

Chinese often have difficulty understanding conversations between native speakers, or dialogues in films, TV shows, and contemporary literature. This comprehensive handbook is specially designed to bridge that gap, with important features to help them understand and use the more than 1,200 colloquial expressions in their own speech.

It features English definitions including both idiomatic and literal meanings, notes identifying special characteristics, such as phrases that come from non-Beijing dialects or expressions that are considered abusive or rude. Each entry includes examples that illustrate its usage; many from over 500 popular contemporary films, novels, short stories, and TV series. Each example is translated into colloquial English. Background notes in English explain the context in which the example phrase is used.

This handbook contains a wide variety of spoken expressions, including words used only in colloquial speech or in ways that differ from their standard definitions; idiomatic phrases; special spoken-language compounds, colloquial proverbs and short sentences; and sentence patterns used only in colloquial speech. Most of the entries come from standard Beijing dialect but have become popular throughout China.

The handbook is ideal for students of Chinese at the intermediate level and above, native English speakers living in China, as a companion teaching tool to intermediate- and advanced-level Chinese classes in contemporary film, literature, and language, overseas Chinese who want to watch new Chinese movies and TV series but are not familiar with the new expressions, and as an essential reference on spoken Chinese for translators, researchers of Chinese language and linguistics, and professors of modern Chinese literature in the West.

Christine Berg

June Grasso, Jay Corrin, Michael Kort (eds.): Modernization and Revolution in China – From the Opium Wars to World Power

Armonk, M.E.Sharpe, 2004, 3rd Edition, 353 pages, Hardcover 79,95 US\$, Paperback 29,95 US\$

"The Chinese have never doubted their place in the world." Thus begins this text, and the reader who is not discouraged by a statement of such magnitude will find a very short account of modern Chinese history, covering the period from the Opium Wars of the 1840s into the Communist era. The book was written, as is made explicit in the preface, with the (American) undergraduate student and the so-called lay historian in mind. The authors aim to make up for a perceived gap in the scholarly literature, which either focuses only on the late imperial era, or instead exclusively on the Republican and Communist periods.

The coverage is comprehensive, yet never manages to be more than shallow. The first thirty pages introduce ancient history and geographical properties, followed by an account of "Patterns of Traditional Chinese Life" (Chapter 2), briefly describing classic hierarchical orders, the concept of dynastic cycles, Confucianism, the Imperial bureaucracy, and the Tributary System. A section entitled "China's Last Dynasties" covers the time span from the collapse of the Southern Song in 1279 through the reigns of the Mongol Yuan dynasty (1279-1368) and the Ming (1368-1644) to the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), all in two pages. "Imperial Breakdown and Western Invasion" (Chapter 3) explains foreign imperialist policies as well as internal disorder and conflicts. Special consideration is given to the changes in social stratification and the socio-economic impact of these events.

The chapter "The New Chinese Republic" rushes the reader through the 1911 revolution, the Yuan Shikai reign, the Warlord era (1917-1927), World War I, the May 4th

Movement, the early years of the CCP, and the Northern Expedition (1926-7). This chapter, providing a basic understanding of the political framework of the ROC, is followed by a chapter juxtaposing the Guomindang (GMD) and the CCP from the mid-1920s until the Second United Front in 1936 (Chapter 5: "Nationalists and Communists"). An interpretation of the emergence of Mao Zedong, internal disputes within the CCP, the Jiangxi Soviet and the Long March follow. The few notes to this chapter, as well as in most of the other chapters, are based on scholarly literature produced during the 1960s and 1970s. The same is the case for the suggested further readings for this chapter. The authors' neglect of the substantial innovative and archive-based scholarship of the recent decades, causes the book (at least in its coverage of events prior to the reform era of the 1980s) to develop into just another variation of already abundant Cold-War era accounts depicting the rise of the CCP and Chinese Communism.

The chapter "China at War" introduces typical features of GMD warfare, the Communist guerilla tactics, as well as the 1946-1949 Civil War. The following three chapters take us through the early years of the PRC and through the Cultural Revolution. These chapters largely reiterate previous accounts. The last part of the book is devoted to the reform era and contemporary China (up to 2003). Deng Xiaoping's reforms and the political upheavals and pro-democracy protests of the late 1970s and the 1980s are covered in chapter 10. "The Era of Jiang Zemin" (Chapter 11) spans from Jiang's rise to power and the consolidation of his leadership to the continuation of economic reforms and the tedious negotiations of China's entry into the World Trade Organization. The chapter also features an account of major foreign policy issues during Jiang's reign. These include the return of Hong Kong and the relationship with Taiwan, and Beijing's relations with the United States, Japan, the Koreas, and Russia. This part gives a good overview of the variegated

strategic interests of China with regard to each one of these countries.

The concluding chapter deals with the "Fourth Generation" of Chinese leaders, who are cast into the "Generation of the Cultural Revolution" paradigm, as well as social costs of reform, domestic migration and the rise in crime. An account of the sale of organs of executed criminals is combined with reports of the recent health scandals, followed by the usual closing section with speculations on "Future Prospects". The question posed at the end, whether "communism wedded to nationalism" (p. 322) will be able to secure the country's stability, no doubt remains an interesting one and will probably continue to produce educated guesses for some time to come.

