

rammes and the *danwei* system. Increasing illegitimate births, divorce rates and criminality, corruption, alliances between cadres and private businessmen, patronage and growing polarization between poor and rich are some of the social consequences identified. Social tensions and conflicts seem to be inevitable.

In sum, Thomas Heberer's study underlines the old thesis that private trade and production on a small scale within a socialist economy provide many goods and services far more effectively than a centralized economy and that dualistic models of economic systems do not do justice to socio-economic reality. The study would have benefitted if theoretical concepts such as the 'shadow economy theory' or Heberer's interesting comments on 'traditional Chinese economic psychology' (explanatory approach III) had been further substantiated with empirical case studies. In spite of 201 tables and impressive charts (p. 438,440) which summarize the 'threefold' theoretical framework of this study, the book provides little insight into the spiritual orientations and the form of daily life that small businessmen in the PRC take to be intrinsically meaningful. This should be understood as a challenge to undertake further empirical work 'in China after June 4th, 1989' for which Thomas Heberer has provided an important foundation.

Thomas Menkhoff

MATTHIAS RISLER, *Berufsbildung in China. Rot und Experte*. (Mitteilungen des Instituts für Asienkunde Hamburg, 179). Hamburg: Institut für Asienkunde 1989. X, 427 pages, DM 36,-

Matthias Risler has already proved himself an expert in the field of vocational training in the People's Republic of China. Unlike his previous publications, this one is written from a historical perspective. He investigates the genesis and development of vocational training in order to answer questions about its strengths, weaknesses and peculiarities. His aim is to trace the connection between traditional structures of education and the modern institutions which, in most cases, have been inspired by foreign examples. He tries to ascertain and characterize in what way China as a developing country assimilates European technology.

Risler has a broad definition of vocational training which includes education in the school and at the workplace as well as primary, secondary and continuing education. Six of his seven chapters are descriptive and deal, in

part, with education in general which, given the scarcity of good sources on vocational training, may be unavoidable.

The first three chapters describe the historical foundations of vocational training. In the first chapter, the author sketches the basic ideas of the most important philosophical schools. In the second, he traces the connection between them, the structure of society and the imperial system of education. He describes the examination system from its inception to its abolition in 1905 and the institutions which trained the elite. The third chapter, which describes the training in the handicraft guilds, is the most important. The characteristic master-apprentice relationship continues to be of considerable importance in contemporary China. Since Risler proposes making use of this traditional method of instruction to create popular and practically oriented methods of modern training, it is odd that he does not go on to describe its historical development. For example, he doesn't even mention the account of apprenticeship in Chesneau's seminal work on the Chinese labour movement.

In the next section the author describes the strategies of modernization that were developed in response to the western challenges after the Opium Wars. His presentation is chronological and is divided into three parts: 1840-1911, 1911-1949, and 1949-1987. He portrays the initiatives of the Chinese reformers in vocational training, for example Li Hongzhang or Huang Yanpei and his Society for Vocational Training. Most of the reformers were fairly successful but their efforts remained isolated in the traditional agrarian society. Risler notes the shortcomings of "The New School System", started in 1922 and founded on the ideas of John Dewey, and he quotes the finding of a League of Nations Mission (1931) because of its significance for the present.

The chapter on training in the People's Republic is the longest though it is only a cursory treatment of the subject. The description of the situation since 1978 is intentionally brief, with the author referring to his previous publications on the subject. It becomes clear that the attitude toward vocational training depended on which political faction was in power. Several times the pendulum swung between education for the masses (red) or for the elite (expert). This discontinuous development contributed to many of the obvious defects in the present system.

In the seventh and final chapter, Risler summarizes the strengths and weaknesses of contemporary vocational training and draws some conclusions. He notes the lack of qualified middle-level personnel, the preference given to general education and theory, the neglect of rural areas, the disparate development of the various regions and the predominance of technical subjects. On the other hand, he looks favourably on the high overall level of knowledge and the widespread adult education.

His comments in this last chapter are valuable; unfortunately they are somewhat disconnected from his description to which he makes only passing reference. He does not *systematically* outline the structures of vocational training throughout history as he intended in his introduction. Nevertheless, the book is an important addition to the literature on vocational training. It is worthwhile not only for scientists but also for those engaged in training in the People's Republic. Although his inconsistent use of a lexical style of presentation is not particularly readable, the detailed contents make Risler's work a useful handbook.

Günter Schucher

MECHTHILD LEUTNER, *Geburt, Heirat und Tod in Peking. Volkskultur und Elitekultur vom 19. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart*. Berlin: Reimer, 1989. 394 pages, DM 78.-

Mechthild Leutner has taken on an overwhelming task; each of the main areas of her book could itself be the subject of a work of similar length. She has assembled an enormous amount of material, much of it previously unpublished. Specialists will appreciate this achievement. Her study is notable for being the first to examine both the existing rites and the literature describing the form these rites took in previous eras. In addition, she is able to draw from her own observations of marriage, burial and cremation ceremonies in Peking.

Mechthild Leutner's book covers the period from the midnineteenth century (late Imperial era) to the present - a period of tumultuous, even wrenching, transitions. During these years China underwent industrialisation and various political changes, which produced tremendous social ferment.

The subjects of Mechthild Leutner's inquiry are birth, marriage and death - not the events as such but the set of traditions and practices surrounding these events, as well as their explanations. She proposes that the differences between popular and elite culture stem mainly from economic considerations rather than from any profound divergence in belief.

Her perspective is unabashedly economic, as is made clear from the outset by the author's aligning herself with the modern *Volkskulturforschung* which considers even the Marxist approach "insufficiently materialistic". Consequently Mechthild Leutner discusses religion and culture only with respect to their purported economic underpinnings.