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From None but Self Expect Applause

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Companion to Neo-Confucian Philosophy, ed. John Makeham [New York: Springer, 2010] p. 205). Additionally, Xunzi's formulation of the idea that good governance arises out of having the right person rather than out of laws found the favor of Hu Hong 胡宏 (1105–1161) among others (*The Collected Works of Hu Hong* 胡宏集 [Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987], 8.18). I thank Justin Tiwald for bringing these to my attention.

12. There is no implication that, in the future, oxen should be spared (at the expense of sheep). Rather, it is accepted that animals must be used as sacrificial offerings to satisfy the rituals, regardless of the compassion evoked by their fear.

13. Indeed, later Confucians do take this stance, not simply toward animals, but toward all aspects of our environment. As Bai notes, the later Confucian thinker Zhou Dunyi (1017–1073) refused to cut the grass in front of his house because he felt one with it (p. 54). While a variety of Confucians from the Song dynasty onward hold some version of this view, this is an important way in which they differ drastically from the early Confucians (and one can certainly be pardoned for thinking that Buddhist thought played an important role in this shift). The Japanese thinker Itō Jinsai (1627–1705), the Chinese scholar Dai Zhen (1722–1776), and the Korean intellectual Jeong Yakyoung (Dasan, 1762–1836), all have points of agreement with the orthodox Neo-Confucian views of Zhu Xi regarding the connection of human beings to the world around them and the obligations this connection places upon them. However, their specific accounts of the extent of our obligations and how they are grounded differ dramatically. Coming to understand these differences and the arguments underlying them seems essential to the task of evaluating the potential of the Confucian tradition to make substantive contributions to contemporary discourses on our obligations toward animals.



From None but Self Expect Applause

Michael Gibbs Hill. *Lin Shu, Inc.: Translation and the Making of Modern Chinese Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. xiii, 294 pp. Hardcover \$65.00, ISBN 978-0-19-989288-4.

Evelyn Eaton. *Go Ask the River*. London: Singing Dragon, 2011. 288 pp. Paperback \$19.95, ISBN 978-1-84819-092-4.

I am quite sure that translation does not make even the long list of chosen professions for the vainglorious. Mistakes mark out incompetence in any field, and with translation it is no different. The translator's failure is frequently what makes his name (from St. Jerome's horns on Moses, to the funny infelicities on signs: "For restrooms, go back toward your behind"). Successes are marked, conversely, by the fact that there should be no marks at all: the highest compliment is frequently

phrased in terms of how well one has obliterated any traces of oneself from the final product. The effectiveness of a translation is remarked on for its naturalness, so invisibly crafted that the reader feels that she is reading the original, as if by magic. If we can agree that, in general, the translator's most urgent task is to be the servant to the original text, performing necessary functions, but invisibly, how do we make sense of the image of the rather grim and grizzled, definitely not hale and hearty-looking, visage of a translator selling "Dr. William's Pink Pills for Pale People" from the pages of a literary magazine?

In 1897, Lin Shu 林紓 (1852–1924) was in his mid-forties and a recent widower after twenty-eight years of marriage when his friend Wang Shouchang suggested that they collaborate on a translation of a famous French novel that was incredibly popular in Paris. Introductions of Lin Shu are generally accompanied by a description that nears epithet: "failed Confucian scholar" and "who knew no foreign languages." He, like many others, never did surpass the *jurem* degree after half a dozen attempts. This would turn out not to matter much anyway: by 1897 the imperial exam system was on its way out, and would be completely eliminated in less than ten years. This ended a thousand-year tradition of an adherence to literati standards and values more or less codified during the Song dynasty. Whether he agreed to the initial project as a distraction from the sadness of losing his wife (art emerging from the death of the beloved), or whether he sought to redefine his vocation (from failed professional scholar to professional writer), or whether he was simply enchanted by his friend's retelling and enjoyed the prospect of transcribing the Chinese version, he agreed to take on the translation project. This novel was by Alexandre Dumas fils: *La Dame aux camélias*, or *The Lady of the Camellias* (1848). The eponymous *Parisian Lady of the Camellias* (the novel's full title in translation was *The Legacy of the Parisian Lady of the Camellias, Bali chahuanü yishi* 巴黎茶花女遺事) became what Ying Hu writes is "without question the most popular figure in the late Qing imaginary of the West [who, after the translation reached the public, quickly] became an icon, a revered symbol of tragic love and suffering."¹ The name *Chahua nü* (The lady of the Camellias or Camille), would be applied to its multiple incarnations. This included a stage version by the Spring Willow Troupe theatrical group, Chinese film versions (including one in 1938 in Shanghai and 1950 in Hong Kong) and spin-offs ("New Lady of Camellias" *Xin chahua nü*), the translation of the title of the film adaptation starring Greta Garbo, *Camille*, and the translated title of Giuseppe Verdi's opera *La Traviata*. It also sparked a series of *chahua nü*-inspired novels that launched the Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies fiction genre. Lin personally funded the first printing of *Chahua nü* in 1899, beginning what would eventually become an oeuvre of nearly two hundred Western-work translations that turned the name "Lin Shu" into a brand (*Linyi xiaoshuo*, i.e., the Lin-translated novels).