The book raises two major questions: 1) how to teach Chinese history, and 2) how minimally historical a textbook can be before it becomes invalid in historical terms. Should we start with Master Narratives, trying to provide an essentialist framework, or is it better to teach in a more post-structuralist fashion? But regardless, any interpretation should be reference-based. The earlier-mentioned neglect of recent scholarship in references and suggested readings makes this narrative a repetition of conventional knowledge, with little regard for historical accuracy and areas of contention. If brevity is the calling of the day, the authors surely deserve commendation. However, to be short and quick, we might just as well ask google, especially in its edition for scholars (<http://scholar.google.com>), what the Taiping Rebellion was all about. It is covered there in about as much detail as in the book, with a greater number of references plus a few links.

In short, this book is not a particularly engaging addition to work on China, neither content-wise nor for methodological purposes. For the introductory mandatory course I would stick with Spence's *Search for Modern China* or Ebrey's *Cambridge Illustrated History* and complement those

with historical records and historiography as detailed as possible.

Karin-Irene Eiermann

Karl Pilny: Das asiatische Jahrhundert. China und Japan auf dem Weg zur neuen Weltmacht

Frankfurt a.M.: Campus Verlag, 2005, 340 S., 24,90 €

Weltwirtschaft im Zeichen des Drachen – von jeher schon zog der Ferne Osten sowohl Bewunderung als auch Ängste auf sich. Während die in den 1980er-Jahren allseits verkündete "japanische Gefahr" im darauf folgenden Jahrzehnt angesichts von Rezession und Bankenkrise etwas in den Hintergrund rückte, geht im Westen wieder die Angst vor einer asiatisch dominierten Weltwirtschaft um. Dabei hat – so scheint es – der alte Dauerrival Japan Verstärkung bekommen: die Volksrepublik China.

Für den Wirtschaftsrechtler Karl Pilny, der über langjährige praktische Erfahrungen im asiatischen Raum verfügt, deutet sich bereits ein Trend an, der diese beiden Länder zu einer neuen ökonomischen Weltmacht werden lässt. Mit seinem im Campus Verlag erschienen Buch *Das asiatische Jahrhundert* legt er eine lehrreiche Studie über die Herausforderungen vor, denen sich die westlichen Industriestaaten in den nächsten Jahrzehnten gegenübersehen werden. Er vermeidet die sonst übliche Sensationsgier und versucht, ein ausgewogenes Bild möglicher Szenarien zu zeichnen.

Seine These lautet, das westliche Wirtschaftsmodell sei auf Dauer gesehen dem asiatischen unterlegen. Dabei macht er im westlichen Denken mittel- und langfristige einen gravierenden Wettbewerbsnachteil aus: die völlige Fixierung auf kurzfristige, Börsenkurs begünstigende Gewinne, den Shareholder-Value. Die Konzentration auf schnelle Erträge in Europa und den USA verdeckte den Blick auf langwierige Ent-

wicklungen, welche die Weltwirtschaft von morgen prägen werden.

Die Asiaten dagegen, die einer eher gemeinschaftsorientierten Kapitalismusvariante anhängen und folglich mit der Freihandelsdoktrin wenig anfangen können, besitzen einen breiteren Fokus im Wirtschaftsleben. Dies führe dazu, dass der Westen einerseits die Absatzmöglichkeiten für seine Waren überschätzt, was einige Unternehmen vor allem in der Automobilbranche mittlerweile schmerzhaft erfahren haben. Andererseits verkennen sie das Bemühen insbesondere der Chinesen, sich westliches Know-how anzueignen, um die entsprechenden Produkte dann selbst herstellen zu können. Mit dieser strategischen Ausrichtung würden sie in einem ersten Schritt die arbeitsintensiven und in einem zweiten Schritt auch die technologieintensiven Produktionsabläufe ab- bzw. abziehen. Dem Westen bliebe zukünftig kein Bereich mehr, in dem er einen besonderen Wettbewerbsvorsprung vorweisen kann.

Ob die von einer Staatsbürokratie gelenkten asiatischen Wirtschaften, die mit der Globalisierung einhergehende Beschleunigung der Ökonomie besser bewältigen können als die marktorientierten westlichen, ist zumindest fraglich. In dem Maße, wie die Staaten an Steuerungsfähigkeit verlieren, werden auch sie vor neue Herausforderungen gestellt. Dennoch bleibt es wichtig anzuerkennen, dass es neben dem liberalen Modell auch andere Wirtschaftskonzeptionen mit anderen Wertorientierungen gibt – mögliche Konflikte können so besser antizipiert und bearbeitet werden. Dem Autor ist es gelungen, den Blick hierfür zu schärfen. Und: Ein Nachdenken über die eigene Wirtschaftsweise kann nie schaden.

Einem weiteren Teil des Buches räumt Pilny ferner der überaus interessanten Frage ein, wie sich das japanisch-chinesische Verhältnis in politischer Hinsicht entwickeln könnte. Über die Frage, wer in Zukunft die Führungsrolle in Asien übernehmen wird, kann heute nur spekuliert werden. Ange-