishes in his paper, one might as well state an affective cosmopolitanism “that locates, in a purportedly ‘human’ capacity to sympathize with others, a nascent or extant cosmopolitan community: one that enables us to envision an international political field that is more inclusionary and equitable” (Hallemeier 69). This, however, tends to carry the notion of Enlightenment universalism. Roddy’s exegesis of Gong Zizhen’s Buddhist inclination points out a particular (i.e. Buddhist) pluralistic cosmopolitanism (which however did not extend beyond China’s longstanding Asian neighbors), that not only saw scorching criticism of Han-centric worldview, but also its parochial institutions and practices; Gong’s promotion of Buddhism to develop a pan-Asian vision also had a pragmatic rationale, since it was essential to appropriate the expansion of the Qing empire to also include Tibet and the Zünghar Mongols.

Moving into the nineteenth century, Benjamin Elman brings Korean polymath Kim Chöng-hŭi’s (1786-1856) turbulent life as a bicultural political actor, traveler and mediator, courtier and exile to our at-

tention. Following Kim's and his contemporaries' intellectual and aesthetic explorations, their knowledge production, expertise and mediation that "articulated the cultural, imperial, geographical, and disciplinary boundaries that informed the early modern regional world of East Asia" (160), Elman shows that these enthusiastic travelers between the worlds were anything but bystanders; they were cultural agents actively contributing to and employing Qing cosmopolitanism by promoting an ecumenical classical tradition at home at a "loosely interconnected but very cosmopolitan East Asian social-cultural world of classical learning, literary writings, and political statecraft" (180), without being aware that they seem to catering for a Confucian cosmopolis that was due to fall victim to Western imperialism and Asian nationalism.

In his second contribution to *Cosmopolitanism in China*, Stephen Roddy chronicles two counter directional developments: the steady growth of an intellectual community transgressing national, ethnic and linguistic boundaries, facilitated by scholars like Yu Yue (1821-1907), and the steady decline of classical Chinese scholarship in the course of the twentieth century. The question of how far the titled motto "Cultural Solidarity in Troubled Times," that basically refers to Yu Yue's exchange and companionship with his Japanese admirers, actually reflects a cosmopolitan worldview seems to be justified. To think in terms of a vernacularism of accommodation might have shed more light onto this pivotal point of Chinese history when the pendulum clearly swung towards nationalism, thus prompting Yu Yue and his contemporaries to summon classical tradition to be forearmed for the entry into the modern world.

The last two articles by Sun Jiang on Sino-Babylonianism and Wang Hui on Chinese intellectuals' debate in the 1910s on Eastern and Western civilizations, both co-authored with Minghui Hu, are stimulating and rewarding readings, although it is arguable whether they actually contribute to the overall approach taken in this volume. Sun Jiang and Minghui Hu read Sino-Babylonianism as "a genuine attempt at synthesizing Assyriology and Sinology" and point out that it is a "cosmopolitan portrayal of cultural encounters" in their conclusion (248). Their general take on this obscure Euro-centric theory that traced the Yellow Emperor's origin to East Asia, however, points much more to its politically driven agenda. The fact that it might have given inspiration to a less ethnocentric nationalist agenda, does not necessarily qualify it as a subject of cosmopolitan historiography since it was in actual fact aimed at establishing a founding myth with the Yellow Emperor at its center. While the authors describe the East Asian success story of Terrien de Lacouperie's (1845-1894) peculiar theory within the framework of Qing cosmopolitanism, it would perhaps have been even more informative if they had instead used discourse on the nation. Sino-Babylonianism created a space for Chinese intellectuals' fascination with the idea that early China had been linked to a global network of economic and cultural exchange, and it provoked a fierce quest for Chinese authenticity—a theoretical contradiction that later converged in the discourse of "national essence."

The same can be argued for the paper on Du Yaquan's (1873-1933) "civilization discourse" in the face of the Great War and the formation of the Republic of China. Wang Hui and Minghui Hu examine the "cultural turn" in the late 1910s and how and why Chinese intellectuals from the Left (with its mouthpiece *New Youth*) or the Right (voicing their ideas in *Eastern Miscellany*) reframed the debate of burning political issues in the form of a cultural debate. Du's "civilization discourse" is not only to be seen as radical departure from intellectual and literary traditions, but—as Du Yaquan's writings prove—also as a continuation that facilitated the integration and appropriation of emerging contradictions of the time (e.g. centralism vs. regionalism, monarchy vs. republicanism, Eastern vs. Western civilizations). The advent of the October Revolution 1917, however, narrowed down this inclusive and multifarious worldview and allowed for only one possible vision, thereby conclusively marking the end of cosmopolitanism.

It is a pity that Johan Elverskog's paper on Injannashi (1837-1092), the last Mongol Qing cosmopolitan, has been published separately. It would have made a valid umbrella chapter that develops a theoretical paradigm of cosmopolitanism while re-conceptualizing Qing culture (Elverskog). Taken together or read one by one, the eight chapters collected in this volume illustrate what Elverskog rightly concluded in his paper, that "there did exist a tradition of Qing cosmopolitanism, and that the Chinese tradition has the cultural, intellectual and religious resources needed to foster cosmopolitanism" (30). If we agree that cosmopolitanism implies "a

serious moral commitment to the other” (30), then we can only conclude that devoting ourselves to cosmopolitanisms not only in retrospect but first and foremost in prospect seems to be the most urgent order of the day.

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