The rise and fall of the Lin Shu brand is the premise that animates Michael Gibbs Hill's book *Lin Shu, Inc.: Translation and the Making of Modern Chinese*

Culture. Hill's is a story of the historical confluences that created precisely the phenomenon that allows a classically trained scholar to become a commercial figure. It is less a biography of a personage than it is an impressive consolidation of the major themes that preoccupied and defined the lives of China's intelligentsia in the early decades of the twentieth century: a biography of an era. The book investigates as well Lin's decline. As a young man, Lu Xun eagerly collected, devoured, and lovingly rebound his *Linyi xiaoshuo* while a foreign exchange student in Japan; yet, years later, he referred to them as "cocoon[s] that must be left behind."² Hill's book pauses where others might write off Lin Shu's story as just another byproduct of the relentless pull of history. It isolates and explores Lin Shu's work as a way to explore the necessary growing pains of the period.

Given our knowledge of these translators' available resources at the turn of the twentieth century, that they produced what they did is already quite impressive. Translations required a deep degree of comprehension of the foreign language as well as a literary command of the target language; these skills often—and at this historical moment in particular—failed to coincide in one person. The elegant classical prose writing that the reading audiences preferred was the domain of traditionally trained scholars such as Lin Shu, but the linguistic expertise fell to young men of Lu Xun's generation, such as Wei Yi, born in 1880, and Wang Jingqi, born in 1882. Chinese translators also relied on secondhand Japanese translations of European-language sources, especially the *kanji*-heavy versions. Pollard notes the scarcity of reference books, both monolingual dictionaries and foreign language dictionaries, until the Commercial Press publication of its *English and Chinese Standard Dictionary* in 1911.³ The result, as explained in the first two chapters of *Lin Shu, Inc.*, is the tandem style of translating adopted by Lin Shu. This method was neither unusual historically, nor was it unusual during the early decades of twentieth-century China. It might shock some that Lin Shu himself was "a translator who knew no foreign languages" (Hill, p. 25). In his time it was hardly a rare condition: about his process of translating, Lin himself did not prevaricate. An appendix at the end of the book supplies brief biographies and dates for Lin's factory of mostly fellow Fujianese working partners. This presents a picture of the backgrounds and expertise of these young men, many of whom were graduates of naval academies and had worked in the foreign service. Describing how *Chahua nü* came about, Lin writes: "I implored [Wang] to tell me more. He then said the most famous novels in Paris today are by Dumas père and Dumas fils, among which *La Dame aux camélias* is the masterpiece. When we found ourselves at leisure, he recounted the story to me, and I recorded it with my brush."⁴ Working side-by-side with a partner with some degree of competence in the language, Lin would transcribe what his partner reported, presumably adding flourishes of his own.

Lin Shu, Inc. includes three chapters of close readings of Lin Shu translations to make two points: one about mental labor, and one about the use of *guwen*, or

