



**Review: [Untitled]**

Reviewed Work(s):

*Rebellions and Revolutions: China from the 1800s to the 1980s* by Jack Gray  
William C. Kirby

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Taiwan authorities with a golden opportunity to stake their claim to a return to the international community, and Klintworth points out that Australia has gone further than many others in granting diplomatic facilities and status to Taiwan's representatives.

Klintworth's study is a timely survey of the subject and fills a gap in the literature, particularly for tertiary courses in Asian studies which now proliferate in Australian universities. My main complaint is the absence of a bibliography or list of recommended references, repetition of basic factual material and some padding of the text as well as the elusiveness of the author's personal views. On the latter issue, Klintworth's career background has served him well. On the whole, however, these are minor reservations about what is a solid piece of research.

KEITH FORSTER

*Rebellions and Revolutions: China from the 1800s to the 1980s.* By JACK GRAY. [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990. 456 pp. Hard cover £35.00, ISBN 0-19-913076-0; paperback £12.95, ISBN 0-19-821576-2.]

The writing of a general history is one of the most difficult tasks that a historian can undertake. One must reach a variety of audiences, writing well enough to engage the undergraduate and carefully enough to please the professional academic; one must strive to achieve a balance between coverage and interpretation; and one must demonstrate a mastery of the historical literature, and (at least in my view) have strong opinions about it. Jack Gray does an admirable job in all these categories in this, the "China" volume of the Short Oxford History of the Modern World.

Gray, who is Honorary Research Fellow at the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex, places issues of "development" at the heart of his narrative. Indeed the work distinguishes itself from other modern histories of China above all when he focuses on economic and political-economic matters: an introductory discussion of the vitality and growth of the late imperial system; a superb chapter on the Chinese economy under Republican rule; and what must certainly be a controversial discussion of the Great Leap Forward that takes Maoist economics seriously. Yet the bulk of the volume would fall more clearly into the category of a political history, for it is in the political realm that Gray finds both the impediments and solutions to China's developmental problems. Here monarchs and leaders matter critically: thus for example China's perceived "failure" to adapt to Western and internal challenges in the late Qing was due above all to the "virtual interregnum" preserved by the Empress Dowager Cixi (p. 139).

Political history is therefore given in great detail in a manner reminiscent of rather more traditional histories. Indeed readers will learn much here of the nature of Anglo-Chinese diplomacy before and after the opium wars; of Peking politics and military machinations during the Warlord era; and of splits in the Party leadership under the People's

Republic. But Gray has the knack of bringing each lengthy political chapter to a conclusion that is sharp and memorable – for example on the nature of imperialism or the impact of warlordism. These are invaluable for students, and make the work intellectually challenging for all readers.

No general history will please every specialist, and I confess to being disappointed that Gray's strong discussion of Nationalist China ends in 1937. After all, the Nationalists did rule large parts of the mainland for another 13 years, and how they ruled it was vitally affected by the nature of the Sino-Japanese war, a not insignificant event which is almost entirely omitted. In a work that is centrally concerned with developmental issues, it is surprising that the post-1945 Taiwan experience, at least, is not treated as a central part of modern Chinese history, though Gray does allude in his conclusion to its utility as a developmental model for the mainland.

Historians of the Communist era may find Gray rather generous in his appraisal of the early People's Republic. The terror of its early years, especially in the Anti-Counter-Revolutionaries campaign, is glided over (pp. 291–92). Mao's "excellent theory" of the Great Leap Forward is set out at some length (p. 310), while the scope of the subsequent famine is dealt with in three sentences (p. 316) and followed by the conclusion that the Leap was "not ... a complete failure." Scholars of PRC politics may be surprised to read that Mao was the "most passionately democratic of all communist leaders" (this is perhaps damning with faint praise) and that Maoism as a whole was "the only intellectually intelligible, practical, and humane Marxist alternative to Stalinism" (p. 379). Mao's failure, ultimately, was a "failure of nerve" to be Maoist enough, when in 1967 he disowned the Shanghai Commune and began to restore central authority (p. 378).

Yet Gray's final pages on "The Modernization of China" (pp. 396–411) give the PRC a decidedly mixed verdict – strong marks in economic development and a failing grade in education, for example – as he describes a contemporary China moving, with much of the rest of East Asia toward a new "Confucian corporatism" (p. 411). This is a challenging conclusion to a stimulating and well written narrative.

WILLIAM C. KIRBY

*An American Missionary in China: John Leighton Stuart and Chinese-American Relations.* By YU-MING SHAW. [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992. 381 pp. \$30.00. ISBN 0-674-47835-5.]

Yu-ming Shaw's biography of Leighton Stuart provides a comprehensive survey of Stuart's public career. Chronologically and thematically the treatment is balanced. The book begins with Stuart's training and early missionary years. Major attention is given to the presidency of Yenching University from 1919 to 1941, which was undoubtedly the high point of his career. By focusing on his leadership, Shaw's complements rather than repeats or challenges the analysis in Philip West's definitive