

James Zheng GAO, *The Communist Takeover of Hangzhou: The Transformation of City and Cadre, 1949–1954*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004. x + 339 pp., with maps, tables, plates, glossary. ISBN: 0-8248-2701-5 (hc). Price: US\$50.00.

James Gao chronicles the experiences of the “southbound cadres” from rural Shandong Province who occupied and administered the cities of east and south China during the early 1950s. Based on oral history interviews and archival research in Shandong, Shanghai, and Zhejiang, the book’s richness of detail and its welcome focus on cultural and gender issues surpass earlier works on the communist takeover of cities, including Ezra Vogel’s *Canton under Communism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969) and Kenneth Lieberthal’s *Revolution and Tradition in Tientsin, 1949–1952* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980).

Gao concludes that the encounter between rural officials and Hangzhou residents was a “process of cultural confrontation and convergence in which both the southbound cadres and the urban dwellers penetrated each other’s ranks and both, in the end, emerged with a dual identity” (p. 255). He also argues that the relatively cautious tenor of urban governance during the early years of the People’s Republic was not a retreat from radicalism but actually set the stage for the revolutionary fervor to come.

A more appropriate title for the book might be “The Shandongese Takeover of Hangzhou.” In early 1949, well in advance of the People’s Liberation Army’s southward march, over 4,000 rural cadres in Shandong were assigned to shadow governments for the cities and counties of Zhejiang, Shanghai, and Fujian. In his opening chapters, Gao shows that many Shandong natives would have preferred farming at home to working in a strange and potentially hostile city. Only promises of promotions and beautiful Jiangnan women induced the southbound cadres to shake off their hesitation. Once in Hangzhou, the new arrivals took up residence in luxury lakeside villas but impressed urban residents with their discipline and restraint as they established order in the city’s schools, neighborhoods, and factories.

Gao gains momentum in the book’s three final chapters. Chapter six, “The Trial of Strength,” is one of the best accounts available of the Three and Five Antis campaigns of 1952–3. In Hangzhou, the Five Antis movement was somewhat accommodating to businessmen who had experienced similar shakedowns under the nationalists and Japanese. Instead of completely

eliminating the bourgeoisie, the new regime was satisfied to undermine its prestige by demanding contrite self-criticisms.

Chapter seven, “Women Cadres,” is sobering but contains the freshest material in the book. Gao’s interviews reveal that while some female revolutionaries accompanied the PLA from Shandong to Zhejiang, communist women with bound feet were prohibited from heading south. Although foot-bound women had served the revolution by running safe houses during the war against Japan, the Party feared that their appearance in newly occupied cities “would damage the image of the liberated rural areas” (p. 193). Women who stayed behind in rural Shandong—foot-bound or not—were often divorced by their husbands who found young, educated girlfriends in the city. The Party approved divorces for any southbound cadre who requested one, leaving the rural ex-wives with no financial compensation or child support.

Gao’s final chapter, “The ‘Geneva of the East,’” outlines how economic needs and Mao Zedong’s love for Hangzhou as a vacation spot led the regime to downgrade industrialization and to develop the city as a tourist attraction. This strategy included the preservation and renovation of the city’s temples and gardens, many of which survived the Cultural Revolution intact.

Gao’s final conclusions do not live up to the richness of the book’s chapters. One of the strengths of the book is depicting Hangzhou through the eyes of the rural men and women who carried out the takeover. But at times Gao undermines this strength by denigrating people from the countryside. In assessing the influence of rural cadres in Hangzhou, Gao turns to unsubstantiated generalizations like “opportunism is rooted in the Chinese peasantry,” and “Chinese peasants were usually passive, reactive but not creative” (p. 250). If anything, opportunism is a human trait, not a rural one. Gao’s evidence suggests that while the rural revolutionaries were pragmatic and creative in dealing with Hangzhou’s problems, urban residents—including currency speculators and factory workers who succumbed to the blandishments of “yellow trade unions”—were the real opportunists.

Sloppy editing mars the book and does a disservice to Gao and his readers. Even worse than the typographical and romanization errors are the footnotes and bibliography, which do not meet scholarly standards. Those wishing to check or draw upon Gao’s sources will find the task difficult, if not impossible, because certain books, periodicals, and archival documents are listed only in English translation—all too often, the original Chinese source names are not provided.

In spite of these flaws, the book is a solid contribution to our understanding of the early 1950s transition period. It properly directs our attention to the crucial role played by Shandong natives in the cities of east and south China and is recommended for all students of contemporary Chinese history.

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Ross GARNAUT and Ligang SONG, eds, *China's Third Economic Transformation: The Rise of the Private Economy*. London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004. xvii + 246 pp., with tables, figures. ISBN: 0-415-30944-1 (hc). Price: £65.00.

The editors of this new collection on the modern economy of China suggest that the rise of private corporations should be viewed, as the title has it, the third economic transformation of the country, following those of the household responsibility system and the development of town and village enterprises. This concept is investigated not just in the chapters themselves but also in the introductory and concluding chapters by the two editors. This, together with the selection and ordering of the chapters, helps to make a much more focused collection than many other academic books.

Ross Garnaut will need little introduction to scholars of modern East Asia. He teaches economics at the Australian National University (ANU) and is honorary professor of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. He has in the past served as Australian ambassador to China and as economic advisor to the Australian Prime Minister. His contributions to scholarship on Asian economics and business are numerous and distinguished. Ligang Song is Fellow and Director of the China Economy and Business Program at the ANU. The editors are able to draw upon research previously conducted at the ANU to guide their thinking.

The book is organized into five main sections. The first section is entitled "Private Enterprise Development: Overview," which consists of two chapters providing an introduction to the themes of transformation of the Chinese economy through the emergence of private enterprises. The second section is entitled "Paths toward Emerging Private Enterprise" and this consists of six chapters, most of which are concerned with aspects of the privatization of existing Chinese corporations in various ways. Perhaps not surprisingly, it is generally agreed that privatization is not just an inevitable but a welcome development. The third section is perhaps the most interesting. Entitled "Market Reform and the Business Environment," there are five contributions dealing with financing of private enterprises, their interaction with and