

like that of many national literatures of the time. Whatever thoughts authors had about the state of their realm, they also had their own lives to lead and to write about, which even the most politically committed did, often in the form of *xiaopinwen*.

In the end, though, one must admire Laughlin's courage and applaud his endeavour. As a fellow worker in the same field, I felt I could offer only translations and commentary in my book *The Chinese Essay*.<sup>4</sup> Laughlin set himself a much more venturesome task. Despite my contrariness in this review, his book deserves to succeed in its aim of directing academic attention to the rival claims of the occasional essay in the pantheon of modern Chinese literature.

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*A Court on Horseback: Imperial Touring and the Construction of Qing Rule, 1680–1785.*  
By Michael G. Chang. Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007. Pp. xxii + 550. \$49.95/£36.95.

This handsome monograph is a major addition to a growing body of historical research on the High Qing period. Following in the tracks of influential works by Mark Elliott, Pamela Crossley, and other Qing specialists, Michael Chang has undertaken to further our understanding of the Qing imperial tours by linking them organically to a theory of imperial rule. The period most closely analysed is that of the Qianlong emperor (r. 1736–1795), but there is considerable information also on the tours inaugurated by the Kangxi emperor in 1684.

In the Introduction the author presents a theory of Manchu and Qing rulership centred on ethnicity and on the Weberian notion of the patrimonial state. In the first twenty-odd pages Chang exposes the theoretical foundations of his work, and in particular the concept of “ethno-dynastic” rulership, which informs much of the later analysis of the meaning of the tours.

In Chapter One the author describes the “ideological multivalence” of imperial touring, on the basis of an extensive survey of historical precedents from the Warring States period onwards. Chapters Two, Three and Four focus closely on the “court in motion.” In Chapter Two Chang illustrates the beginning of the tours under the Kangxi

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<sup>4</sup> Hong Kong: Research Centre for Translation, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1999.

emperor down to the early Qianlong period. This study is followed in Chapter Three by a close-up examination of the logistical and practical organization of the tours, while Chapter Four is dedicated to an extensive discussion of the structural connection between the tours and the military challenges and enterprises of the Qianlong era. Chapters Five and Six deal with various dimensions of the encounter between the ruler and his Han subjects, in particular the merchant and intellectual élites. Michael Chang shows here that the Qianlong emperor was able to tone down ethnically exclusive pronouncements and attitudes and deploy a discourse of common cultural ideals, stressing in particular purity and simplicity, that not only did not threaten the intellectual hegemony of the Jiangnan literati but instead valorized it by extolling Han Learning. The key term chosen here by the author to explain the inclusiveness and ethnic neutrality of Qianlong is “cultural encompassment.” Chapter Seven illustrates the public image cultivated by Qianlong during the tours, whereby the image of a wandering literatus in search of intellectual thrills popular in the Chinese tradition is consciously rejected in favour of that of a responsible, benevolent, and competent monarch. Finally, Chapter Eight analyses the revival of touring in the early 1780s, contrasting the ideological and political dimensions of these later tours with the motivations and historical background of the early ones of the 1750s and 1760s.

The book is rich in detail and provides a splendid illustration of the sheer grandiosity of the moving court and of the personalities that dominated the scene, first of all the Qianlong emperor. The narrative, however, is at times weighed down by the author’s anxiety to repeatedly remind the reader of the theoretical tenets undergirding the study. Hence, terms such as “patrimonial,” “ethno-dynastic” and “Manchu exceptionalism” surface with predictable regularity. In order to understand how the author uses these terms the reader needs to refer repeatedly to the Introduction (I have done so several times). However, here these concepts are not articulated quite as crisply or persuasively as one might have wished. For instance, on pp. 7–8, we encounter a definition of Qing rule, and of the critically important concept of ethno-dynastic rule. It reads: “[a]s conceived of here, Qing rule consisted of various configurations of people bound up in dynamic webs of interdependence that shifted over time and whose interactions both structured and were structured by a set of overlapping ideological discourses and institutional arrangements. To the extent that Qing rule was constituted through overlapping ideologies of ethnic exceptionalism and dynastic (clan) rule, it was simultaneously ethnic and dynastic, or ‘ethno-dynastic.’” But such an involved definition of imperial rule, in order to be accepted, requires demonstration that cannot be logically derived from the sentence quoted, or from any part of the preceding discussion. This and other ambiguous or unclear statements shed doubts on the degree to which the conceptual framework and theoretical bases of the work hold together.

