

cross-cultural interaction would have strengthened the book. Jun Xing claims that Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony will be his guiding theoretical tool, but after a single paragraph in the introduction, this concept does not reappear.

The author ignores the role of gender in the student movement or the formation of the YMCA, to the point of including Maud Russell in a list of "American men" (p. 171). A discussion of the similarities and differences between the YWCA and the YMCA might have proven valuable since other studies have argued that the YWCA played a key role for women workers in Shanghai, and in communist recruiting efforts there (cf. Emily Honig, *Sisters and Strangers: Women in the Shanghai Cotton Mills, 1919–1949* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986]).

The book contains a brief bibliographical essay on cross-cultural scholarship, as well as an index and photographs of YMCA secretaries. The preface notes that "most of the names in the original sources, on which this study is based, used the Wade-Giles transliteration . . . to make these names consistent with the historical documents, I will leave those names in Wade-Giles form" (p. 21). This reader thus expected that other names and terms would be given in Pinyin, but this was not the case. The confusion is compounded by errors in Wade-Giles and even Japanese romanizations.

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*Gifts, Favors, and Banquets: The Art of Social Relationships in China.* By MAYFAIR MEI-HUI YANG. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994. viii, 370 pp. \$45.00 (cloth); \$18.95 (paper).

With the rejection of rigid Mao-era limits on Chinese society after 1978, many more than one hundred cultural flowers have bloomed. In the diversity of cultural practices that have characterized China's reform era, we see both new styles and fashions imported from the West and apparent revivals of traditional customs. A number of scholars have been working intensively to describe and explain the latter. To what extent did traditional customs and practices persist under the surface during the decades of Mao's rule, or are present forms a genuine revival? To what extent do these revivals testify to the enduring strength of the Chinese cultural tradition, or are they to be explained much more as reflections of popular experiences during the socialist and reform eras?

Mayfair Yang's book represents one of the most ambitious and systematic attempts to deal with a whole range of such questions. Her focus is on a key complex of contemporary Chinese beliefs and practices, *guanxixue*. Yang's anthropological predecessors, such as Fei Xiaotong and Morton Fried, presented cogent analyses of the importance of *guanxi* (social relationships, connections) in pre-1949 China, analyses which have been added to by scholars in Taiwan and Hong Kong in recent times. However, she points out that the term *guanxixue* (roughly, connections-ology, or the art of social relationships of her subtitle) is distinctive to the PRC. Her study is concerned not simply with describing the extent to which contemporary Chinese rely on personal connections and networks to pursue goals and seek security. This study is as much or more focused on the nature of the popular discourse that has arisen in an atmosphere of virtual obsession with the cultivation of useful personal ties.

Conducting ethnographic fieldwork on this topic was quite difficult, and Yang's original proposal to spend a year studying social relationships in a single factory was repeatedly blocked. Eventually she was able to spend brief stints in two separate factories on separate visits during the 1980s, but these experiences provide only a small portion of the rich data upon which this book is based. Her failed encounters with bureaucratic gatekeepers were valuable lessons in the importance of *guanxi* in contemporary China, and eventually she relied on a network approach to investigate her topic. Over the course of repeated visits to and travel around China over a decade, she struck up conversations with individuals in many walks of life, always asking them to provide examples of how they had used personal connections in their own lives, and what the use of *guanxi* meant to them. Given the popular fixation on the topic, it proved quite easy to steer conversations in this direction and collect vignettes and popular sayings.

Yang's book is divided into two parts. The first four chapters are concerned mainly with describing the results of her ethnographic investigations on *guanxixue*. As indicated, the concern is not so much with how individuals actually cultivate personal connections to pursue their goals, but with the discourse that has arisen around this practice. At one point the author suggests that those already familiar with contemporary China might skip over this part and proceed directly to part 2. However, I found part one to be more illuminating and rewarding than part 2. The primary reason is the author's skill at weaving together accounts of popular practice, attitudes, and language. For example, she has diligently collected dozens of examples of popular sayings and couplets involving *guanxi* practice, and these are a particularly effective way to convey the complex attitudes of Chinese today. While official discourse in China condemns the use of *guanxi*, ordinary people have a more contradictory, almost love-hate set of attitudes toward the cultivation of personal connections. They may decry the necessity of expending so much energy and gifts to get simple things accomplished and envy those who are better connected than they are. At the same time they exult when they are able to make the connections necessary to achieve a difficult objective. At the close of part one of her book, the author clearly sides with those who argue that contemporary reliance on *guanxi* should be seen not as a simple revival of traditional forms, but as practices that have been fundamentally transformed and reemphasized by the social orders of both Maoist and reform-era China.

