

China connection. Goscha notes that “Li Lisan did, in fact exist” (p.302). Anyone familiar with Chinese politics knows that Li was one of the 28 Bolsheviks who controlled the Chinese Communist Party until Mao Zedong consolidated his power at the Zunyi Conference in January 1935. My only other criticism is that the narrative ends around 1951, rather than the advertised 1955.

General Vo Nguyen Giap spoke of Indochina as being a “single strategic battlefield”. Goscha agrees, but for him, the battlefield extended beyond Indochina into Thailand, and from there through the vast networks of overseas Vietnamese and ethnic Chinese trading networks that spanned across Southeast Asia into southern China. To understand how the revolution got off the ground, one must not just study Vietnam’s revolutionary ties with China but with the region.

This book makes for a fascinating read for anyone who is not just interested in Vietnamese history and politics, but also in the region’s as well. Goscha is able to bring to light many Thai language sources that remain inaccessible to most scholars on Vietnam. That said, the book is heavy in detail and will have a limited audience. At times it is a confusing story; this is no fault of the author’s but simply because of the very complex and covert matter that he deals with. As the author is still in the midst of his doctoral research, we should expect more fine scholarship from him on the regional networks that made the Vietnamese revolution possible.

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China’s Provinces in Reform: Class, Community, and Political Culture.
Edited by David S.G. Goodman. London and New York: Routledge,
1997. 278 pp.

This highly informative book is a long overdue antidote to the plethora of studies of China in transition, which adopt a macro-perspective of the post-Mao reform period. Those conventional studies largely fail to convey or explain the often subtle, sometimes dramatic, though always important, diversity of social, political and spatial variation in China. Furthermore, much of the inability of outside observers to adequately

conceptualize and explain China's political economy stems from their reliance upon national-level (or Beijing-centred) modes of analysis, or an unwillingness or inability to proceed methodologically beyond dubious official statistics and second-hand accounts. Deeper understanding of the complex processes and mechanisms which determine regional and even national patterns and trends in China can only arise from smaller-scale grounded insights. As this book demonstrates, this approach does not preclude wider generalizations about the character of contemporary change in China. Rather, it is a necessary precondition for adequately reconceptualizing such change, which compels an intellectual fortitude absent in many studies.

The volume under review arises as a direct result of this perspective, as it is embodied in a unique Research on Provincial China initiative which has systematically endeavoured to provide a comprehensive survey of China's regional politics. The editor has compiled the first of what will become a series of contributions which will undertake an examination of the detailed patterns and trends of provincial and sub-provincial change since the late 1970s. The book focuses on seven case studies of the impact of economic reform on social change and political culture in Guangxi, Hainan, Liaoning, Shandong, Shanghai, Sichuan, and Zhejiang. David Goodman begins with an introduction that fundamentally rejects the conventional historical perspectives stemming from the experiences of nineteenth century Western Europe and the genesis of capitalism and liberal-democracy, the demise of communism, and subsequent political disarray of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe since 1989, and the transformation of authoritarianism in parts of East Asia. This clears the slate for an alternative conceptual framework embedded in three interconnected themes. The first emerges from efforts to determine the extent to which the Chinese party-state controls economic management and the political agenda in the context of significant shifts in the structure of production. The circumstances of rapid change and the multiple and frequently contradictory roles of local actors compound the difficulties of undertaking such an assessment.

The second theme relates to the continued cohesion of a unified state under the leadership of an institutionalized communist party. Recognizing and responding to the potential conflicts based on class (or some other social formation), locality, or community is central to conceptualizing the formation and operation of provincial political systems. The virtually inescapable economic imperatives of openness, reform and institutional change, and their respective impact on provincial politics, comprise the third theme. The challenge here lies in uncovering and explaining the processes by which the various underlying elements of this transition are negotiated and managed.

The critical linkages between socio-economic reforms and the practice of politics are discussed in the seven provincial case studies in this book. Each is organized according to a common format which begins with a review of the economic, social and political history straddling the pre-liberation, Maoist, and immediate pre-reform periods. This provides a necessary context for the subsequent detailed survey of the political economy of the early years of the reforms in each locale. Most readers will likely find these latter sections to be the most interesting and revealing in relation to the common themes identified by the editor. Much of the sometimes surprising divergence from the commonly accepted China-wide narrative is highlighted. These insights are then positioned in relation to the respective patterns of provincial and sub-provincial political culture.

The chapter on the autonomous provincial-level region of Guangxi by Hans Hendrichske describes an especially conservative élite on the eve of reforms which owed their allegiance to Cultural Revolution politics. It was not until the early 1990s that Guangxi began to shed its ideological conservatism and bureaucratic reliance on central subsidies as it was coerced into reforms by Beijing. Guangxi's position as neither a typical border region — coastal, but not prosperous — nor poor inland province, meant that its development trajectory was less predictable. By highlighting the details of its uniqueness, Hendrichske, is able to effectively demonstrate how provincial policy and personality changes articulated with the wider economic transition and political conflicts of the centre.

