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Sam Geall ed. (2013), *China and the Environment: The Green Revolution*, London and New York: Zed Books, pp. 247; ISBN: 978-1-78032-340-4

This is an extremely informative and useful book for those interested in Chinese politics, specifically the relationships between the Chinese state, citizens and the environmental movement. It contains a wealth of information about the various campaigns initiated and run by affected citizens, NGOs and professionals. The book provides great insights into the delicate balance between the various stakeholders vis-à-vis the state in contemporary China after the economic reforms of the late 1970s and early 1980s. It is one of the most comprehensive scholarly pieces of work that has so far been written about the state of Chinese ecology and the response of civil society in tackling environmental problems produced by unbridled, state-led economic development.

The book is not only a very credible source for further research about the subject, it is also an impressive product of investigative journalism, combined with a well-informed analysis of China's environmental movement today. This is a movement concerned with a wide array of issues ranging from nature conservation and fighting against industrial pollution and mega hydroelectric power stations to protecting local residents' rights against the encroachment of corporate interests. The book's very detailed documentation of a number of key environmental campaigns that have effectively changed the Chinese political and legal landscape in recent years makes it an invaluable witness to the transformation of Chinese civic consciousness and the empowerment of the people from the local to the national level. This book can also be read as a social history of contemporary Chinese society, illuminating in particular grassroots' perspectives on China's environmental challenges, as opposed to the propaganda of the Chinese state.

It is divided into six long chapters, including an excellent introduction by Isabel Hilton, editor of *www.chinadialogue.net*, a bilingual 'Chinese – English web publication on environment and climate change' (p.3). Hilton expands on the problem of how the 'retreat of the state from many aspects of life in

China' has created 'both the need and the opportunity for non-state organisations' (p.5). However, despite the government's recognition of the need for civil society organisations, 'it has been slow to create the legal and regulatory conditions that would allow civil society to fulfil its potential', according to Hilton (ibid.). It was not until 2007 that the state introduced the *Regulations on Open Government Information* (p.6) that gave citizens 'the legal right to obtain government information' (p.10), which in turn allows China's environment activists a wider field of action than mere protests (p.9). Hilton has also conceded that ideas 'voiced from the political and social margins ten years earlier' in China have today become incorporated by the state as its 'core declarations of values and developmental intentions' (p.12). Nevertheless, she ends her chapter urging for greater autonomy, 'more robust protection for civil society organisations' and 'rule of law that would help to equip China to cope peacefully with its difficult next phase of development' (p.13).

This is followed by Sam Geall's exposé of China's own brand of environmental journalism. He argues that the marketisation of the Chinese economy has resulted in the liberalisation of its mass media. Chinese mass media no longer function solely as the government's mouthpiece, because investigative, watchdog or 'citizen' journalism (p.17) operating within an increasingly commercialised and privatised milieu has allowed both traditional print media and new social media to play the role of whistle-blower. The increase in citizens' access to information via a more open media environment over the last three decades has helped to transform Chinese people's 'attitude to China's environment and the problems it faces' (p.21). Reports about sustainable development are increasingly utilised to address 'social issues, from institutional corruption to the lack of transparency or public participation in policymaking' (p.22). According to Geall, the contemporary Chinese media are characterised by the 'three 'C's: control, change and chaos' (p.23). He then concludes that the 'state of open government information reflects the delicate balancing act that defines governance in China today' (p.37). In its pursuit of achieving high economic growth by safeguarding the CCP's authority, the Chinese state is coming under increasing pressure to allow for greater public oversight, while at the same time retaining a firm hand over the burgeoning civil society to ensure political and social stability (ibid.).

The third chapter by Olivia Boyd delineates the recent significant environment campaigns that have emerged, ranging from a citizen-led campaign over urban air pollution (p.40) and protection of the Tibetan antelopes to 'crusades against dam-building' (p.43). She also outlines their successes and failures. The author defines Chinese civil society 'as a space where multiple actors hold conversation about the kind of community...they want to live in', and this space has begun to 'roll back...state control' since China's opening up to the world. She reiterates that 'environmental protection was one of the earliest movements supported' by the widening participation of non-state actors, such as local residents, activists, NGOs and professionals, academia, the mass media and even individuals in the government, as well as prominent business figures (p.44). Thus, environmentalists have been successful in exerting some influence over government policymaking (ibid.) through their protests, direct actions, public education, lobbying of individuals in the government, and by exerting pressure on businesses that have transgressed through media exposure.

Consequently, China's environmental movement has become broad and diverse, ranging from 'campaigns on climate change, desertification and water depletion to corporate responsibility', from 'environmental health to dam building', and including animal welfare and protection (p.46). China's environmentalists have been able to affect 'policy at the most senior levels of the Chinese government' through the effective collaboration of local and national activists, NGOs, academics, top officials and the mass media. In her overview Boyd has painted the landscape of China's environmental activism in great detail. It is an immensely useful chapter for readers keen to map out the 'who's who' and 'what they do' in China's broad and dynamic environment movement over the past three decades.

