

the *Lung-hsing Fo-chiao pien-nien t'ung-lun* 隆興佛教編年通論 by the Ch'an monk Tsu-hsiu 祖琇 (fl. 1150–1160). The text bears the influence of Ssu-ma Kuang's *Comprehensive Mirror*, incorporating primary source texts like hagiographies, "lamp histories" and Ch'an sectarian genealogies into a complex narrative of the history of Chinese Buddhism. Tsu-hsiu consciously asserted that the "legitimacy of Buddhism in Chinese society was a historical fact," critiquing the *New T'ang History*'s compilers Sung Ch'i 宋祁 (998–1061) and Ouyang Hsiu for denigrating and erasing the vital presence of Buddhism. Critiquing Confucian historiography for its hostile and condemnatory representations of Buddhist institutions, individuals, and practices, Tsu-hsiu claimed to be writing a "balanced" historical account of the religion. Huang productively mines these inherent contradictions and paradoxes in this Buddhist historian's theory of historiography. Most intriguingly, his article discusses Tsu-hsiu's karmic theory of historical causation, in which those who worked against Buddhism met with retributive justice. Huang's article shows how Buddhist historical thinking, like the so-called "mainstream" of Sung historiography, involved the creation of new modes of historical writing, the construction of perspectival narratives, and the projection of the intellectual concerns of the present back into the past.

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Chinese Discourses on the Peasant, 1900–1949. By Xiaorong Han. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2005. Pp. xii + 260. \$75.00.

This book intends to reveal Chinese intellectuals' perceptions of rural China, of the Chinese peasantry, and of the intellectuals' relationship with the peasantry during the first half of the twentieth century, as well as how such perceptions were politicized. It intends to be a history of theories rather than a history of movements. It covers not only the works of Communist intellectuals, but also those of the non-Communist and anti-Communist intellectuals. This book has three main chapters.

Chapter 3 discusses the encounters between the intellectuals and the peasants in modern China during the first few decades of the twentieth century. The encounters were made possible by the growth of the modern Chinese intelligentsia and the expansion of the Chinese national movement. The intellectuals were increasingly aware of the peasantry's importance to the rebuilding of the Chinese nation, and they showed strong desire to incorporate the peasants into their nation-rescuing programmes. Such interests in the peasantry grew so fast that there was a tremendous outpouring of writing about them. Peasants became the subjects of political and academic works, heroes of novels, plays, and poems, and figures of paintings.

Various images of the peasants began to emerge from the multitude of works. Although the images were diverse, some constant and common elements can be discerned. Ignorance, innocence, poverty, and powerfulness were the four characteristics of the peasantry that figured prominently in the works of all groups of intellectuals. Despite the intellectuals'

different images of the peasant, the general tendency was to transform the peasant from someone seen as useless, despicable, and negative to someone considered useful, admirable, and positive.

The book argues that transformation of the peasants' image was accompanied by a transformation of the intellectuals' perception of their own roles and their relations with the peasants. At the turn of the century, most intellectuals acted as critics of the peasants. Starting from the 1920s and 1930s, however, many of them began to consider themselves representatives of the peasants, and the various groups of intellectuals even fought against one another for the right to represent the peasants. Instead of blaming and criticizing the peasants, the intellectuals now praised and extolled them. Moreover, the intellectuals now tended to blame themselves for whatever weaknesses the peasants possessed. The way of addressing the peasants was changed too. By the 1920s and 1930s, many intellectuals began to address the peasants as "we" and "us," and the intellectuals had come to realize that the peasants could become a powerful positive force, or at least a potential positive force, in the national movement. In addition to developing the images of the peasants, the intellectuals also endeavoured to discover and define the nature of the Chinese rural society.

Chapter 4 reviews the debate on the nature of Chinese rural society. This debate formed part of the intellectuals' effort to justify their respective political strategies: Why had the revolution failed in the mid-1920s? What revolutionary strategy was the most suitable for China? There were two major approaches to the issue of the nature of Chinese rural society: Marxist and non-Marxist. However, whether Marxist or non-Marxist, all those who wrote about the nature of Chinese rural society took the debate as a political matter rather than a purely academic endeavour. The starting points of the intellectuals' debate were their strategies and programmes for rebuilding the nation rather than China's social realities.

The first stage of the debate, which occurred in the early 1920s between the early Chinese Marxists and the reform-minded intellectuals, was centred on whether China had already become a capitalist country and whether revolutionary socialism was applicable to China. The second stage of the debate took place in the Soviet Union during the First United Front of 1924 to 1927. The participants of the second debate included Stalinists, Trotskyites, and supporters of the theory of the Asiatic Mode of Production. The second debate was about whether China was a capitalist society or a semi-feudal and semi-colonial society and, in turn, what kind of revolution China should undergo.

Intellectuals affiliated with the Chinese Communist Party, which called for an anti-feudal and anti-imperialist national democratic revolution, believed that rural China was a semi-feudal and semi-colonial society, while the Trotskyites, who anticipated a proletarian revolution in rural China, argued that rural China was already a capitalist society. Those who opposed the adoption of Marxist theory and believed in the uniqueness of rural Chinese society were all reformers. By denying the applicability of revolutionary Marxist theory to rural China, they denied the feasibility of an agrarian revolution in China. The intellectuals' encounter with the peasant finally made them ponder their relations with the latter.

