

The socio-economy of Canton was firmly embedded in the flow of goods, people and money between southern China and Southeast Asia, as Lee's analyses of the trade and consumption of rice in this volume demonstrates. Therefore, the Nationalist party-state's endeavours to form the national economy with centralized institutions was not an easy fit for the region. By analyzing the transitions of politics and economies in early twentieth-century China from local and global perspectives, Lee aptly challenges the Nationalist state-centred narratives about nation-building and economic modernization.

Taking consumption into account, Lee provides a more nuanced analysis of trade than the conventional model, in which the demand and supply of a single commodity reaches equilibrium through market transactions. Rather, various kinds of rice with different grades compete with one another on the market, and thus the consumers' preference for a specific rice critically affects the route of transaction and the scale of the market. With that hypothesis in mind, it is instinctively plausible that Canton citizens' preference for foreign rice, which was formed through trade with the rice-producing areas in Southeast Asia, increased the rice imports from those areas.

As Lee demonstrates, Canton depended on a trade-oriented economy, exporting silk and other merchandizes while importing foodstuff including rice. In that sense, not in spite of but exactly because of being in "the land of famine," Canton developed a regional cuisine with a wide variety of ingredients. On the one hand, the "gourmet" culture reflected the sumptuous local life. On the other hand, its dependence on imported food made the city vulnerable to external political and economic turbulence. As the food security issue remains crucial for many of the participants in global trade in the twenty-first century, Canton's experience in the first half of the last century merits special attention in terms of the trajectory and the impacts of the integration into the global economy.

Gourmets in the Land of Famine is a masterful synthesis of global history, Chinese socio-economic history and the political history of the late Qing-Republican era. Readers from those different fields will find new research questions in this stimulating volume.

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AN UNFINISHED REPUBLIC: Leading by Word and Deed in Modern China. By David Strand. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011. xiv, 387 pp. (Figures.) US\$65.00, cloth. ISBN 978-0-520-26736-7.

In his new book *An Unfinished Republic*, David Strand examines the political culture of the early years of the Chinese Republic. While the 1911 revolution failed to produce the stable Republic that so many revolutionaries had hoped for, "within a few years," Strand asserts, "the Republic became entrenched, no so much as a set of national political institutions, but as a political way of

life in which citizens confronted leaders and each other face-to-face” (1). The 1911 revolution, in other words, did not simply produce the negative result of destroying the imperial system, it created a new Republican culture of political argument and contestation, in which citizens felt empowered to face up to those in political power and demand that they respond to public needs. Strand approaches early Republican politics from a novel direction, focusing on the practice of public speaking and political oratory. These were skills that were little needed in an imperial regime where political discussion mostly happened behind closed doors. But they quickly became essential during the first two decades of the twentieth century.

Strand's first book, *Rickshaw Beijing*, a study of the micro politics of Chinese urban life in the early Republican era, quickly became a classic after its publication in 1989. *An Unfinished Republic* is a less accessible book, but no less important. This is a deeply researched work which ranges across a remarkable range of sources in Chinese and English, including newspaper reports, personal correspondence and memoirs. The author combines an anecdotal style with sharp analyses drawing on wide reading in theoretical and comparative works. It is studded with insights about the nature of Chinese politics, ideas about citizenship, and the dramatic cultural developments in the fifteen years following the 1911 Revolution.

Strand focuses on three individuals: Tang Qunying, the Hunanese revolutionary and suffragist, Lu Zhengxiang, a professional diplomat turned politician, and Sun Yatsen. Tang was one of the most prominent women activists in the Revolutionary Alliance and subsequently the Nationalist Party (Guomindang). A fervent advocate of women's suffrage, she fought in the revolution, and famously slapped Nationalist leader Song Jiaoren at a Guomindang meeting in 1912 for failing to live up to earlier commitments to female suffrage. She emerges as an unwavering and heroic figure, a symbol of the unrealized potential of the new Republic. Lu Zhengxiang was a professional diplomat who returned to China and served as foreign minister and briefly prime minister under Yuan Shikai. A Chinese patriot who hoped to remain above the fray of politics, Lu's failings as an orator doomed his term as prime minister in 1912 before it really started. Lu serves as a near tragic example of the impossibility of being an apolitical leader in an age of vigorous public speech and debate. Sun, by contrast, was a skilled orator with indefatigable energy for talking about China and its future. He bounced back from disappointments, and managed to remain not only relevant, but the most broadly appealing political figure of the time. Strand makes the case that his abilities as a public speaker, and deft handling of difficult moments during his frequent public appearances, were essential to both his political successes and his remarkable resilience. Strand concludes that both Sun Yatsen and Tang Qunying “were drawn to the political stage confident that they could persuade even hostile or indifferent audiences to follow them” (287). Lu Zhengxiang's skills served him well in the arena

of diplomacy, but his inability to tune into the emotional tenor of Chinese nationalism led him to political disaster.

An Unfinished Republic is important in several respects. First, it is a powerful corrective to an earlier generation of scholarship on Chinese political culture, associated with scholars like Lucien Pye, which emphasized a desire for authoritative leaders and consensus politics. Strand's argumentative republicans were, he claims, precursors to decades of movements of dissent in the People's Republic of China, and the richly competitive democratic politics of Taiwan after Chiang Ching-kuo. Second, this book is an insightful contribution to discussions about the public sphere and the nature of citizenship in modern China. In the rise of political oratory, Strand shows clearly that politics in early twentieth-century China were indeed different from the local elite activism of the late imperial period. He also shows that politically engaged Chinese saw themselves as citizens, not subjects.

An Unfinished Republic is not without flaws. It could have benefitted from a stronger editorial hand to tighten some chapters. For example, chapter 4, "Seeing Like a Citizen," while full of perceptive commentary on political practice, doesn't hold together as a coherent whole. At times chapter 5 seems like a long (albeit interesting) digression from the narrative of Lu Zhengxiang's disastrous speech of July 1918. Strand also leaves two very big questions unanswered: How and why did the lively oratory of the early Republic go underground? How did the stiff culture of China's Leninist political parties, the post 1920s Guomindang and the Chinese Communist Party, come to dominate Chinese politics after 1927? Nevertheless this is an important book, and essential reading for those interested both in modern Chinese history and in Chinese politics, both past and present.

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RESEARCHING TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY JAPAN: New Directions and Approaches for the Electronic Age. *Edited by Timothy Iles and Peter Matanle.* Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2012. xvi, 365 pp. (Tables, figures, B&W photos.) US\$85.00, cloth. ISBN 978-0-7391-7014-4.

Scholarly e-journals are emerging as a vital part of the academic landscape, although they remain, for many, a second-tier alternative to their mainstream peer-reviewed relations. That most traditional journals now make their material available online, largely through university libraries, has countered one of the core advantages of the e-journal format, which remains more popular in scientific fields than in the Arts. Despite more than a decade of experience, e-journals continue to struggle for respect.

The *electronic journal of contemporary japanese studies* is one of the more enduring digital academic forums. Around for more than a decade, the