The author examines with clarity and precision the historical background, organizational aspects, and ideological and political considerations, and is especially successful in showing how the Qing court and emperors used the tours to represent themselves and their rule. Yet perhaps the discussion could have been pushed a little

beyond the pervasive and overworked question of ethnicity. For instance, the author says that “[f]or Qianlong, imperial tours of inspection . . . were the *habitus* in and through which Manchu exceptionalism would be secured, maintained and displayed” (p. 357). That is to say that Qianlong “provided occasions for the performance, the preservation, and the promotion of ethno-dynastic identity and rule.” One may argue, however, that “Manchu exceptionalism” was also neutralized by confining it to a space that could have been hardly contested by the Han subjects. Moreover, the spectacle of the court in motion needs to be compared with the normal state of seclusion of the emperor and his gilded world and impenetrability to the gaze of the common subject. The emperor on horseback, cutting a dashing figure in the midst of parade-arranged martial Bannermen, traded his remoteness for grandiosity. If Manchu exceptionalism was a major concern, the exceptionality of the sight of the emperor in public view must have also been an important concern that affected the elaborate choreography, arrangements, and “theatricality” of the tours. This is a dimension that I think could have been explored further with no loss of focus or detail.

One aspect of Chang’s ethno-dynastic thesis is also puzzling, namely, how does “Manchu exceptionalism” square with Banner identity? The problem can be exemplified by looking at the first quotation on p. 180, in which Qianlong contrasts Green Standard (Han, Chinese) troops with Banner troops. This Chang takes to be evidence of a “distinctly ethnic twist.” But the Banners were not just Manchu. The author’s conflation of what appears to be from the evidence supplied a military “ethos” shared by all Bannermen with what he calls a “Manchu-martial *habitus*” (p. 178) produces a conceptual impasse, or rather an aporia, that sheds some doubt on the tenability of the principle of “ethno-dynastic” rule.

These questions should be understood as a way to penetrate and possibly challenge the author’s thinking in a constructive spirit, rather than to critique it. Indeed, Chang’s efforts to tackle hard questions constitute an important step towards a non-conventional approach to Qing imperial rulership. Chang rightly focuses on the ways in which Qing rule manifested itself in practice rather than by trying to construct it as an edifice made of state bureaucracies and government policies.

The book contains remarkably few mistakes, hardly noticeable, although I ought to point out that the Manchu name for the Chinese or “Han-martial” Banners (*Hanjun*) was not *nikan cooha* (p. 21) but *ujen cooha*.

In sum, this is a book that can claim a front-row place in any respectable Qing history library. It explores an important aspect of Qing rule, and captures its most important features with learned sensibility. Like many other fine books, it can be experienced at different levels. First, as a novel and valuable theoretical contribution to a more general reflection on specific features of Qing rulership, in particular the position of “ethnic consciousness” in imperial Qing ideology. As we are reminded of Qianlong’s dissatisfaction with his sedan-chair-riding, luxury-loving Manchu officials, we realize that ideology was also a matter of daily preoccupation and concrete action. Secondly, it should be appreciated as a detailed reconstruction of important historical events—the court’s

tours—and their significance as spectacle, ritual, and intellectual as well as physical exercise. Third, it is a book that sheds new light on the unique personality of the Qianlong emperor. For all these reasons this book ought to be regarded as a truly significant contribution to the field of Qing history, whose impact will be felt broadly.

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*The Analects of Confucius*. Translated by Burton Watson. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007. Pp. 162. \$21.95.

Although D. C. Lau's translation of the *Analects* under the Penguin (first published in 1979) and Chinese University Press imprints continues to attract a wide readership, a number of other fine translations have appeared over the past decade or so. Those of Simon Leys (aka Pierre Ryckmans) (1997), E. Bruce Brooks and A. Taeko Brooks (1998), Roger T. Ames and Henry Rosemont Jr. (1998), and Edward Slingerland (2003) stand out in particular. Their ranks are now joined by Burton Watson.

Burton Watson's reputation as a leading translator of early Chinese texts was established already in the 1960s with translations of such fundamental texts as *Shiji*, *Xunzi*, *Mozzi*, *Zhuangzi* and *Han Feizi*. Since then he has produced a vast *œuvre* of Chinese and Japanese literature in translation. Given the early date traditionally ascribed to the *Analects*, coupled with what we know about Confucius in his mature years from that briefest of autobiographies (*Analects* 2.4), it seems apt that Burton Watson chose to defer the challenge (and rewards) of translating the *Analects* until his eighth decade.

Each of the translations by the above-named translators has its own distinguishing features. Lau's interpretations are conservative and informed by a sound familiarity with the commentarial tradition. Leys attempts to recapture the "real" Confucius whose distant voice he discerns in the *Analects*. The Brookses advance a richly detailed, if controversial, hypothesis about the dating and structure of the text. Ames and Rosemont characterise their work as a "philosophical translation." Slingerland provides his reader with an extensive running commentary closely informed by influential interpretations drawn from the Chinese commentarial tradition.

Watson does not inform his reader about what distinguishes his translation other than to state that he has tried "as much as possible to follow the wording and word order of the Chinese" and to render it in "the colloquial English that would be used if these conversations took place today." The word order of Classical Chinese and modern English share several common features: subject precedes its predicate; modifier precedes what is