

looks at Chinese migration from an original perspective of Chinese migrants' filmic representations in the countries of the former Yugoslavia.

The portrayal of Chinese migration to individual countries, although illuminative in many respects, does not offer the comparative insight that cross-country research of a particular group or aspect of Chinese migration would and may succumb to methodological nationalism by delimiting the social life of migrants to the borders of the nation-state. Furthermore, the rather successful incorporation of the Chinese into the Italian and Spanish markets, which, at least in the past, have been considered as stable, may raise questions about the argument that Chinese migrants prefer volatile markets, perhaps indicating Chinese migrants' future adaptive strategies in developing countries. Nevertheless, the essays collected in this volume are a welcome contribution, especially to the almost non-existing literature on Chinese migration to certain regions of Central Asia and Eastern Europe, and therefore provide a valuable starting point for students of migration and area studies.

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**ADMINISTERING THE COLONIZER: Manchuria's Russians under Chinese Rule, 1918-29.** *Contemporary Chinese Studies.* By **Blaine R. Chiasson.** *Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011, c2010. x. 285 pp. (Tables, maps, B&W photos, illus.) C\$34.95, paper. ISBN 978-0-7748-1657-1.*

During almost a decade, from 1921-1929, the Chinese government administered Russians, Chinese, Manchus and other foreigners living in the former Tsarist Russian concession in northern Manchuria under the name "Special District of the Three Eastern Provinces." However, the 1929 Sino-Soviet conflict over the Chinese Eastern Railway (CER) undermined this "administrative experiment," and Japan's 1931 invasion of Manchuria, followed by the 1932 creation of the puppet state of Manchukuo, quickly destroyed any remaining vestiges of this innovative system. After the end of World War II and following the Communist victory in 1949, almost all remaining Russians living in Manchuria were forced to leave China. The history of the "Special District," and its remarkable impact on northern Manchuria, was soon forgotten.

Blaine R. Chiasson has revived this important history by using a wide range of Russian and Chinese secondary sources, augmented by extensive primary research at the Jilin Provincial Archives, Changchun, Jilin Province, the diplomatic archives held by the Ministère des Affaires Etrangère, Paris, France, and the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), College Park, MD, plus access to a varied group of rare books, private papers

and manuscript collections at Columbia University, Stanford University and Yale University. The majority of the endnotes are to primary sources or to contemporary press accounts, making this book the most authoritative source available on this topic.

Russian influence in China was often portrayed as being less rapacious than the other foreign powers, but this overlooked enormous Tsarist land acquisitions at Qing expense during the nineteenth century. Meanwhile, the single largest Russian enterprise in northern Manchuria, and so later the biggest bone of contention, was the CER. Built after 1896, when Count Sergei Witte and Viceroy Li Hongzhang agreed to cooperate in discouraging Japanese aggression, Li was later accused of creating even greater problems by “letting the Russian wolf into Chinese territory” (20). While building this railway shortcut from Chita to Vladivostok cut off almost a thousand kilometres of track from the longer and more difficult route in Russia proper, its construction also gave the Tsarist government a dominant political and economic position throughout northern Manchuria.

After the Russian revolutions of 1917, China tried to retake control over this strategic area, only to meet with Russian resistance. In October 1920, however, the Chinese government based in Beijing successfully abolished the Russians’ extraterritorial rights, making them subject for the first time to Chinese laws. It was at this time that the Special District was created to administer the Tsarist institutions. The Special District’s courts, for example, adopted Chinese—not Russian—as their principal language of business. The formerly Russian-run prisons were taken over by Chinese administrators, and conditions were improved to show that China could rule foreigners in a “fair and humane fashion” (88). Education was also a priority, and new schools were built and additional teachers—both Russian and Chinese—were hired.

During most of the 1920s the Chinese administrators of the Special District worked hard to exert greater control over the CER and its adjoining territory by pressuring the Soviet government to abide by its 1924 promise to discuss terms that would return the railway line to Chinese control. It was this rights-recovery policy, which intensified after the Nationalists took power and moved the capital to Nanjing in 1928, that resulted in China’s unsuccessful attempt during July 1929 to retake the CER by force. Mounting tensions with the USSR resulted in war, during which tens of thousands of Red Army troops invaded northern Manchuria. One unfortunate shortfall of this book is that Chiasson spends too little time discussing this war’s impact on the Special District. After the Soviet victory in December 1929, it appeared that Russian power throughout Manchuria would increase, perhaps even turning it into a Soviet puppet state similar to Mongolia. Japan’s 1931 invasion of Manchuria completed the job of undermining the Special District.

Behind the high politics surrounding control over the CER, Chiasson discusses the significant changes brought about by the Chinese administrators: “The case of the Special District reveals that, given the opportunity, the

Chinese could not only take over a European administration but also improve it" (222). Renowned for its "spirit of practical and pragmatic compromise" (224), the Special District represented a path not taken in Chinese history. Rather, after 1949 most foreigners were forcibly ejected from the PRC, not just in Manchuria but throughout China proper. If things had gone differently, and compromise had trumped conflict, other foreign concessions might have one by one fallen under Chinese control, only to be governed by administrative entities similar to the Special District.

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**HOME AND FAMILY IN JAPAN: Continuity and Transformation.** Edited by *Richard Ronald and Allison Alexy*. London and New York: Routledge, 2011. xvii, 278 pp. (Tables, figures.) US\$44.95, paper. ISBN 978-0-415-68804-8.

The declining marriage rate, low fertility rate and rapidly aging population are central issues in current public policy debates in Japan. These trends are significant, not only because they highlight changes in individual and family lifestyles, but also because they have important ramifications for the economy and social policies. Fewer children means fewer workers, who will carry a heavier burden in upholding the social security system. *Home and Family in Japan* makes a welcome contribution to our understanding of these trends in combining macro-level analysis with ethnographic case studies, and in examining not only shifts in personal attitudes and lifestyles but also the broader policy frameworks, and the physical spaces within which families' lives in contemporary Japan take shape.

Central to the approach of the volume is the concept of the *ie*, or family system. Whereas the norms and customs of the *ie* applied only to specific social strata in earlier times, the *ie* was institutionalized and normalized in the Meiji period, in an effort to integrate families into the modern nation-state. Significantly, although the *ie* formally ceased existing with the introduction of the postwar constitution, the hierarchy of family relationships, filial piety and gender roles associated with the *ie* continue to have, as the contributions to this volume show, a salient presence in contemporary family life. While the centrality of the *ie* within the chapters of the volume may strike the reader as anachronistic at first sight, the analysis makes clear that the *ie* here is not treated as a remainder of mysterious family traditions, but rather as something that continues to inform family life in a fragmentary fashion, be it in the form of specific expectations regarding women's role in the family, or conscious resistance among younger generations against taking care of their elderly parents.

The chapters of the volume address family change, and the salience of the *ie* from a diversity of perspectives. Several chapters introduce the