ancient-style prose. The first point has to do with the way that the translations deliberately employed a self-reflexive style that interpolated the translator's own commentary: a gesture both to the commenting historian, such as Sima Qian (d. 86 B.C.E.), but also to the storytelling persona adopted in Pu Songling's (1640–1715) *Liaozhai zhiyi*. This creates the potential, Hill argues, to make the translator's perspective visible and to make translation equally a form of original writing, creating “new possibilities for understanding how intellectuals imagined and positioned themselves as cultural and political actors across their careers” (Hill, p. 154). The translations discussed in these chapters include a collection of Washington Irving's stories, Aesop's Fables, and Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist* (*A History of Thieves*, *Zeishi* 賊史) and *The Old Curiosity Shop* (*The Biography of Nell, a Filial Girl*, *Xiaonü naier zhuan* 孝女耐兒傳). The novel that captured the popular imagination in the most fascinating way would be Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which Lin Shu translated in 1901 with Wei Yi as *A Record of the Black Slaves' Plea to Heaven* (*Heinu yu tian lu* 黑奴籲天錄). This novel, whose reach across the Atlantic was so powerful as to inspire a feverish Tom Mania, has been well documented in recent years.⁵ Henry James characterized Stowe's novel as similar to a flying fish in its capacity to undergo so many metamorphoses and adaptations almost from the instant it was released. The novel captured imaginations across the Pacific as well; Lin Shu's translation was the first American novel published in China and was an influential popular success.⁶ Hill's discussion of Lin's topical interpolations of an allegorical reading of enslaved Chinese laborers on sugarcane plantations in Hawai'i, for example, which then extends to considerations of China's plight in relation to the world, is intriguing and a deft show of the translator's individual hand. It is also a fascinating entry to discussions of intellectual collaboration and how credit can be designated in terms of authorship and even reception. While it is difficult to trace this individual hand when faced with the spectacular range of Lin's translations, it is irresistible to privately speculate whether variants on the same narratives possessed his imagination. Is there a common denominator in Lin Shu's choices of works to translate? Did Lin see, for example, a nationalist allegory in the narrative of oppression, growth, and eventual liberation in *Oliver Twist*?

The Dickens translations, in particular, inspired Arthur Waley to write: “To put Dickens into classical Chinese would on the face of it seem to be a grotesque undertaking. But the results are not all grotesque. Dickens, inevitably, becomes a rather different and to my mind a better writer. All the overelaboration, the overstatement and uncurbed garrulity disappear. The humor is there, but is transmuted by a precise, economical style; every point that Dickens spoils by uncontrolled exuberance, Lin Shu makes quietly and efficiently.”⁷ As a translator himself of classical Chinese poetry and prose, Waley may have possessed a finer sensitivity to the stylistic nuances of Lin Shu's prose. He certainly possessed some fellow feeling in approaches to translation between East and West.⁸ Waley's assessment suggests

the question of whether the changes in the text could be attributed to Lin Shu's individual perspective, the characteristics of *guwen* prose in general, or some inextricable bond between the two that may be harder to quantify. This speaks to Hill's second point, about Lin's deliberate choice of using *guwen* rather than a vernacular style, or the *wenyan* hybrid style that would dominate the literary world following the May Fourth Movement. Hill puts it this way: "Garbed in the royal robes of prestigious *guwen* stylings, these translations demanded that their translators and readers acknowledge the inescapable reach of Western Learning. At the same time, within the unequal power relations between languages found in any act of rendering and reading a translation in this time, these books sought a new space from which to appropriate and dispute Western Learning's claims to universal validity and authority" (Hill, p. 51).

The second half of *Lin Shu, Inc.* considers Lin Shu's decline and its precipitating circumstances, tied to this insistence on the use of *guwen*. Beginning in chapter 6, Hill details Lin's self-fashioning as a "master of ancient-style prose" (古文家 *guwen jia*) (Hill, p. 22), reminding the reader that this persona was paradoxically created through the vast production of *guwen* in the translations of decidedly non-ancient-style Western novels. Moving from the translations, the book considers Lin Shu's other cultural activities beyond translation as an indicator of the cultural temperature in these early decades of the twentieth century. The visual cues of Lin in his Pink Pills advertisement, with the mandarin jacket and skullcap, may supply part of the answer. Unlike his contemporaries, whose interpolations of modernity took the form of Western dress, or gestures to Western dress—a felt fedora, perhaps, worn with the long gown—as Antonia Finnane has demonstrated in *Changing Clothes in China*, Lin Shu appeared steadfastly bound to the traditional.⁹ He was even guilty of converting the colloquial European novel backward into *guwen* prose. His association with *guwen* became a symptom, Hill suggests, of an intransigence in the face of modernity and change, against the movement of a younger generation of intelligentsia pushing to leave *guwen* behind as a relic.

