

a particular focus on the growing radicalization of students and faculty as the final struggle between Nationalists and Communists approached.

Through this complex portrait, several themes emerge whose significance goes beyond the limits of the narrative. The first is the ongoing struggle over the appropriate form and content of Chinese education: specialist or generalist; Sinification or Western-oriented; centralized control on the European model or liberal autonomy in the Anglo-American mold. While this is presented as a debate over appropriate "wartime" education, the issues have deeper roots in modern China's transformation, as well as a strong resonance with contemporary debates in academe. Moreover, the Lianda debates were not so dissimilar from those of the Communists in their wartime Yanan capital, especially the search for Sinification. Unfortunately, Israel does not draw that comparison nor does his section on the College of Arts give a real sense of what the curriculum was like or how "wartime" education was realized. Anecdotal portraits of colourful personalities obscure this theme. Another gap is the failure to address issues of gender. While the study gives tantalizing glimpses of the special hardships of the women students, and the local prejudices against their "immoral" behaviour, overall there is a dearth of specific information on women. We do not know what percentage of the student body they were although we do learn that they were a majority in the study of foreign languages. A more precise focus on these issues would have been welcomed.

Finally, Lianda's story raises anew the gap between urban and rural, between metropolis and hinterland, that is at the heart of much uneven development in China and elsewhere. There is an eerie parallel with the massive transfers of youth and urban specialists during the Cultural Revolution of the sixties and seventies. Israel makes it clear that such a transfer could have positive results, and was much needed. Local youth could not meet Lianda's entrance standards and most went either to the Teachers' College, established in 1939 as a service to the host province, or to Yunnan University. Over time, however, as Teacher's College students entered the local school system, and with additional tutoring by Lianda students, the percentage of local students at Lianda began rising. Significantly, at war's end, the college remained behind and became Kunming Teacher's College, still a major institution. Other colleges made similar, though less impressive, contributions to the local economy. This is, ultimately, a study of much wider significance for education and development specialists than its narrow focus on one institution over eight years would suggest. The "romance" of Lianda, which has so clearly captivated the author, an "honorary" alumnus, should not obscure that larger purpose.

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Beyond the Neon Lights: Everyday Shanghai in the Early Twentieth Century, by Hanchao Lu. Berkeley, California. University of California Press, 1999. xvii, 456 pp. \$50.00 U.S. (cloth).

This is a much welcomed addition to the now rather large corpus of western language books on early twentieth-century Shanghai. While Shanghai might or might not be the "Paris of the East," with Professor Lu's book, no serious students would be able

to think or write about the city again without paying attention also to the lives of the "little" people.

Beyond the Neon Lights is divided into three parts. Part 1, "In Search of an Urban Identity," provides an overview of the dramatic growth and the changing composition of the population of Shanghai in the century following its designation as a treaty port in 1842. Despite Shanghai's reputation as a leading cosmopolitan hub in Republican China (1912-49), the majority of its population, we are told, were neither foreigners nor wealthy Chinese but former peasants who had come from the countryside to search for a better living. Once there, these "little urbanites" (or "urban poor," according to Lu, if they remained at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder) were quickly absorbed into and made an integral part of a highly commercialized world. Though largely left out of the discussion in scholarly literature, these "little urbanites," Lu argues, were the "true brickwork" (p. 105) of early twentieth-century Shanghai.

Part 2, "A Place to Suck an Awl," once again directs our gaze away from the glittery thoroughfares of Shanghai and focuses our attention on the living conditions of the majority of the population. Here the reader is introduced to two types of residential quarters: shantytowns, where urban poor congregated, and alleyway-house neighbourhoods (*hulong*), which little urbanites most likely called home. While residents of shantytowns — almost all were located at the city's periphery — were generally cut off from the modern life of Shanghai (most notably electricity and running water), the majority of the population — those who lived in the city's ubiquitous *hulong* — were able to create a lifestyle, Lu argues, that defied the "dichotomy of 'tradition' versus 'modernity' or 'Chinese' versus 'Western'" (p. 295).

