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Modern Chinese History Studies

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From “The Peach Blossom Spring” to “Utopia”: *Datong shu* and Transformation of the Chinese
Imaginations of the Ideal Society *Wang Dongjie*(47)

Chinese imaginations of the ideal society during the pre-modern era were replete with the tendencies of inaction, laissez-faire and respecting “nature”. A typical example of such Chinese imaginations, “The Peach Blossom Spring” was inherently different from the “Utopian” tradition dominant in the West. As far as its writing style is concerned, *Datong shu* (The Great Harmony) by Kang Youwei was the first book that systemically discussed “Utopia” in the intellectual history of China. According to Kang, a world of “great harmony” is based on sophisticated and fine-tuned planning and governance solutions. Based on the assumption that administrators can gain sufficient information on the reality, Kang believed that “the great harmony” could only be possible with rational planning and calculations. In Kang’s view, “the great harmony” is essentially man-made as opposed to “natural”. Kang’s view is a testament to the fundamental changes of the trajectory of modern Chinese intellectual history.

With an Eye to the Southernmost: Evolution of the Chinese Perception on New Zealand During
the Late Qing Period *Qiu Zhihong*(60)

As a young island country of the southwestern Pacific, New Zealand is extremely faraway from China. Due to limited geographic knowledge and the lack of navigation technologies and vessels during the ancient era, there was very few, if any, exchanges between Eurasian and South Pacific civilizations. The Chinese started to have some geographic knowledge about New Zealand during the reign of Emperor Kangxi, thanks to the efforts of Jesuits who introduced the latest geographic knowledge during the Age of Exploration into China. In *Kunyu quantu* (A Complete Map of the World), Ferdinand Verbiest gave New Zealand its original Chinese name “*xin se lan di ya*.” After the Opium War, Chinese writings about New Zealand started to cover a wider range of topics; apart from geography, they also introduced the politics, history, economy and culture of the colonial society of New Zealand. In keeping with this trend, the Chinese further enriched their knowledge about the five continents. They had much deeper understanding of the changes in the world and tried hard to seek a new identity for China. The Chinese evolving perceptions on the colonial culture and nationalism in New Zealand undoubtedly enriched the understanding of the Chinese on the diversity of the world. At the turn of the 20th Century, the Qing Government even discussed the possibility of establishing a consulate in New Zealand, demonstrating that the Chinese started to develop some out-of-the-box geopolitical thinking with the increase of geographic knowledge. It turned out that the Chinese perceptions on New Zealand and China-New Zealand relations in the modern era were more colourful than we think.

Legalization of Chinese-Foreign Joint Stock in Late Qing: A Case Study on the Bank of China, Japan & the Straits *Xiong Changkun* (76)

The Japanese Origin of “Genealogy of Law” Knowledge and Its Dissemination in China during the Late Qing and Early Republic of China Periods *Yang Rui* (92)

Incorporating Local Customs into National Laws: Inheritance and Reform of Indigenous Land Rights Customs by Legal and Political Authorities in the Early Period of the Republic of China *Lai Junnan* (107)

One challenge confronted the legal and political actors in modern China was how to strike a balance between and then reconcile indigenous land rights customs and relevant legal principles borrowed from abroad. Indigenous land rights customs in modern China had their own merits like having sufficient market rationality, ensuring considerable economic efficiency, maintaining trans-regional consistency and fitting in the moral economy. Having said that, they posed challenges to the functioning of state power. Both the political and academic environments were hostile to indigenous land rights customs in the early days of the Republic of China, but the Chinese legal and political authorities at the time largely maintained a balanced attitude towards indigenous land rights customs after trial and error. Land rights legislation in early period of the Republic of China reflected the complex intertwinement of legal principles from continental Europe, indigenous customs, and the imminent demands of social governance and state finance. Daliyuan, serving as the Supreme Court, incorporated indigenous land rights into national law through prejudication on the one hand and adjusted certain aspects of indigenous land rights customs according to legal principles from continental Europe or the practical demands of administration on the other. The Chinese legal and political authorities in the early days of the Republic of China generally showed sufficient respect to the indigenous land right customs. Furthermore, most adjustments of the indigenous land right customs were legitimate in modern circumstances except several radical cases.

The Japanese Government’s Policies on International Students from Manchukuo *Xu Zhimin* (124)

At the behest of the Japanese government, Manchukuo, the puppet regime selected and sent students to Japan to receive targeted training after the September 18th Incident. These students were taught science, technologies and humanistic knowledge through regular curricula on the one hand and were imposed with pro-Japanese sentiments on the other. For the Japanese government, the objective of this policy was to cultivate agents for “Japanese-Manchu Integration” and facilitate Japanese colonial rule in China’s Northeast and its aggression policy in China. To prevent the Chinese students sent by the puppet regime from being exposed to anti-Manchuguo and anti-Japanese sentiments, the Japanese government restrained them from socializing with other Chinese students sent either by the Republican government or other Chinese puppet regimes. Specifically, they had to be mentored by designated social organizations controlled by the Japanese government. Chinese Student Association in Japan was just one of such social organizations that served to influence and control the students sent by the puppet regime. This was a testament to the strategic objective of the Japanese government to occupy Chinese Northeast through “pitting the Chinese against each other” and “divide-and-rule”.

Understanding China in History: Westerners’ Writings on Chinese History in the Modern Era and Changes of Their Approaches *Cui Huajie* (139)

Before the outbreak of the Opium War, westerners in China studied Chinese history to know more about this old country that they were eager to open to the outside world. Galvanized by the geographical expansion of colonialism, westerners incorporated a local perspective in their writings of Chinese history out of the conviction that history provided the knowledge background to understand a locality. Such an approach, with its merit of examining and understanding China from the perspective of history, helped westerners discover the implications to world history of the Chinese literature and unveiled the logic of civilization behind the Chinese history. Westerners’ writings on Chinese history and changes of their approaches shed important light on the formation of western perceptions on China and their changes in the course of time.

Copy to Preserve: The Collotype Printing Technology in Modern China *Qu Yandan* (152)

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