

state formation in East Asia. I highly recommend it for scholars and students interested in the history and politics of the region and will assign it in any classes that I teach on state-building and historical political economy.

Response to Yuhua Wang's Review of *State Formation through Emulation: The East Asian Model*

doi:10.1017/S1537592723002013

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Yuhua Wang raises an important critique of *State Formation through Emulation*, noting that we move too quickly in our argument against the bellicist mechanism for state formation. Wang's critique points to the deep fissures in the state formation literature and the contested nature of state behavior in international politics more broadly. As such, this exchange has been an important opportunity to truly compare two very different theoretical approaches to social science.

Wang argues that the Qin state engaged in bureaucratic reforms so that it could conquer smaller neighbors and that war was a key determinant in Korea's state formation. Wang also finds that the violent clashes between steppe nomads and China, as well as Japan's accrual of material power after the Meiji Restoration, raise questions about the effectiveness of the tributary system and the extent to which emulation truly reflected state-building practices in the region. To Wang and for most of the theoretical scholarship in international relations, the perpetual state of conflict in a zero-sum, anarchic environment seems to confirm rather than delimit the universalistic logic of bellicism in state formation.

What was perhaps most surprising about Wang's review is that he did not address our core argument: that the extraordinarily long-enduring states in the region emulated a truly massive amount of their religious, social, intellectual, philosophical, scientific, economic, and, yes, political ideas and practices from the hegemonic power—China—over the centuries. The evidence for this is simply overwhelming.

We were also a bit disappointed that Wang did not engage further with the specifics of our book. We dealt in detail with questions of war and order in chapter 4 and explicitly addressed the Tang–Silla alliance in the seventh century (pp. 60–67). Our larger point remains unchallenged: all three Korean kingdoms sought an alliance with the more powerful Tang dynasty, rather than allying together to balance against it. Historian Nadia Kanagawa, whom we quoted (pp. 61–62), points out that “both Paekche and Silla sent envoys to the Tang complaining that Koguryō was preventing them from sending tribute and asking the Tang ruler to take action.” Patterns of alliance and war worked nothing like what one would

expect from the universalist models of contemporary IR such as the balance of power. Furthermore, once Korea was unified, the Tang dynasty relinquished its ambitions to the peninsula. None of this is explainable without understanding the relative position of China in the region and the principles of the tribute system as practiced at the time.

More generally, we have dealt elsewhere with issues of historical and contemporary regional variation in both war and the types of international order and need not repeat those arguments (e.g., see David Kang, *East Asia before the West*, 2010; Chin-Hao Huang, *Power and Restraint in China's Rise*, 2022).

The *longue durée* of peace and stability remains a puzzle for those trying to fit Europe's experience onto the historical realities of East Asian state development. We conclude that deeply institutionalized states in historical East Asia strengthened under the shadow of a hegemonic international system through astonishing levels of emulation and where conflict was relatively rare. We believe both Wang's and our book open up a range of important avenues for future research and look forward to continuing the stimulating dialogues that such questions provoke.

The Rise and Fall of Imperial China: The Social Origins of State Development.

By Yuhua Wang. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2022. 352p. \$120.00 cloth, \$35.00 paper.

doi:10.1017/S1537592723001986

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Yuhua Wang's *The Rise and Fall of Imperial China: The Social Origins of State Development* identifies a thought-provoking question: How did imperial China endure for so long even as its state capacity seemingly weakened over time? In this magisterial book, Wang relies on innovative historical data—from reading and coding a copious number of epitaphs and genealogical records to compiling new and original datasets on Chinese emperors, taxation, and military conflicts—to advance new claims about the ruler–elite relationship in imperial China. The empirical work is a tour de force, ensuring this is a big book with provocative ideas. It promises to become a crucial work on historical political economy and state formation that everyone should read.

For Wang, rulers are revenue maximizers, but they also seek to extend their grip on power. These two objectives are incompatible, leading to Wang's observation of a “sovereign's dilemma” in which strengthening state capacity through tax collection jeopardizes the ruler's odds of survival. The equilibrium is struck by looking at the role of