

JÜRGEN OSTERHAMMEL, *China und die Weltgesellschaft. Vom 18. Jahrhundert bis in unsere Zeit*. München: C.H. Beck, 1989. XVI + 607 pages, DM 84,-

Although many Chinese and Western scholars regarded the nineteenth century arrival of the West in China and particularly the Opium War of 1840-42 as the beginning of modern Chinese history, it is becoming increasingly common for scholars to seek the roots of modern Chinese history in the pre-nineteenth century era. Irrespective of whether one regards the Song-Dynasty (A.D. 960-1279) or a later period as the beginning of Modern China, when looking at China in a comparative perspective one should naturally take a range of more than one or two centuries into account. Thus it is completely justified to begin a study of China as part of world society with the eighteenth century. The eighteenth century was seen by many contemporary Chinese as perhaps the greatest era of Chinese history since the remote antiquity of the sage kings Yao and Shun. And it was to a remarkable extent the peace, prosperity, and stability - in the contemporary Chinese view: the glory - of the eighteenth century Chinese empire that created the image of an eternal and unchanging China. The changing perspective of the late nineteenth century which led to the disregard of the glory of eighteenth century China was on the Chinese side due to the fact that traditional China in general was regarded as backward and to be substituted by a New China. Euro-centric historiography in the West and the depreciation of its own past in China thus conditioned each other.

This view, which permeates even such a historical analysis as John King Fairbank's *The Great Chinese Revolution: 1800-1985*, published in 1986 [German transl. 1989], leads to the consequence that modernization of China is regarded as contrary to the Chinese tradition.

Whereas most books on recent Chinese history start with the opium wars (1840 ff.) or with the fall of the Manchu dynasty, the present work by the historian and political scientist Jürgen Osterhammel points out - after a stimulating introduction - the changes in the evaluation of China in the West since the Jesuits, and then turns to evaluate China's position in the eighteenth-century world system. Starting from this period he throws new light on the history of China and on the role of China in international politics.

The picture he draws in the main text is substantially supported as well as deepened by the many generally very precise notes which fill 200 pages. These notes are also evidence of the profound scholarship of the author who used Chinese as well as western material and secondary literature comprising a number of titles which may at least partly have been unknown to the historian

of China who is often not even familiar with high-quality scholarship done and published outside his narrow field.

After the introductory part, the book deals on about a hundred pages with the state of eighteenth century China and the international political arena of this era. The third part of the book with the title "China and Free Trade Imperialism" is concerned with the nineteenth century and deals particularly with British policy towards East Asia, the Opium War and development of industry and commerce in China. This is followed by a very differentiated treatment of the first half of the twentieth century, "China between Submission and Resistance", which deals with the colonial policy of the Big Powers towards China. In the fifth part Osterhammel combines a survey of the People's Republic of China's domestic policy with a description of international politics in East Asia and the Pacific.

That the "Chronological Table of Events" (p. 563-590) has some gaps is not astonishing; but it is regrettable that the index is not more detailed. This does, however, in no way diminish the merit of this impressive work which is in my view a milestone in German historical literature. Thanks to its intellectual clarity and accuracy this book, which treats China and the international community in multiperspective, will set up a standard in the field and it will remain for long the book to be recommended to all interested in China's recent history and the international context.

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EYAL BEN-ARI, BRIAN MOERAN, JAMES VALENTINE (eds.), *Unwrapping Japan. Society and culture in anthropological perspective*. Manchester: Manchester University Press 1990, 237 pages, £ 29.95

It is not only social anthropologists who have been persistently engaged in rethinking the art of explaining Japan. Yet the image of Japan as it has come to be seen not only outside the country, can be related to British and American anthropological studies, e.g. Benedict's *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1946), Nakane's *Japanese Society* (1970) and Vogel's *Japan As No. 1* (1979). As most of us who deal with Japan feel that none of the three offers the ultimate interpretation of the phenomenon that is Japan, it may come as a relief that even anthropologists are not happy with it. However, the outcome of the Japan Anthropology Workshop held at Jerusalem in 1987, presented under the title of *Unwrapping Japan*, does not in the least try to offer any new interpretations. From its very beginnings anthropology has been a highly self-