The communal politics and struggle for identity in China's newest province and largest Special Economic Zone on the island of Hainan is the subject of the third chapter by Feng Chongyi and Goodman. The granting of provincial status in 1988 was a direct result of China's economic reforms. However, Hainan's provincial era has been very much subject to the unique political culture, social composition, and the quasi-colonial experience of its five main politically significant communities among the island's 7 million inhabitants. The divided politics of class, social status, economic activity, access to power, and community have tended to mutually reinforce the lack of any common and coherent vision for the development of the province despite its many natural attributes. Chapter 4 by Margot Schuller outlines the considerable and persistent bureaucratic conservatism in China's northeastern province of Liaoning, which arose as a result of a close allegiance to the central planning system and the historical dominance of the state-owned sector. The development of township and village enterprises, which began in earnest in the early 1990s, signalled the beginning of the rise to prominence of particular localities. However, this shift also highlighted the disarticulation between

territorially based competing claims to economic resources and the still mostly centralized power of administrative authority. Yet, as Schuller clearly demonstrates, the role of the localities has proved critical in offsetting the problems of the state-owned sector.

The political economy of development and inequality in Shandong is the subject of chapter 5 by Jae Ho Chung. The author explores the way in which developmental imperatives and the role of endogenous actors challenge the established hierarchies and patterns of political power in the province. Deep inter-provincial inequalities and local responses loom large as the tasks of poverty alleviation articulate with the politics of economic growth imperatives. Chapter 6, by J. Bruce Jacobs, positions the emergence of Shanghai as an alternative centre in China's political economy. The economic and increasing cultural dominance of the provincial-level municipality is documented by the author in the context of its relative cosmopolitanism and overwhelming concern for economics, not politics. Dimensions of the city's post-reform transition, such as the relatively late formalization of developments in the special zone of Pudong, are largely defined by the nature of Shanghai's political and economic relations with the centre.

The disadvantages of location and the political economy of mismanagement are the central issue in Lijian Hong's chapter on Sichuan. Hampered by its relative isolation, provincial leaders tended to focus on their relations with Beijing and other parts of China to ensure Sichuan's economic well-being. It was in this context, during the relative disarray of central politics in the mid-1970s, that Sichuan experimented with local reforms under Zhao Ziyang which anticipated by several years their implementation throughout China. Such phenomena (a similar situation arose in Anhui under Wan Li) serve to emphasize the importance of understanding the local dimensions of transition, which in fact stimulated nation-wide policies of change. This perspective also underlies Hong's very interesting discussion of the regional and national political economy of the Three Gorges dam project in Sichuan. The final chapter by Keith Forster explores the paradoxes of restoration, reinvigoration and renewal in Zhejiang. The author illustrates how the reform period in this province has been characterized by economic dynamism amidst cautious and hesitant political conservatism. Zhejiang's delay in implementing reforms stemmed from its internal ideological and political differences. The political consequences of the pressures to reform have resulted in the localization of the élite and a new desire to make government more efficient, but not necessarily more accountable.

Taken together, these contributions represent a solid attempt to unpack the complexities of China's political economy of development

since the beginning of the reforms. Moreover, this collection of provincial-level analyses reveals much of interest in a comparative context about the interrelationships between socio-economic and political change throughout China. As such, this book provides a welcome first step towards an alternative methodological and analytical framework for exploring and explaining the true character of contemporary change in China. China specialists, and others interested in deepening their insights and understanding of rapid transformation in the PRC, should look forward to the publication of subsequent volumes in this series.

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Dynamics in Pacific Asia: Conflict, Competition and Cooperation. Edited by Kurt W. Radtke, et al. London and New York: Kegan Paul International in association with the International Institute for Asian Studies, 1998. 287 pp.

Written before the onset of the Asian economic crisis in July 1997, this edited volume seeks to examine the extent to which developments in the Asia-Pacific region would affect Europe's global position. It also postulates how these changes should be conceptualized to assist in policy formulation to deal with the new international environment. Chapters 1 to 7 examine political and strategic issues while chapters 8 to 12 consider issues of economic interdependency. The introduction provides an insightful and succinct overview of the book's ambitious agenda.

The opening two chapters examine Asia-Pacific regional security. Arguing for enhancing co-operation in international institutions, Hanns W. Maull opines that the future of Asia-Pacific security need not be pessimistic and should not be based on a realist balance of power approach. Using European experiences in a comparative perspective, he argues that successful international governance would depend on close interaction between state and society, within and between, countries. Regional co-operation is a key building block if regions can "keep their own house in order" and "keep channels open to cooperation with other