Part 2 of the study is concerned with what the author calls meta-interpretations, and one of the reasons it is less satisfying is that the text is encased in much more impenetrable theoretical jargon than part 1. Along the way there are also extended detours to tenuously related topics, such as the conflict between legalist and early Confucian views more than two millennia ago. Underneath the difficult exposition, some key themes emerge. Yang takes issue with those who see extensive reliance on *guanxi* as reflecting the subordination of the population to the bureaucratic state. Rather, she argues that the cultivation of personal connections is a powerful way in which Chinese can oppose or at least get around state power. Furthermore, she contends that we should see contemporary Chinese society as composed not of two competing economies (state allocation and markets) but of three, with the gift economy fostered by *guanxi* as a qualitatively different system. She even ventures bravely into the world of prediction, arguing that China's evolution into a more democratic society in the future is not likely to take the form of markets leading to growth of the autonomous associations of civil society as in Western experience. Instead she contends that growing checks on state power are more likely to emerge from the further spread and institutionalization of *guanxi* networks. This hopeful

scenario is obviously quite different from the conventional view that sees connections and corruption as spreading cancers afflicting the Chinese system. None of the themes in part 2 is presented convincingly enough to persuade skeptics, and Yang's empirical materials do not allow her to be more definitive. Nonetheless, her discussion of these themes is provocative and stimulating, and any serious scholar of contemporary Chinese society will want to consult this rich work.

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*Interpreting Chinese Foreign Policy: The Micro-Macro Linkage Approach.* By QUANSHENG ZHAO. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1996. 281 pp. \$60.00 (cloth); \$19.95 (paper).

*Toward a History of Chinese Communist Foreign Relations, 1920s–1960s: Personalities and Interpretive Approaches.* Edited by MICHAEL H. HUNT and NIU JUN. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1995. 194 pp.

Chinese foreign policy is a “fascinating, but frustrating” subject, according to Allen Whiting, a prominent China watcher. Despite a great deal of attention to the subject, little consensus has been achieved about how the subject should be researched. The two books reviewed here represent two entirely different approaches: one inductive theory-building by a political scientist and the other inductive searching for missing pieces in history. While both are necessary tools for understanding the subject, the historian's approach seems to make more sense.

Dr. Quangsheng Zhao, a native Chinese thoroughly immersed in the sea of Western academia, has built a multilevel and multiprocess model of “micro-macro linkage” (p. 25). Each of the three dimensions—symbolic, institutional, and power/ regime—has its own process and dynamics so that the model is expected to cover various aspects of Chinese foreign policy (p. 26). Zhao argues that neither the structure nor the decision-makers at various levels has absolute control over a country's foreign policy. Their influences are considered “in a relative sense” (p. 26). With this model, Zhao examines major shifts in China's foreign policy from Mao's revolutionary to Deng's pragmatic foreign policy (chapter 3); changes in the policy-making process from “vertical” to “horizontal” authoritarianism (chapter 4); changes in the strategy and tactics from “rigidity” toward “flexibility” (chapter 5).

Despite its departure from some “single”-level approaches (systemic, domestic, and individual levels) in the study of international relations and Chinese foreign policy, the model is yet to be adequately tested. Its purported theoretical “comprehensiveness” is paled by a single case study of “Japan's Official Development Assistance to China,” which reads more like a study of Japanese policy toward China, not vice versa. The book leaves some other, perhaps more important, aspects of Chinese foreign policy—such as Sino-U.S. and Sino-Russian relations—to the concluding part, treating them briefly and with little reference to the model itself.

The emphasis on theory building is also overshadowed by the author's somewhat problematic understanding and interpretation of history. For example, Zhao claims that China's decision to enter the Korean War in 1950 “prompted President Harry Truman to order the U.S. Seventh Fleet into the Taiwan Straits to guarantee Taiwanese