She also highlights the shift in the movement from 'a non-confrontational stance and exclusive focus on ecology to a broader agenda that included social justice and government transparency' (p.62). The success of the movement in aligning certain interests of the central government with its objectives so as to put pressure on businesses to abide by environment standards as part of their corporate social responsibilities also indicates the increasingly sophisticated campaigning style of a movement coming of age. Moreover, the increasing use of social media as a tool for online campaigning has hugely bolstered the

effectiveness of a burgeoning Chinese civil society in which ‘citizens and NGOs, as well as state and business actors, contribute to decision-making’, not only on a day to day level but also at the national policy level, to build a ‘greener, cleaner and more open society’ (p.93).

The last three chapters of the book are equally important as they each highlight a particular case study, documenting the difficult journey of progress and regression Chinese environmental activism has experienced. The first case study is on the famous litigation case between a regional NGO and a state-owned coal power plant as a public-interest case written by Adam Moser. The second case study, by Jonathan Ansfield, is about a proposed Taiwanese-owned petrochemical plant that sparked off a ‘not in my backyard (nimby)’ style of citizens’ protests, while the third case study, penned by former reporter on the *Southern Weekend* newspaper and the Beijing editor of *chinadialogue*, Liu Jianqiang, details how an alliance between the media, civil society and the public has successfully defeated the pact between government and big business in the proposed construction of mega dams for hydroelectric power at the Tiger Leaping Gorge.

In its analysis of the evolution of China’s environmental movement this edited book has adopted a critical, in-depth and comprehensive approach that is also highly nuanced. It provides great insights into the impact of the movement on Chinese power structures, as well as its ambivalence towards the state. It attempts to transcend the formulaic characterisation of a monolithic Chinese state overpowering a burgeoning social movement by presenting a more complex narrative of tension-filled interactions among citizens, activists, NGOs, media, academics, professionals, businesses, and local and central government.

The book’s most significant contribution to the current debate is its illumination of the weakness in China’s rule of law in enforcing environmental standards and safeguards. Whilst many laws exist on paper, it has been difficult to implement or enforce these owing to corruption, corporate unaccountability and the disjuncture between local government interests and the goals of the central government. More often than not, existing laws on the environment are only enforced and/or the transgressing parties taken to task when citizens’ protests are widely publicised by the mass media with the support of concerned stakeholders, as well as individual officials and leaders

right up to the highest state level, whereby the interests of the campaigns are aligned with national interests. Even so, these campaigns do not always succeed because certain circumstantial factors may still intervene.

The only criticism I have of the book is its overwhelming amount of detail on specific examples and cases that tends to blur the overall focus of the book. Whilst these details may be useful for hands-on activists and journalists, they make it very difficult for the wider readership to formulate the different themes presented into a coherent whole. It is, nevertheless, an excellent resource of primary data, first-hand observation and documentation of China's increasingly sophisticated and diversified grassroots activism that continues to push the boundary of the state. However, a lot more research and debate still need to take place before the rather chaotic and changing dynamics among the various stakeholders of China's environment movement vis-à-vis the state can be properly understood and systematically articulated.

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Cal Clark ed. (2011), *The Changing Dynamics of the Relations Among China, Taiwan, and the United States*, Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp.281; ISBN (10): 1-4438-2681-2, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-2681-5

The Changing Dynamics of the Relations Among China, Taiwan, and the United States, edited by Cal Clark, analyses various aspects of the recent phase of this complex relationship. In the introductory chapter, Clark succinctly examines the trajectory of this relationship and introduces the contents of the 12 subsequent chapters contributed by eminent scholars in the field.

In chapter two, entitled 'Washington between Beijing and Taipei: A Triangular Analysis', Lowell Dittmer tests the theory of strategic triangle. In his opinion, US policy on cross-Strait relations has moved between 'strategic considerations' and 'values' in an attempt to create a balance between these objectives.

In chapter three, entitled 'Strategic Triangle, Change of Guard, and Ma's New Course', Yu-Shan Wu applies the 'sequential model'. He argues that cross-

Strait relations since President Ma's presidency in 2008 have been unprecedentedly conciliatory.

Vincent Wei-cheng Wang, in chapter four, 'The Strengths and Weaknesses of the Taiwan Relations Act: Enduring Framework or Accidental Success?' examines the impact of the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA), which guided US-Taiwan relations for over three decades. This 'unique' domestic US law (with international implications) was a blend of idealism and realism. It neither endorsed nor precluded unification. On the positive side, the Act provided trade, cultural and security guarantees to Taiwan, enabling it to gain economic development and democracy. On the negative side, it imposed restrictions on Taiwan's officials travelling to the US and on the island's inclusion in international bodies. The TRA is likely to remain in practice in the future.

