

may have applied up to the end of the last century, but the last two decades have witnessed a remarkable upsurge in interest in the theatre of the latter half of the Qing dynasty. While the majority of these studies do not focus on the topics Professor Goldman has selected, the unsuspecting reader should be aware of this rapidly growing body of Chinese scholarship. As many of the relevant titles are listed in the Bibliography, one would have expected our author to alert her readers to this growing body of new scholarship more often and discuss in somewhat greater detail the differences between her approach and that of her colleagues from China and Taiwan. Together with this rapidly growing body of Chinese scholarship, Professor Goldman's monograph makes clear that the relative neglect of the history of Chinese drama during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has come to an end. This development is long overdue as the long-neglected sources for this period turn out to be very rich. Professor Goldman's monograph demonstrates not only how these sources allow for a detailed understanding of developments on stage, but also how they can speak to a great number of issues in Chinese cultural history.

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*Anyuan: Mining China's Revolutionary Tradition.* By Elizabeth J. Perry. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2012. Pp. xv + 392. \$75.00 cloth, \$34.95 paper.

Elizabeth Perry's latest book is centrally an examination of the role of culture in the Chinese revolution both before and after 1949. To address this issue, she focuses on the history of the labour movement in the Anyuan coal mines 安源煤礦 in Jiangxi in the 1920s and the ways in which that history has been used and conceptualized in the decades since then.

The first half of the book presents a narrative and analysis of the history of the Anyuan workers' movement in the 1920s. Four chapters cover the rebellious history of the area, the workers' education movement and the 1922 strike, the period in the mid-1920s when Anyuan was known as "Little Moscow," and the white terror following the suppression of the workers movement.

The key concept developed in this first half of the book is that of "cultural positioning"—"the strategic deployment of a range of symbolic resources (religion, ritual, rhetoric, dress, drama, art, and so on) for purposes of political persuasion" (p. 4). The author argues that this cultural positioning was far more important in the

development and success of the Communist Party than usually recognized, and must stand alongside other factors such as ideology and organization in explaining the Communists' success. Getting their message across using often traditional cultural forms was central to the Communists' ability to mobilize support. Mao Zedong's 毛澤東 strengths included his awareness of the importance of the cultural realm and his skill in deploying cultural tools to construct national identity and promote the revolution.

Central to the process were the particular actors who undertook cultural positioning, and an important case study through which the author examines the role and importance of cultural positioning is the contrast between the approaches of Li Lisan 李立三 and of Liu Shaoqi 劉少奇 at Anyuan. Probably at least in part as a result of his greater skill at cultural positioning, the former was considerably more successful both at the time and afterwards in gaining the affection of the workers Li was very adept at employing the whole panoply of cultural mechanisms to defuse opposition among the elite and win support among the workers. On his arrival in Pingxiang 萍鄉 (the county in which the Anyuan mines are situated; the mines are mostly known as the Pingxiang mines 萍鄉煤礦 in the context of the coal industry, as the Anyuan mines in the context of the labour movement) he used local and family ties to the director of the Anyuan Chamber of Commerce to gain access to the local magistrate and present him with a petition written in flowery classical Chinese requesting permission to open a school; he wore a traditional scholar's gown to emphasize the message that his mission was educational in nature. In order to win over the workers and especially the coal miners (in addition to the more highly educated mechanics and railway workers) he collaborated from the start with the secret societies and labour contractors who had dominated the region for decades. In recruiting workers and maintaining support among them, he did not hesitate to make use of Red Gang rituals such as initiation ceremonies. He simulated a religious procession, substituting a bust of Marx for the image of the local deity, and allowed himself to be portrayed as having supernatural powers along the lines of the martial arts tradition.

By contrast Liu Shaoqi was more strongly influenced by his experience of the Soviet Union, and was from the start very much of an "organization" man—a designation that stuck with him later in his career. The earlier emphasis on education remained central to the CCP's activities in the area, however. Moreover, even Liu countenanced favouritism towards fellow provincials, developing his closest relationships with people from Hunan, while the organization of the Anyuan Workers' Club reflected that of the Red Gang. Nevertheless, Liu was less inclined than Li to work with secret societies or to make use of pre-existing cultural forms. While Li's influence underlay the 1922 strike, the development of "Little Moscow" in the mid-1920s largely reflected Liu's approach.

A second important theme that runs through the first half of the book and beyond is the dichotomy between the literary (*wen* 文) and the martial (*wu* 武) in Chinese culture, on which Kam Louie has made pioneering contributions in his analysis of masculinity. While recognizing that both played their part in the revolutionary movement and were important elements of the Communists' appeal, Perry emphasizes the privileging of *wen* early in the Anyuan movement. She argues, for example, that Li Lisan's predominantly educational strategy in mobilizing the workers—for all that he also invoked the martial elements of the Chinese tradition—was a case of *wen* in practice, a sign strengthened for example by his adoption of the scholar's gown. Liu Shaoqi by contrast was more willing to exercise the coercion inherent in the *wu* model. The author sees the mid-1920s as a key turning point in the Chinese revolutionary movement, involving a switch from a predominantly civilian strategy based on *wen* to a military one, involving brutality, coercion, and red terror, based on *wu* and long-standing secret society militancy.

The second half of the book analyses the ways in which the Anyuan heritage has been shaped (and distorted) and used in the post-1949 period. Three chapters deal respectively with the pre-1966 period, the Cultural Revolution, and the reformist period. In this second part the key concept changes from “cultural positioning” (where the Communist Party used mainly traditional cultural forms to win support among the masses) to “cultural patronage” (where leaders create and manipulate a revolutionary tradition—in this case the history of the labour movement at Anyuan—for their own purposes, while groups in society attempt to exploit this manipulation in their own interests). Anyuan was a particularly important case in that it represented the origins of the Chinese *workers'* movement, a crucial issue at a time when the Party, having come to power on the backs of the peasants, had retaken the cities and was interested in claiming legitimacy among the urban proletariat.

