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Ruedy's authors do not think so. They suggest that Islamic fundamentalism is not intrinsically a threat to Western interests, however it may seem.

Corinne Lathrop Gilb


This book defies easy classification. Is it history? Is it economics? Is it anthropology? Is it gibberish? Gibberish it is not! Yet, Gates acknowledges some potential difficulties when she confesses: "This is a book of immodest scope, written from a distant perspective that makes most historians grumpy and many anthropologists tart. I write in this fashion not out of simple ignorance or for lack of sympathy for close-grained concrete analysis." (p.4)

Hill Gates is a Senior Research Associate at the Center for East Asian Studies at Stanford University, and has published two other books, *Chinese Working-Class Lives* and *Getting By In Taiwan*. The title of China's Motor suggests that its subject is Chinese economic history. The book's twelve chapters, which include such titles as: "The Tributary and Petty-Capitalist Modes of Production", "Motion in the System", "Cities and Space", "Patricorporations: The State and the Household", "Patricorporations: The Lineage", "Dowry and Brideprice", "Folk Ideologies and Commoners", "Folk Ideologies: Women and Men", "Petty Capitalism in Taiwan", and "Re-creating the Tributary in China," reveal a broad range of topics, suggesting the book is neither fish nor fowl, but, at base, an anthropologically oriented economic study of China from the Song Dynasty to the present.

*China's Motor* probably will make "historians grumpy" and "anthropologists tart". Yet Gates raises a stimulating challenge to
scholars wishing to analyze China's historic and contemporary economic development, suggesting that to appreciatively comprehend twentieth century Chinese economic developments, these must be seen in the context of China's historical setting during the past one thousand years. Gates observes that what somewhat naturally emerged in China during this lengthy period does not conform to paradigms associated with European economic development. Attempts to analyze China's situation from the late nineteenth century to the present that utilize Eurocentric traditional theoretical methodologies for evaluation, will fail to identify some fundamentally unique Chinese realities. She contends that a cogent study of China's economic conditions ever since the Song period reveals the existence of two competing modes of production. One is the "petty capitalist mode of production" (and thus the subtitle of her book) which she refers throughout with the acronym PCMP. The second is the Chinese tributary mode of production, referred throughout as TMP. In each chapter she describes how the dialectic or tensions created by these two modes of production influenced a broad range of normal human activities.

Her description's anthropological approach (reflecting her basic academic training) is not one traditionally associated with the field of economics. Economists who are fascinated by what has transpired in Taiwan and the People's Republic of China during the past twenty years, really need to consult this book! Gates quite successfully offers reasonable explanations for matters that western observers find slightly mystifying or inscrutable.

Gates states her case so eloquently, perhaps it is best to simply use her own summary of the book's purpose. "Recent textbooks summarizing current knowledge rarely refer to matters Chinese for proof of a proposition or as a source of theory to illuminate other problems.... The unfolding drama of European social historiography—reshaped by feminism, demography, autonomy, and a sophisticated neo-Marxism—are reflected in Chinese studies, but the compliment is rarely returned. Both Eurocentrism and Sino-centricism contribute to this lack of mutual influence. We need abstractions and language with sufficient scope to encompass within a unifying theoretical framework the great historical divergences between these two influential centers
of human culture. In trying to build such a framework, I begin with the best actually existing tools I can find, those of Marxism.

*China's Motor* certainly provides the "abstractions and language" Gates cites as a "need"; and she quite obviously aims towards a "unifying theoretical framework". It is these very features in this book that provoke frustrations for a student of China's cultural/intellectual history who lacks sophisticated training in anthropology or economics. Scattered here and there, Gates provides tidbits of delightfully informative details. Her chapters dealing with "Dowry and Brideprice" and folk ideologies prove truly stimulating and insightful.

Probably the most valuable sections of the book are the final three chapters. Traditional Chinese books are published exactly opposite from western books, to be read by turning pages from right to left. To gain a clearer understanding of Gates' message, it might be advised to commence with Chapter 12, "Conclusions," and read the remainder of the text in reverse. Her observations on conditions in the People's Republic of China in Chapter 11 are thoughtfully provocative. "Petty Capitalism in Taiwan" (Chapter 10) provides the most significant information, that most closely related to her personal field study.

The book contains numerous minor irritations. The "General Index" is unprofessional and inadequately prepared. Gates' "Index of Place Names" serves no useful purpose. Her dedication to the Pinyin transcription system (which lacks attribution anywhere in the book) records Chiang K'ai-shek in quotations but refers to him as Jiang Jieshi in the text (which can only confuse readers with no Chinese language background). Gates openly reveals her Marxist predilections early in the book (p. 5) but, for an English reading audience she might at least compromise when it comes to the spelling of such an important Chinese national leader in the twentieth century! The PRC may spell his name this way in their English language publications, but Americans need not "kowtow" to their proclivities.

At moments Gates indulges in some questionably florid prose. Just one example is: "For a glorious moment during the land reform of 1950,..." (p. 246) referring to Communist programs during the initial years of their control on the mainland. This uncritical value judgment of a highly controversial event
undermines the thrust of her message. What the Communists accomplished in terms of land reform in the 1950's may prove interesting and unique, but to dignify it as "glorious" is a bit too presumptuous! This sort of prose is characteristic of publications from the Beijing Foreign Language Press in the 1950's and 1960's. For a Cornell University press publication in 1996, this is slightly unprofessional.

On a more serious note, at least for a Sinologist who professes no sophisticated expertise in economic and anthropological matters, is Hill Gates' contention that she finds the theoretical matrix of Marxism the most appropriate paradigm for her basic analysis of "China's Motor." Yet she proposes to offer a non-Eurocentric analysis of China's economic history and requests the scholarly world to contemplate a new standard for evaluating China's situation. This strikes one as a fundamental contradiction and a genuine flaw in this book. Does she naively think that Marxism is not Eurocentric?

Gates raises some very significant issues in China's Motor. Western scholars who analyze economic development in both Taiwan and the People's Republic of China need to study her observations with careful attention. She has revealed a potentially important flaw that characterizes most recent studies of Chinese economic trends. We need to understand the historical development of the Chinese economy with an open mind and should refrain from making value judgments of conditions in China based on western models. Hill Gates' self-acknowledged Marxist predilections should not predispose anyone toward hastily dismissing this significant and provocative excursion into China's economic history.

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