

Book Reviews

Global Perspectives on Global History: Theories and Approaches in a Connected World.

By Dominic SACHSENMAIER.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. 340 pp.

ISBN: 978-0-521-17312-4 (Paperback).

ISBN: 978-1-107-00182-4 (Hardback)

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doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.12773/arwh.2013.1.1.157>

Sachsenmaier's book is a well-written historiographical summary of the global history discourses in the United States, Germany and China. The author's interest in bringing to light the diversity of the discourses on global history and in making global history truly global as well as less hierarchical is legitimate and significant for the present global history discourse dominated by the Western scholarship. However, readers might read much more in the multifarious discourses on global history in these three different countries: That global history is a highly competitive field where each participant is competing for its own definition of the global, modernity or history itself in the rapidly proceeding global integration process. The Chinese discussion of global history is its most apparent showcase.

From the Korean perspective, the global history discourse in China is the most interesting one, since the Chinese one is not well known to the Korean discourse which centers around the US scholarship on global history like in many other countries. The increasing interest in East Asian history in Korea spurs further attention to the Chinese discussions on global history, since Sino-centrism is such a big debating issue in writing East Asian history. However, China which shares its border with fourteen countries and an ocean with six countries is rather passive in understanding herself as a part of East Asia, but very active in appropriating the global history paradigm for world-wide networking of Chinese history. Three foci in the Chinese discussion of global history draw attention: the affirmative understanding of globalization, a strong allegiance to the national history paradigm, and the predominant interest in Chinese modernity in the context of alternative or multiple modernities, in other words, the interest in seeking “the basic pattern of a distinctively Chinese path into modernity” (p. 209). The first two issues are ‘radically’ deviating from the general direction of the global history discussions, but relatively easily explicable from the background of the successful re-emergence of China as a major global player. The last issue of Chinese modernity is also located closely to ‘cultural nationalism’ of China, i.e. the re-appreciation of Chinese culture as a main momentum of the successful change of China.

Nonetheless, the issue of Chinese modernity complies with the international popularity of the concepts such as multiple or alternative modernities. It is not only Chinese scholars, who “no longer accept the view of Europe as the sole creator of the modern world,” (p. 216) and furthermore demand for their own, alternative outlooks on global history. While Confucian capitalism discourse made a big splash back in the late 1990s all over in East Asia, there has also been an Islamic revival, a Hindu revival in India, and a resurrection of earlier pan-Turanian utopias in Turkey, as Arif Dirlik keenly observed. None of them are denying their historical connectedness with modernity, but all of them are rejecting a universal standard for measuring their modernity and seeking a culture-specific understanding of modernity. The seemingly apparent connectedness of the Chinese discussion on

alternative modernity to this international trend is, unfortunately, not investigated in this book.

Eloquent as it is to address the plurality of global history discussions in a plural world, readers need an additional meta-discourse in order to piece together the nation-specific global history discourses and to make sense of, for example, the Chinese modernity in a global context. An extra chapter for analyzing and problematizing the various global history discourses in the context of the criss-cross of the power of the globalization and the regional academic politics to control the former would have been a better finish than the epilogue for summarizing the background of the international rise of the global history discourse. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that *Global Perspectives on Global History* is the most balanced and ambitious introduction to global history in true sense among the ones published so far.

China and the Shaping of Indonesia, 1949-1965.

By Hong LIU. Singapore and Kyoto.

NUS Press and Kyoto University Press, 2011. 321pp.

ISBN: 978-9971-69-381-7 (Paperback)

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doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.12773/arwh.2013.1.1.159>

China and the Shaping of Indonesia presents a transnational approach to Indonesian history, aiming at transcending the existing nation-state and liberal democratic frameworks that have dominated the Indonesian history and constrained the possibilities of locating the Indonesian history within a broader Asian context. Relations with China and perceptions of China constituted an important dynamic in this regard, that has been mar-