Granting *guwen* praise as an achievement of the past, the new generation defined it as a part in a process that was functionless in their present. Lin's supposed insistence on holding on to archaic prose would prevent him from fitting in with the writers of the New Culture movement. The second injunction in Hu Shi's (1891–1962) "A Preliminary Discussion of Literary Reform," written in 1917, scolds:

Do not imitate the ancients. Literature changes with time. . . . This is not my private opinion but the universal law of the advancement of civilization. . . . Each period has changed in accordance with its situation and circumstance, each with its own characteristic merits. From the point of view of historical evolution, we cannot say that the writings of the ancients are superior to those of modern writers. The prose of Zuo Qiuming [sixth century BCE., author of the *Zuozhuan*] and Sima Qian is wonderful, but compared to the *Zuozhuan* and *Records of the Historian*, wherein is Shi Naian's *Water Margin* (*Shuihu zhuan*) inferior? I have always held that colloquial stories alone in modern Chinese literature can proudly

be compared with the first-class literature of the world. Because they do not imitate the past but only describe the society of the day, they have become genuine literature.¹⁰

The reported popularity and success of the Lin Shu translations suggest that his prose style was not inaccessible. Lin Shu translations were a significant contribution to a period during which the number of published translated works of fiction surpassed those of original works of fiction for several years: even when they were not the majority, translated works were still numerous and incredibly influential.¹¹ This returns us to the question of fashion. It would seem that the peripeteia of Lin Shu's life is less a picture of one who, refusing to change with the times, gets left behind. We have instead a story of how, in order for modern literature to come into being, professionals like Lin Shu were necessarily framed as the very opposite of modern: desperately out of touch, clinging to the past, backward beyond rescue. He was, it seems, the earliest step in an evolutionary process that needed to leave him behind in order to move forward.

As Hill points out, Lin did little to prevent the inevitable. Between 1913 and 1918, he published no less than forty-one books in monograph form, including “over thirty translations of full-length novels, four full-length novels authored by Lin himself, three collections of short *biji* fiction, two collections of classical prose with Lin's commentaries, and two books on the theory and practice of ancient-style prose” (Hill, p. 196). This marks the period when he seemed to lose control of his brand: a large-scale outsourcing of translation work begins around 1915, along with a move into selling products other than books, as in the aforementioned advertisement for Pink Tonic Pills. This commercialism did not sit well with the young and idealistic writers behind *New Youth* magazine, nor with its readers, epitomized by the fictional Gao brothers, who impatiently take turns reading the latest issue, in Ba Jin's 1930's novel, *Family* (*Jia* 家). Hill turns, in chapter 7, to a story about the rise of *New Youth* magazine and the intellectual ideals it promoted; this narrative is juxtaposed against and, Hill suggests, precipitated by the public ridicule of Lin Shu that resulted in his taking a stand for a hopeless cause.

The parodic hoax was published in *New Youth* by a fictional Mr. Wang Jingxuan. Mr. Wang heaps lavish praise on Lin Shu for bringing Tang dynasty-style prose to translate works of Western fiction, such that it obliterates any resemblance to the original. This fatuous, but cutting, praise linked him with outmoded practices to which he did not necessarily subscribe. The letter, Hill explains, “made an enemy who, after careful arrangement, embodied the link between *guwen* in literary and intellectual writing, crass commercial culture, and bankrupt anti-Western, antimodern conservatism” (Hill, p. 213). Hill shows how Lin Shu walked into the trap nearly a year later, by trying to take on those charges with his own satirical riposte: “Lin Shu became Wang Jingxuan, authoring his own defeat in the public eye. In his inept handling of the matter, he not only failed to answer the charges of commercialization hurled against him but also gave May Fourth

scholars another important way to declare independence—this time not from the market, but from factional politics and government interference” (Hill, p. 217). Most grievous of his mistakes, Hill writes, was his decision to attack publicly Cai Yuanpei, the chancellor of Peking University, who had hitherto maintained a neutral remove. The fight between the old and the new found its shorthand in the fight over language; classical Chinese could be the villain to the freedom-seeking vernacular, and Lin Shu its addled representative. Hill ends his discussion on a wistful note, wondering what might have been had Lin Shu refused to engage in such a public quarrel. Is this a story of the last gasps of a member of a dying generation, hanging on to the costume and grammar of a long-dead past? Or is this the story of the successes of a pioneer who found innovative ways to transfer the plots and novels from Europe and America to a reading public eager to see the world as others did, albeit through the filter of one man (and his team)? Sadly, this is the kind of narrative that emerges from an extremely long lens. The fewer particularities, the easier it is to shape. If we are to judge Lin’s writing with the same critical temperature that we do Pound’s *Cathay*, as a literary work on its own terms, as Hill suggests, will we rely on translations of that writing back into English by yet another hand?