One result of the role this history played was the production of a very rich published record, which, even more than archival and interview sources, underlies much of the book's earlier narrative of the Anyuan labour movement. Many original documents have been published in collections in China since 1949, and the memoirs of participants, important and not so important, have appeared either in short forms in journals, collections, or newspapers or, in the case of the leaders, in book form, mostly after 1978. The political role of such publications in promoting one or other political leader, which was the main reason for their production, means also that much of the writing was tendentious—certainly, as we shall see, in the case of works produced between 1949 and 1978. Even beyond that one wonders whether the selection of documents and the recording of testimony in hindsight might still have left behind an impression that exaggerated the role of Mao, whose actual role in the movement was very limited.

The core focus of the manipulation of Anyuan's history was the struggle over the relative contributions to the movement by figures who were prominent in the People's Republic, in particular Li Lisan, Liu Shaoqi, and Mao Zedong. I visited Anyuan in 1971 and the central message then was the betrayal of the workers by the renegade, traitor, and scab Liu Shaoqi and the dominant role of Mao in leading the workers to a better future. If that sounded—quite rightly—an unprincipled distortion of history and of Liu's role at Anyuan, it is also true that in the period before 1966 Liu and his supporters grossly understated the role of Li Lisan, to Liu's benefit. While in the 1950s Liu showed some discomfort with this rewriting of history ("Historical circumstances at the time weren't quite like that," p. 171), by the 1960s the process had gathered more momentum and Li was almost totally excluded from any role in the history of the movement.

The Cultural Revolution saw a quasi-religious (perhaps not even "quasi") emphasis on Mao's role, encapsulated above all by the famous painting "Chairman Mao Goes to Anyuan" by Liu Chunhua 劉春華. Explicitly (after the event) influenced by Raphael's religious paintings this has been one of the most reproduced images in history, and glorified the role of Mao, not only in relation to other leaders, but indeed in relation to the workers themselves, who do not actually appear in the painting.

The reform period has seen on the one hand a more academically acceptable analysis of the history of the movement, one that gives a historically justifiable prominence to each of the leaders. At the same time, however, just because Anyuan's history no longer plays a central role in building up the legitimacy of the Party or of individual leaders, the prominence of the area in "revolutionary tourism" has declined, to be detriment of the populace.

A secondary theme of this half of the book outlines the efforts—almost entirely unsuccessful—of the workers and local officials from the Anyuan area to turn their revolutionary tradition into concrete gains in their post-1949 livelihoods. In 1954 local officials and workers' representatives tried to persuade Liu Shaoqi to allocate central funds to support retired miners, whose inadequate pensions (any pensions that they did receive were largely the result of labour security legislation brought in by Li Lisan as Minister of Labour) left them in economic difficulties (pp. 173–74). But Liu steadfastly refused to provide financial assistance—money was only forthcoming for activities that could strengthen Liu's (or later Mao's) personal legitimacy. Some benefits nevertheless accrued to Anyuan through its success in promoting revolutionary tourism, which contributed to local incomes.

In relation to the lives of the people and workers of Anyuan, Perry ends on a downbeat note. Workers in the reform period have increasingly been left behind by other groups, and have lost much of their previous security. As a result, many look—through somewhat rosy spectacles—back on the Mao period as one where the contribution of workers was valued and their jobs secure. The rapid rise—in both

absolute terms and relative to those of other workers—of coal mining wages since the early 2000s might suggest a more optimistic conclusion, though Perry also points to the resurgence of small-scale mining in the area, suggesting a return to the days of exploitation and dangerous work environments before the emergence of modern mining in the late nineteenth century.

Perry has made a major contribution in bringing the movement at Anyuan to the attention of scholars—I was struck by how little prominence is given to it by general histories of modern China and the Chinese Communist movement. Her analysis of the post-1949 history of the history is also an illuminating contribution to our understanding of the way political struggle was conducted by China's leaders and of the attempts by those lower down the ladder to take advantage. More broadly, she is no doubt correct in her argument that past scholars have tended to exaggerate the degree to which the Communist Party aimed to transform, and did transform, traditional Chinese cultural patterns. She shows convincingly the importance of adaptation to pre-existing culture for the early success of the Party even among workers, and probably even more so among peasants.

There remains a question of how important this cultural adaptation was in relation to other factors, and this issue comes up particularly in the author's claim that the more successful cultural positioning by the Chinese Communist Party than by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union explains the greater longevity of the former (pp. 14, 287–92). Leaving aside the fact that the PRC has actually not yet quite survived for as long as the Soviet Union did, the evidence for the 1920s, or even for the Mao period, surely cannot go very far to explain the survival of the CCP into the 2010s. Moreover, the CPSU also used cultural positioning to appeal to traditional nationalistic sentiments, most notably during the Great Patriotic War, a crisis greater than any faced by the CCP, and the outcome of the war indicates that such positioning was not unsuccessful. Perry suggests that the greater success of the CCP's cultural positioning means it is not as vulnerable to failure of economic performance as was the USSR, where there was a more direct comparison between capitalist success and communist failure. However, in the post-Mao period that contention basically still remains to be tested, as the performance of the regime in presiding over (even if not being directly responsible for) economic growth has remained very strong.

Notwithstanding a few issues still open to debate, this is an important book that throws major new light on two very different periods of recent Chinese history. It raises many useful hypotheses and ideas about the role and importance of culture in modern China, and will be required reading for scholars of China's revolution and workers' movement.

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