Shelley Rigger's chapter, entitled 'Strawberry Jam: National Identity, Cross-Strait Relations, and Taiwan's Youth', is based on data collected from focus group interviews. It sheds light on Taiwan's generation born during the 1980s. This generation grew up at a time when Taiwan had already gained economic prosperity and democracy. Thus, according to the older generation, it got used to the good life and cared more about making money than about defending the country. This generation is labelled the 'strawberry tribe'. The author argues that Taiwan's current political structure did not properly accommodate the 'strawberry tribe', leading to the 'tribe's' ambivalence and a lack of confidence among leaders. This generation might be different from those of its parents and grandparents, but it is neither weak nor indifferent to the political process. It embraces a mixed Taiwanese and Chinese identity, but views Taiwan as its homeland.

In chapter six, entitled 'Hu Jintao's Pro-Status Quo Approach in Cross-Strait Relations: Building up a One-China Framework for Eventual Reunification', Jing Huang examines China's Taiwan policy under President Hu Jintao. At the start of the new century the world began to be concerned at China's rise. In this situation, a confrontational policy with Taiwan, which had the staunchest pro-independence President, Chen Shui-bian, could reinforce this perception. To avoid it, China renamed its strategy: from 'peaceful rise' to 'peaceful development', opted for the status quo over early unification and domestically, and passed an Anti-Secession Law in 2005. These measures were the continuation of the 'One China Policy'.

Elizabeth Hague's chapter, entitled 'China Debates the Way Forward for Cross-Strait Relations', is based on the writings of prominent Chinese scholars on Taiwan, the majority of whom supported stronger economic ties with Taipei. To pacify the tense situation and find a final political or military settlement with Taipei, China pushed for economic interdependence, consolidated ties with the KMT and approached moderate members in the DPP.

Timothy S. Rich, in chapter eight, entitled 'Renting Allies and Selling Sovereignty: Taiwan's Struggle for Diplomatic Recognition', examines small states' politics of switching recognition between Taiwan and China. He argues that recognition based on ideology has largely been replaced by recognition based on economic and national interests. In 2008, Beijing and Taipei's tacit agreement not to bribe small states to switch recognition halted this trend. Rich rightly argues that recognition tied to economic assistance risks creating a perpetual cycle of shifting allegiances.

Chun-Yi Lee's chapter, entitled 'The Political Views of Chinese Businesses in China: Blue, Green, or Red?' is based on data collected during field trips to China in 2005 and 2009. The chapter studies the role of Taiwanese entrepreneurs known as *Taishangs* in cross-Strait relations. Although *Taishangs* claim that 'A businessman only talks about business', they are eventually drawn to blue (KMT), green (DPP) or red (PRC) politics. The author argues that most businessmen adopt a 'colour' which supports their businesses. *Taishangs* worked as a bridge during the tense phase of cross-Strait relations under Chen Shui-bian's two terms in office. Their role was, however, marginalized in the post-Chen period of relative tranquillity.

Kun-Ming Chen, Ji Chou and Chia-Ching Lin, in their joint chapter entitled 'The Impact of Trade Liberalization across the Taiwan Strait: Empirical Evidence and Policy Implications', apply a computable general equilibrium model to investigate the possible impact of cross-Strait trade liberalization. They argue that regional trade agreements marginalized Taiwan's export-based economy. Taiwan's signing of the FTA with China will positively affect its economy, which is becoming tied more to East Asia than to the US. This trend might influence the future development of Taiwan's economic and political decisions.

In chapter eleven, entitled 'ECFA: The Emerging Crisis Facing Taiwan', Chung-Hsin Hsu criticizes the Ma Administration's signing of the ECFA with China. He argues that historically Taiwan's North-South trade pattern (with Japan, the US

and Southeast Asia) offered greater benefits than its West-East trade pattern (with China). Taiwan's economic miracle (1960s to 1990s) was possible only because the island was separated from China. Hsu argues that the ECFA made Taiwan's economy dependent on China, leading to the 'destruction of the nation'.

Peter C.Y. Chow, in chapter twelve entitled 'The Emerging Trade Bloc Across the Taiwan Strait: The Implications of ECFA and its Aftermath for U.S. Economic and Strategic Interests in East Asia', states that Taiwan has become one of the largest of China's trade partners in the region, yet Beijing continues to exclude Taipei from regional trade arrangements. To counter this marginalization, in June 2009 the Ma Administration signed the ECFA with China. The ECFA may increase two-way trade, but it will also deepen Taiwan's economic and later political integration with China. This will affect US-China-Taiwan relations, US political and security interests in the region and Taipei's de facto sovereignty.

This book examines the intriguing triangular relationships between the US, China and Taiwan. It deals with both theoretical and policy-related issues and provides an insightful account of this complex relationship. It is a valuable addition to the existing knowledge on the subject and can be a useful reference for those engaged in East Asian studies, cross-Strait relations and US-China ties.

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