* * *

I cannot shake the association between translation and literary biography; they seem as if distant cousins, to me. Both offer interpretations of a life, or a mind, and whatever numinous property one might be tempted to assign to that thing which emerges from prolonged company with a group of texts authored by one hand. Both translator and biographer, time and again, apply elements of possession and ventriloquism to their task: “This is what she wrote; this is what I think she meant.”

The novelist Evelyn Eaton (1902–1983) lived a fascinating life filled with events and accomplishments that suggest a richly adventurous soul. Born in Switzerland, she moved with her parents and sister to Canada, where they lived until her father’s death. The resulting moves around Europe and back to North America in her younger years are all delightfully documented in her memoir, *The Trees and Hills Went the Other Way*, as are other hallmarks of her fiercely independent nature during her adult years.¹² As a single mother, Eaton worked as a writer, journalist, war correspondent, and college lecturer at Columbia University and Sweet Briar College. It was her work as a war correspondent that brought her face-to-face with a place where she felt herself reconciled with a past incarnation, the Tang dynasty poet Xue Tao 薛涛 (768–831). She would years later explore the other lives she felt she surely lived as a Native American; but, before everything else, visiting Chengdu was like returning home.

Biographies of Xue Tao are necessarily embroideries of what little evidence remains of her existence: anecdotal tales from long after her death, a small collection of extant poems exchanged with luminous personages of the Tang dynasty,

and the invention of slips of paper bearing her name, just the right size for copying out a poem. Referring to Xue Tao by her courtesy name, “Hung Tu” (Hongdu 宏度), *Go Ask the River* does not present a biography, but rather a fictional imagining of the life of the poet and the vicissitudes to which her life was tied. Drawing from the anecdotes and the poems, translated by Mary Kennedy as *I Am a Thought of You* (1968) the previous year and appended here at the novel’s end, Eaton freely weaves her narrative. Following the death of her father, Hung Tu becomes a courtesan, achieving with her talent the kind of fame that gains her the protection of the local governor and an association with the poet Yuan Zhen. To embroider a biography from the nuances of these short lyrics requires a great deal of interpretation and creative wizardry, and Eaton draws the reader’s attention to the sights, smells, and sensations of Hung Tu’s existence. Eaton imagines a teacher-student friendship between Meng Jiao 孟郊 (751–814) and Hung Tu, in which he instructs her on the solidarity between poet and courtesan: “Tao for a poet demands that he enter the lives of others to understand them, to re-create their essences, but he must not become entrapped by any one way too long. Tao for a Flower-in-the-mist [courtesan] demands that she enter the lives of others to minister to all, but she must not become entrapped into giving her heart to one. In this the poet and the Flower are alike and may travel the same road” (Eaton, p. 145). The writer of the novel follows, not far behind.

Eaton herself, whose fortunes changed with the death of her father when she was young and who independently secured her own future with her talents and canny will, may have felt a kinship with Hung Tu, reincarnation or not. Though they lived more than a thousand years and thousands of miles apart, Hung Tu and other famous women writers and artists in Chinese history, such as Yu Xuanji 魚玄機 (late Tang dynasty), captured the imaginations of American women writing during these interbellum years as they continue to do today. Genevieve Wimsatt’s *Well of Fragrant Waters* (1945) was inspired by a visit to Chengdu, too, causing one to speculate whether Xue Tao’s well may have been a popular stop on the tourist circuit of those years, perhaps especially trotted out to traveling women from the West. The proliferation of books about China written by women working as independent writers and journalists reflects the changing nature of women’s roles in Europe and America. There is a great degree of fellow feeling between these twentieth-century observer-biographers and the Tang dynasty subjects they pursued.

The Genevieve Wimsatts, Emily Hahns, and Evelyn Eatons of the early twentieth century presented a picture of the cultural artifacts and contemporary curiosities that appealed to them. They then shared them with an English-reading public curious about the Orient. The picture that they document is a fascinating one. It displays their own perspective and interpretive temperament just as much as Lin Shu’s translations of stories and novels did in the reverse direction. Eaton’s is a translation of a life, and its existence makes a commentary on the reading

