

provocative for readers within and outside of these fields. Three historical chapters follow that are themed around subsumption and raise questions of historicity and periodization. Each of these can be read and taught individually. Chapter three, on the subsumption of literature, reads Lu Xun's "Diary of a Mad Man" for its queer subjects to recover a queer modernism. Chapter four on the subsumption of the Cold War reframes the war as a cultural palimpsest for queer Asia. Through an analysis of *Swordsman II: Asia the Invincible*, Liu shows how the Cold War continues to unfold through structures of feeling, partitions, ideologies and memories. Chapter five on the subsumption of sexuality examines discourses of sex/gender (*shengli xingbie*, *shehui xingbie*), from the 1995 Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women to contemporary "gender mainstreaming" that deploys gender to marginalize queer sexualities in China and buttress China's engagements in the global South. The book ends with an inspiring vision for global queer Marxism.

It would be a disservice to limit this book to readers in Asian Marxist cultural studies and Chinese queer studies. The book speaks to audiences beyond its immediate fields. Liu offers an instructive, imaginative study in bringing together objects, areas, theories and histories. In the vein of subjectless discourse, Liu does not link Marxism and queer theory through their proper objects (class, sexuality) but through their methods and concepts (dialectics, alterity). The book explores how concepts such as sex/gender are translated across language, national contexts and epistemes, insisting that gender is always in translation, not merely a Western concept translocalized in China. Liu's scholarship leaves a blueprint for scholarship on non-Western social formations and global histories of sexuality, capitalism and race. These approaches are vital for queer theory, or any critical theory, to remain relevant in the age of the Beijing Consensus.

Among its most compelling points, *The Specters of Materialism* urges scholars to "promiscuously" work across intellectual silos and question a hierarchy of knowledge production whereby the global South provides examples, not epistemologies, for the North. In the prolonged life of the Cold War, knowledge is still organized through area studies, "which reflects a division of *intellectual* labor created by the international division of *manual* labor" (p. 109). To reenergize queer theory's materialist project, "a Marxist analysis can help establish an alternative conception of US queer theory as a minority participant in a global conversation sustained by the labor of scholars and activists working in other languages" (p. 34). Such a decentring of Western/anglophone knowledge production is central to creating new paradigms and collective struggles everywhere.

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Negotiating the Christian Past in China: Memory and Missions in Contemporary Xiamen

Jifeng Liu. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2022. 233 pp. \$119.95 (hbk). ISBN 9780271092874

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This book provides a beautifully crafted insight into the ways in which contemporary Christianity in Xiamen is informed and shaped by Christian history in the locality, and the ways in which memory of this past is constructed and selectively employed by all actors – local churches (both official and

unregistered), religious authorities, local government and the non-Christian population – for identity construction, world heritage recognition and a sense of belonging to global Christianity.

The majority of studies on Christianity, most of which are conducted from within the Christian belief, have focused on the growth of Chinese Christianity and present a state–church dichotomy. Liu Jifeng, himself not a believer, instead addresses the relevance of Christianity to ideological negotiations with officially established authority (p. 2) and hopes to move away from viewing Christianity as simply a religious system and to focus instead on how deeply embedded and relevant it has become in and to society as a whole. Liu argues that Christianity has been an important source of ideas and knowledge for ordinary people, intellectuals and politicians in the Xiamen area. Drawing on in-depth ethnography over several years, he shows the complex dynamics of Christianity (and religion more widely) and government at the local level. He successfully demonstrates these complex dynamics through an analysis of the local actors’ joint negotiation of how to commemorate and write the history of Christianity in Xiamen and Gulangyu.

In the book’s introduction, Liu sets out this approach, provides a useful literature review and explains very clearly his fieldwork methodology. He writes with great honesty and sincerity about the challenges and merits of conducting fieldwork on Chinese Christianity as a non-believer, as well as the extent to which external circumstances like changing access to archives made it necessary for him to amend his original plans. The study is possibly richer for it.

Chapter one provides an overview of the two areas in focus, Xiamen and Gulangyu, as well as a historical account of Christianity’s influence in the locale. One learns about the important role Christian schools played in education and upward social mobility; Xiamen and Gulangyu can point to many well-known local graduates who continued their studies in Europe and in turn had a large impact on local society upon their return. Historically, missionary organizations mostly adapted to local society, in contrast to more recent arrivals. Generally speaking, while Christianity is undeniably a minority religion, it has had significant cultural influence which, in turn, contributed to the growth of Chinese Christianity, Liu argues.