Chapter 5 discusses various patterns of intellectual-peasant relations. While the intellectuals showed deep sympathy for the peasants, they all strove to justify their control over the peasants on the ground that the peasants were too ignorant and weak to control their own fate and it was the intellectuals' responsibility to save the peasants. In intellectual-

peasant relations, the major difference among the intellectuals was in their views about with whom they should identify and how. The Communist intellectuals made it clear that they intended to identify with the poor people of the village. The non-Communist intellectuals, on the other hand, tended to claim that they identified with all the villagers. Since the 1930s, many non-Communist intellectuals have been repeatedly accused by the Communists of siding with the ruling class instead of the people as a whole. For example, Communist intellectuals attacked Liang Shuming for relying on landlords and local gentry and promoting their interests; Fei Xiaotong was also criticized for neglecting class differences in the villages and emphasizing the gentry's role in his rural development programme.

In Chapter 6, the book emphasizes that the intellectuals' peasant discourse was very much influenced by their concern with the China nation and by their ideologies (Communism, Socialism, or Nationalism) for liberating and building the nation. The creation of the peasant's images, the debate on the nature of rural society, and the search for a suitable pattern of intellectual-peasant relations are all related in one way or another to the *political* strategies of the intellectual groups. During the first half of the twentieth century, pure academic interests, if there were any, were subordinate to the political needs of the intellectuals because they believed that villages and peasants were at the heart of their political programmes for changing China. Subsequently, the writings of the intellectuals were produced to justify their own plans and actions.

In sum, the book emphasizes the close connection between the intellectuals and the national movement. It is the calling to rescue the Chinese nation that draw the intellectuals to the peasantry because the intellectuals found the peasantry both the causes of and remedies for China's national crisis. The intellectuals believed that if the Chinese peasants, who formed the great majority of the population, remained outside of the national movement, there would be no national movement.

As such, the intellectuals considered their peasant movements as part of their national movements. The communist intellectuals, for example, argued that class struggle was the most effective way to achieve national revolution, and that there was no contradiction at all between their class revolution and national revolution.

This book has given the most comprehensive and thoughtful treatment on the Chinese intellectuals' discourses on the peasants. Nevertheless, I hope the author could have provided a more clear-cut definition on the intellectuals. Who are the intellectuals that the book talks about? Although the book has spent the first chapter on the rise of the modern Chinese intelligentsia and has provided a very interesting discussion on the different generations and the radicalization of the intellectual, it fails to explain what it means by the "intellectuals," their defining characteristics, and their unique features in early twentieth-century China. It seems the word "intellectual" is used very loosely, and the book includes political leaders, revolutionaries, writers and artists, university professors and organizers of scientific researchers as intellectuals. Also, the book has made no attempt to analyze which segment of the above groups was dominant, had an overwhelming influence, and exercised leadership over the other groups or individuals.

In addition, I hope the book could provide a section to spell out its methodology in more detail. The book used what I called a "cut-and-paste" methodology to discuss the discourse of the intellectuals. For example, in order to document the argument that the

peasants were seen as “ignorant” by the intellectuals, the book quoted Peng Pai, a pioneer peasant movement leader, as saying “the peasants were incapable of organization and ignorant.” I would hope the book has brought in the historical context through which Peng Pai made the above statement; otherwise it could easily lead to misunderstanding and wrong interpretation. Instead of using the “cut-and-paste” method to extract short quotes from a variety of intellectuals to document the book’s arguments, a better way is to focus on a few influential or representative intellectuals, present their writings and discourses in full details, so the readers can draw their own conclusions.

Finally, I hope the book can explain how and why the peasant discourse of the intellectuals has changed over time. It is nice if the book could bring in more discussion on the changing historical context (economic, political, and social conditions) of the twentieth century. In other words, although the book says it intends to be merely “a history of theories” rather than “a history of movements.” My argument is that it needs to do both tasks, i.e., to present both a history of theories and a history of movements in order to provide a better understanding of how intellectuals’ peasant discourse emerged, interacted with one another, and transformed in the first part of the twentieth century. Without a better understanding of the historical context, it is hard to make sense on the meaning, the significance, and the transformation of the peasant discourse in the early twentieth-century China.

However, despite the above critical comments, I want to point out that I completely agree with the central argument of the book, i.e., the intellectuals’ peasant discourse was very much influenced by their nationalist concern. It is indeed the calling to rescue the Chinese nation that draws the intellectuals to the peasantry. The book also has done an excellent job in presenting the complexity of the debate on the nature of Chinese rural society. All in all, the book is very well-researched, and has made a significant contribution to our understanding of the concerns, the aspirations, and the political programmes of the intellectuals in the early twentieth-century China.

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Gutenberg in Shanghai: Chinese Print Capitalism, 1876–1937. By Christopher A. Reed. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2004. Pp. xvii + 391pp. CDN\$85.00 cloth, CDN\$29.95 paper.

In *Gutenberg in Shanghai*, Christopher Reed provides a necessary and most welcome study of the modernization of Chinese printing technologies and the emergence of print capitalism in China in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. It is a fascinating and meticulously researched study on China’s reaction towards the advent of Western print technologies and the establishment of a specifically Chinese print capitalism. It is an important contribution to the growing literature on Late Qing culture as Reed aims at studying the reciprocal influences of mental and material culture, instead of seeing China’s