



2-1-2013

## Book Reviews

Richard J. Smith

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jeal>

---

### BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Smith, Richard J. (2013) "Book Reviews," *Journal of East Asian Libraries*: Vol. 2013 : No. 156 , Article 9.  
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jeal/vol2013/iss156/9>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Journal of East Asian Libraries* by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact [scholarsarchive@byu.edu](mailto:scholarsarchive@byu.edu), [ellen\\_amatangelo@byu.edu](mailto:ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu).

## BOOK REVIEWS

*The Birth of the First Republic in Asia as Seen from the U.S. Diplomatic Documents.* By Judy S. Lu. Hong Kong: The Commercial Press, 2012. 321 pp.

Based on old Chinese wisdom in human affairs, if you are blessed by the following three elements: *tian-shi* (right time), *di-li* (right place), and *ren-her* (good human relations or surrounded by good people), the successful achievement of your goal will be unquestionably high. Judy S. Lu's book titled "The Birth of the First Republic in Asia as Seen from the U.S. Diplomatic Documents" was published last year and coincided with the 100 year anniversary of the Hsin-hai Revolution (1911). There were many celebrations and conferences held around the world commemorating this historical event. For Ms. Lu, the timing of the release of her book is *tian-shi*.

Ms. Lu worked for many years at the Asian Division in the Library of Congress, serving in the important role of the Acting Chief of Asian Division and the Head of Collection Services. She had the rich collection of many historical documents, or as she has described them, "King Solomon's treasures," right at her finger tips. She was in great position to examine many documents such as the manuscripts of former presidents. She put her position into good use and utilized those rich resources of archival materials to reconstruct the history of modern China. For Ms. Lu, her position is *di-li*.

Lastly, because of her educational background and training, collecting, analyzing and interpreting the research materials were easy and natural for her. Based on her own statements, Ms. Lu was surrounded by so many highly qualified friends who offered her their expertise and advice in the publication of this book. For Ms. Lu, her friends is *ren-her*.

Ms. Lu's book is divided into eight chapters. After reading the book, readers may come to conclusion that there is a lack of integration among these chapters. However, I ask that you read the book closely and pay attention to her introduction and analysis of each chapter. You will discover that the way she arranged the book gives the book its uniqueness. She analyzes and interprets how these independent historical documents impacted Dr. Sun Yet Sen's political views and their affect in the 1911 revolution which resulted in the creation of the first Republic in Asia. This is not an easy task, yet Ms. Lu has done an extremely good job of it.

In the last chapter Ms. Lu stresses the significance of Dr. Sun Yat-sen's ideals. To her, Dr. Sun's political philosophy is immortal. As a student of Dr. Sun's teaching, I cannot agree more with Ms. Lu's assessment. However, it needs further explanation.

In general, the impact of an influential person is limited to that person's lifetime. When that person dies, he or she is gone for forever. But it is different for "great" individuals. The German philosopher Hegel called these great individuals "world historical individuals." They are great persons because they accomplished something great or willed themselves to greatness. These individuals have the ability to motivate others into action and win support. According to Hegel, these "world historical individuals" are heroes who change the course of history. When we look at Dr. Sun's accomplishments and contributions, it is no exaggeration to consider him a hero. There are at least two distinctive features in Dr. Sun's teaching that will continue to have an impact on the world stage.

First, Dr. Sun's theory is compatible with human nature. We are constantly searching for happiness. Happiness, in general, incorporates individual freedom and individual material security. However, when one is maximized, the other is minimized. In Western ideology (e.g., democracy), individual freedom is maximized and individual material security is ignored. Conversely, in the Communist ideology, individual material security is supposedly provided at the price of individual freedom. Dr. Sun's theory offers a new alternative by suggesting that we do not need to choose between a jungle and a cage. His Min-ch'uan principle provides liberty and equality; his Min-sen principle provides material security. Dr. Sun's theory provides a much better balance.

Second, Dr. Sun believed that everything is subject to change. When the physical conditions of human society change, policies should be modified to the changing conditions. As resources are depleted around the world, competition for such resources rises. Rigid ideology needs to be more flexible.

Take the United States as an example. When the Founding Fathers drafted and adopted the Constitution, they did so based upon the physical conditions of the country at that time. When the Constitution was drafted, the United States had a much smaller population, land was plentiful, and opportunity was endless. The Constitution reflected such conditions and guaranteed people the freedom to secure their own material security. The government had no role in providing material security. Now, over 200 years later, the population has grown to over 300 million people. As a result, natural resources have been depleted and the economic crisis has caused unemployment to be just over 8%. Many Americans can no longer live without the help of the government. Aspects of our material security that were originally our own personal responsibility have now shifted to the government.

Dr. Sun's doctrine is presently being followed in the Republic of China on Taiwan. As the world has witnessed; Taiwan has become a vibrant democracy with a robust

economy. The Taiwan experience has demonstrated the wisdom and effectiveness of Dr. Sun's doctrine for the modernization of society. His teachings have now become more relevant in economic and social development in the People's Republic of China.

In the long run, I believe that Dr. Sun's realistic approach towards human affairs will be adopted by many countries of the modern world in one form or another. In the years ahead, his doctrine may serve as a valuable guide and set of principles for the future development of other countries. His principles conform to human nature and to changing international conditions. Countries will adopt Dr. Sun's principles, although they will most like do it conceptually and not in the name of Dr. Sun.

Yu-long Ling, Franklin College

This book is available on Amazon.com for \$22. The author is offering it to CEAL members for \$14, including postage. To purchase, contact her directly at judylu@gmail.com or by phone (703) 868-8281.

*Peking University and the Origins of Higher Education in China, A Documentary History.* By Hao Ping. Los Angeles, California: Bridge21 Publications in Association with Peking University Press, 2012.

This English translation of Hao Ping's well-known study on the origins of Peking University is an important contribution to the growing Western-language literature on the University's prominent role in the political, social and cultural development of modern China. Particularly valuable is the author's exploration of early educational efforts in the post-Opium War era—notably the Tongwen Guan (often translated "Interpreter's College"), established in 1862—which provided a critical frame of reference for the Qing dynasty in its eventual decision to create an Imperial University at the capital in 1898. Also valuable is the author's abundant citation of primary source materials, which provides the book with the feel and flavor of a well-wrought documentary history.

Richard J. Smith  
Rice University