Part 3, "Under the Eaves of Shanghai," offers a detailed description of lives both inside and outside the alleyway-house neighbourhoods. Here the reader learns not only about nightsoil collection — "Washing the nightstool. . . was exclusively a preserve of the female members of the family, usually the mother or grandmother" (p. 196) — but also about the variety of business activities — food peddling, sidewalk haircuts, portable libraries, etcetera — that were conducted everyday both inside and outside the neighbourhood walls. Residents of the *hulong*, Lu points out, often lived and worked within a few blocks. To them, the neighbourhood was the city. Yet, despite the fact that many lived in the same address for decades, Lu argues, "the people of Shanghai did not develop a sense of identity based on the alleyway compound or, in a broader sense, based on the neighborhood" (p. 224).

Beyond the Neon Lights is packed with details. Throughout the book, the reader is treated with intimate descriptions of the lives of rickshaw pullers (the equivalents of late twentieth-century taxi-drivers), the real estate market of Shanghai (traceable to the 1850s), the floorplans of alleyway houses (they became smaller and smaller), the romance and feuds among *hulong* residents (both unavoidable), and, in general, the sights and smells of the densely populated city. The reader may not be interested in all the details, but he or she should be grateful that there now exists a well-researched study of daily life in early twentieth-century Shanghai.

But, more broadly speaking, what have we learned? The premise of this book is clear: "If human history involves primarily the people, and if what shapes people's outlook and affects their activities involves the places they live and work, then the importance of daily life in historical research needs no further explanation"

(p. 2) But this premise is not entirely correct. We as historians need to find out how people lived, but we also need to explain the significance of daily activities. While Lu's point that he would rather "let the empirical evidence unbossom itself" than "elaborate on a purely conceptual discussion" (p. 297) is well taken; what he considers as strength is in my view this book's weakness. In his introduction, Lu points to three issues as theoretically significant: urban-rural relations, the identity of the people of Shanghai, and Western historical categories. Although he provides a discussion for each of these topics, at the end the reader is left without a framework to place the many fascinating facts found in the book. His conclusion that the stories of Shanghai "suggest how sophisticated were the common people of China in adaptation and integration" (p. 295) is no doubt correct. It would be helpful, however, if he could provide the reader with some conceptual tools to replace the old dichotomy of "tradition" versus "modernity" (or "Chinese" versus "Western") and to theorize the experience of Shanghai.

It is a happy coincidence that Professor Lu's book was published in the same year as Leo Ou-fan Lee's *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930-1945* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999). Although they are both about Shanghai, the approaches of the two books could not be more different. Whereas Lu the historian writes about "the people," Lee the literary critic focuses on the *writers* who wrote about the people. Despite their different perspectives (one looks from below and the other from above), both Lu and Lee seem to agree that, at least for the residents of Shanghai in the early twentieth century, what was considered "modern" was not necessarily the same as "Western." Both emphasize the subjectivity of the people, and both reject simple dichotomies. As a result, our understanding of twentieth-century Shanghai — and twentieth-century China — is richer because of them.

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General and International/Général et International

Money and Finance in the Age of Merchant Capitalism, by John Day. Malden, Massachusetts, Blackwell, 1999. viii, 165 pp. \$29.95 U.S. (paper).

This volume is a collection of previously published essays gathered together here for the first time. In this sense it stands in some respects as a successor to Day's previous collection of essays, *The Medieval Market Economy*. Like that volume the first five essays concentrate on the subject of European monetary history, although here there is an emphasis on a somewhat later time span from about 1400-1750. In addition to this, however there are also three essays which examine how different members of the Annales School of history dealt with questions of economic history.

The first essay, an outline of general trends in European monetary history from the middle ages to the industrial revolution, including inflation and the development

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