Chapters two to four focus on specific case studies, each being illustrative of the careful negotiations between the state, the church and grassroots organizations. Chapter two provides a detailed analysis of both the recent context and the historical background to a commemorative event for Dr John A. Otte (1861–1910), a medical missionary who died and was buried on the island. “Blackened” under Maoism, it was possible for local people to rehabilitate him by employing unofficial channels to counter official erasure and managing to rewrite a piece of local history that allowed for a positive vision of Christianity (p. 63). The official narrative of harmonious multiculturalism prevalent around the time (2010) played an important part in this, as did the authorities’ application for World Heritage Status for 53 sites in Gulangyu, ten of which were related to Christianity. Chapter three turns to the history of Trinity Church and the life story of Pastor Wen, an influential figure key to the church’s survival thanks to his judicious handling of relationships with local government officials. This, however, only works at the local level: as soon as higher state agencies get involved, the tacit agreement breaks down and local officials side with the higher authority. While not a new finding, it is important to restate, as Liu does, that at the local level there is no clear ontological divide between the state and the Christian church (p. 118). What this case study also illustrates is the dispersal of state authority as a result of the reform era; today the state is less centralized but no less powerful, a fact that is also pertinent for other social organizations as well as businesses. Chapter four provides an interesting overview of the framework within which local gazetteers were written and the general publishing landscape today in which three types of “historians” compete and sometimes collaborate in their attempt to produce an agreed upon and officially accepted history of Christianity in Xiamen. It is interesting to note that the Cultural Revolution is universally blamed for the disruption of knowledge and loss of relevant materials even though, as Liu observes, the churches’ lack of enthusiasm for preserving historical materials cannot necessarily be explained by it.

Chapter five puts local Christianity in dialogue with global missionary efforts through a close analysis of one American Christian mission with long-term presence in contemporary Xiamen. While the American mission seeks local links (for example with local Chinese churches), it also consciously positions itself as foreign, aware of the aspirations of local youth in relation to learning English, going abroad, and their yearning for a cosmopolitan lifestyle. While historical missions made great efforts to adapt and assimilate, this is not the case of contemporary foreign missions in Xiamen. The chapter contains very enlightening findings on the role English-language teaching plays in the mission but also about the importance of language in relation to the perceived acceptability of the gospel among the local population. For young people, as Liu notes, Christianity reflects their desire to be in touch with the modern West and to participate in global integration (p. 172) while for older local Christians, their sense of belonging to a global Christianity is facilitated through their yearnings for their Christian past.

In the conclusion, Liu makes some reference to more recent developments while (due to the timing of his research) not being able to fully answer the questions that arise in the reader's mind about the extent to which much of what was true about state–church relations at the local level in the early 2010s continues to hold in the much more restrictive environment following the strict mandate to “Sinify” all religions. Overall, this is a wonderful new resource for all scholars of Chinese religion and historians of China more generally. It is a beautiful example of how contemporary ethnographic work combined with historical archival research can produce some of the most pertinent and insightful portraits of state–society relations and their co-production of memory, history and identity.

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The Chinese Idea of a University: Phoenix Reborn

Rui Yang. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2022. 164 pp. HK\$550.00 (hbk). ISBN 9789888754298

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This is a crucial book about the essential ideas inherent in Chinese higher education. The book's title pays homage to John Henry Newman's collection of essays (*The Idea of a University*, Gateway Editions, 1999 [1852]) emphasizing the pursuit of knowledge for its intrinsic value and the belief that the quest for truth is a fundamental aspect of education. There are books in Chinese about the “idea of a Chinese university” (*Zhongguo daxue linian*), but this is the first in English to advocate a major change in course for Chinese higher education.

The subtitle, *Phoenix Reborn*, aligns with the great rejuvenation discourse of confidence and ideological resilience that highlights a rich and glorious educational heritage – one that deserves to be better understood by the global academy. With a focus on broader cultural issues, the book surpasses the conventional discussions around the seemingly incompatible interpretations of academic freedom and institutional autonomy between Chinese and Western cultures.

The book argues that the Anglo-American model is responsible for value chaos and confusion, cultural conflicts and a feeling of homelessness among Chinese academics in universities. For Rui Yang, fundamental epistemological differences prevent Chinese higher education from assimilating with its hegemonic Western counterpart, namely the Anglo-American-German model found almost