

identifying the PRC as a developmental state in which, unlike Taiwan, political leaders were the “driving force” (p. 152) of S&T development, Greene suggests that the Beijing government should increase its effort to bring technocrats, scientists, and outside advisors to join its cause. Only by galvanizing their support as well as garnering their collective wisdom can the PRC attain its modernization goal.

Overall, the research in this book is solid, its arguments cogent, and the writing clear. The author’s use of the “developmental state” as a theoretical framework for her analysis fits very well with the ongoing discussion on the role of the state in this increasingly global world. If there is any criticism at all, I wish Greene had done more to delineate the differences between political leaders and state planners. This book is suitable not only for academics, but also for general readers who are interested in the history of Taiwan, questions about the Asian miracle, and even issues related to globalization.

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The Subtle Revolution: Poets of the “Old Schools” during Late Qing and Early Republican China. By JON EUGENE VON KOWALLIS. Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 2006. xvi, 299 pp. \$20.00 (paper).

doi:10.1017/S0021911809990180

Jon Kowallis’s book is a major contribution, and a particularly important one, to the urgent project of Chinese literary history in our time, and the replacement of the ideologically motivated old history of Chinese literature, created early in the last century by young scholars associated with the May Fourth movement, by a history that takes into account the full breadth of the tradition, including *shih* poetry, a form of unquestionable centrality from the late Han dynasty to the twentieth century, and perhaps even into the twenty-first. This project is gradually producing an account that treats the poets of the Sung, Yüan, Ming, and Ch’ing dynasties as active, critical creators of a massive and complex body of work rather than as ciphers passing the centuries away while waiting for the vernacular dawn to come.

The subject of this book in particular is the generation of poets spanning the late Ch’ing and early republic. It takes up seven major figures from three “schools”: Wang K’ai-yün and Teng Fu-lun of what Kowallis calls the “Neo-Ancient” school; the “Late Ch’ing Allusionists” Fan Tseng-hsiang and Yi Shun-ting; and Ch’ên Yen, Ch’ên San-li, and Cheng Hsiao-hsü of the “T’ung-kuang” school.

The received verdict on these poets places them among the last holdouts against the arrival of modernity in China, who clung to obsolete literary forms while bolder, more far-sighted writers shifted China’s literary world decisively to the vernacular language. Kowallis shows the shallowness of this view, for

much of their poetry concerns the onset of modernity and partakes of the very complexity that we think of as characteristic of the modern. At one point, Kowallis contrasts the anguished responses of the late Ch'ing poets to their predicament with Mao Tse-tung's boisterously Faustian lyric on swimming the Yangtze, asking, "Where in Mao's lyric ... are the alienation, self-doubt, and sense of unprecedented change that have come to characterize the modern consciousness?" (pp. 151–52).

Kowallis discusses in detail how each man responded to the challenges of the age, political no less than literary. Several men made what we might call bad choices, falling at least briefly into the orbit of Yüan Shih-k'ai or the Japanese puppet state of Manchukuo. Such insufficiently prescient political associations, along with Yi Shun-ting's self-indulgent style of life in his later years, have of course, *more sinico*, affected later evaluations of their poetry in ways that have clouded judgment. Kowallis clarifies the issues by drawing parallels to the case of Ezra Pound in politics and to T. S. Eliot in poetry, the latter especially on the question of allusion. As he points out, the frequent use of literary and historical allusions by some of the poets poses problems for modern readers in ways that it did not for their contemporaries.

The book includes fully annotated translations of a number of long poems, plus many shorter ones. Wang K'ai-yün's "Elegy on the Garden of Perfect Brightness" is here, along with both of Feng Tseng-hsiang's "Songs of Rainbow Cloud," on the subject of the celebrated courtesan Sai Chin-hua. The translations are generally accurate, where I have been able to check them. Indeed, they are more than accurate, being in general resourceful renderings that often capture the elusive flavor of difficult originals. Once in a while they rely on translation "shortcuts" that do not reflect a direct response to the situation of the poem. For example, in the line "In this alien place, I am alarmed at the falling of leaves" (p. 42), "alarmed" strikes a false note, for it seems certain that the original is *jing* (the text is not given, nor do I have access to a copy), which in cases such as this one means not "alarmed" but "taken by surprise," the implication of the falling leaves being that another year has stolen by unnoticed.

Kowallis's work constitutes a kind of "subtle revolution" of its own, shifting our focus away from the "Literary Revolution" and toward the continuing tradition of *shih* poetry. In addition, he takes us decisively beyond the evaluations of the May Fourth period to show how much can be learned by considering the viewpoints of those who were not quick to jump on the vernacular literature bandwagon. Readers of this fine study will understand better why the writing of poetry in the old forms continues to flourish in China and Taiwan today, maintained in numerous periodicals and emerging especially during serious crises, such as during the demonstrations that marked the death of Chou En-lai in 1976. This is an important contribution to our understanding of modern Chinese literature and history, and one that points the way to the future of the field.

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