experience: the lyric voice of the Tang dynasty writer speaking across time and space to the lyric mind of the twentieth-century Anglophone writer. Whether Eaton's novel stands on its own merits as a work of fiction separate from the fascinating history of her life is difficult to say. In a time when books about literature say less about the literature than the circumstances that bring them into being, it is impolitic to draw distinctions anyway. Eaton's novel is a work of fiction, but it functions, too, as a translation. One thing that is clear is that Eaton's papers, housed at the Mugar Library of Boston University, would make for excellent company, indeed, to anyone seeking to take up the process of reimagining a person through her written words. The title of Eaton's memoir, *The Trees and Fields Went the Other Way*, conjures up the perception we have all felt while observing the world from the window of a train or car. We, it seems, are perfectly still, and our surroundings rush quickly away behind us. It is quite hard to know exactly what is changing: what moves forward, what moves back. Might it not be the case that the trees and fields are the ones that fly backwards? After all, how can we be so certain that we are the ones moving forward? We cannot know ever, really.

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NOTES

1. Ying Hu, *Tales of Translation: Composing the New Woman in China 1899–1918* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), p. 68.
2. Hu, *Tales of Translation*, p. 78.
3. David Pollard, ed., *Translation and Creation: Readings of Western Literature in Early Modern China, 1840–1918* (Amsterdam: J. Benjamins, 1998), p. 13.
4. Hu, *Tales of Translation*, p. 73.
5. Examples in the transatlantic interest in Stowe's novel are Denise Kohn, Sarah Meer, and Emily B. Todd, eds., *Transatlantic Stowe: Harriet Beecher Stowe and European Culture* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2006); and Julia Lee, *The American Slave Narrative and the Victorian Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
6. This history is described in Tao Jie, "Uncle Tom's Cabin: The First American Novel Translated into Chinese," *Prospects* 18 (1993): 517–534.
7. Arthur Waley, "Notes on Translation," *Atlantic Monthly* (November 1958): 111.
8. John Walter de Gruchy, *Orienting Arthur Waley: Japonism, Orientalism, and the Creation of Japanese Literature in English* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), relates the story of Arthur Waley's translations of texts from the Japanese and their role in the shaping of Japanese studies as well as English literature.
9. Antonia Finnane, *Changing Clothes in China: Fashion, History, Nation* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2007).
10. Hu Shi, "A Preliminary Discussion of Literary Reform," *Sources of Chinese Tradition: From 1600 Through the Twentieth Century*, comp. Wm. Theodore de Bary and Richard Lufrano, 2nd ed., vol. 2. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), p. 358.

11. Teruo Tarumoto, "A Statistical Survey of Translated Fiction, 1840–1929," *Translation and Creation: Readings of Western Literature in Early Modern China, 1840–1918*, ed. David Pollard (Amsterdam: J. Benjamins, 1998), p. 37–42, aggregates this data to make a compelling argument about reading patterns of translated fiction during these decades.

12. Evelyn Eaton, *The Trees and Fields Went the Other Way* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974).



Viable Social Identities in a Shifting Cultural Landscape

Lucetta Yip Lo Kam. *Shanghai Lalas: Female Tongzhi Communities and Politics in Urban China*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013. x, 142 pp. Hardcover \$50.00, ISBN 978-988-8139-45-3. Paperback \$25.00, ISBN 978-988-8139-46-0.

China has a long history of homosexuality. It is a history, however, of which most Chinese are unaware. Believing homosexuality to be a practice that only actors engage in, most Chinese, especially those in the older generation, remain adamantly opposed to its practice. The homosexual stigma, as it was in nineteenth-century Europe, falls heavier on males than it does on females. For example, during the Ming dynasty, same-sex female lovers were not given the gender identity of lesbian. Women who were sexually attracted to and liked one another were perceived to be emotionally but not sexually involved. For most of Chinese history, female-female friendships were perceived to be a kind of sisterhood devoid of sexual interest. This was and is not currently the case for male homosexuals. For example, Chinese media constantly assert that male homosexuality is a dangerous activity, as it poses a great risk to public health and social stability. It is not clear why or in what ways male homosexuality poses a pressing danger to the social order. This is not so for female homosexuality, which is seldom discussed in the media. Today, there are hundreds of gay and lesbian websites and blogs, and the government, for the most part, does not try to close them. This is a reversal from an earlier view, which held at least until 2001 that homosexuality was a deviant sexual behavior. This is no longer the case. Consequently, young homosexuals no longer believe or fear they are alone, and it is easy for them to make contact with others. Although Chinese have become more tolerant of homosexuality and do not oppose gay and lesbian bars, their tolerance is tested when their only child insists he or she is not heterosexual.