

reconquest, which have been raised in works by Lanny Fields and Owen Lattimore. Nevertheless, *Holy War in China* is a major contribution, and it will be of interest to scholars of China, central Asia, and nineteenth-century world history.

Richard S. Horowitz
California State University, Northridge

KIRBY, William C. (ed.) — *Realms of Freedom in Modern China*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004. Pp. xii, 396.

Edited by Harvard University historian William Kirby, *Realms of Freedom in Modern China* offers 11 closely argued essays on the very general theme of freedom — or its absence — in the modern Chinese experience. This volume is the last of 15 produced in the series entitled “The Making of Modern Freedom” (general editor: R. W. Davis), which has traced the emergence of the idea and experience of freedom beginning in early Stuart England, and is the only volume of the series dedicated to a single Asian example (although a previous volume in the series covers both Africa and Asia). China merits inclusion because of its historical and contemporary importance and because of its protracted struggle to achieve political modernity, which, according to China’s detractors, has largely denied the legitimate rights of the Chinese people to the same freedoms we enjoy in the West.

Indeed, without joining the ranks of “China-bashers”, the contributors to this volume have a hard time locating and clearly describing significant “realms of freedom”. Some authors (such as Irene Bloom) identify alternative currents of political thought that might be rehabilitated (“Confucius himself was not nearly as hostile to the individual as the Confucianism of the imperial state turned out to be”); others (Madeleine Zelin, Robert P. Weller) discuss realms of relative autonomy that exist beyond the state’s ability to exercise effective control (the late imperial commercial economy, local religion past and present). But the theme that dominates this volume is that of growth of the Party-State over the course of the twentieth century, a Party-State that both carried forward certain imperial prerogatives and added many others, thanks to ideology and technology, in the process severely limiting the expression of any other sort of freedom. Taiwan’s recent achievement of democracy is one of the very few success stories recounted here; otherwise, even if groups or individuals manage to carve out tentative realms of relative autonomy, the Chinese state seems consistently to deny any formal claim to an enforceable right to freedom.

I do not mean by this that the volume should not be read — quite the contrary. *Realms of Freedom in Modern China* is a valuable corrective to the work of those (now relatively few) who continue to see China as a totalitarian society, and it is a valuable supplement to scholarship that focuses on Westernized Chinese intellectuals, their dissenting opinions, and their fate under the Chinese regime (indeed, intellectuals, authors, and artists hardly make an appearance in Kirby’s volume). The quality of the essays is uniformly high, much of the scholarship is new, and the volume deserves to be widely read — even if its title might be somewhat misleading.

The following brief summaries of the 11 substantive chapters illustrate the range of material covered.

In “The Moral Autonomy of the Individual in Confucian Tradition”, Irene Bloom argues that the central foundational texts of the Confucian tradition insist — if largely implicitly — on the moral authority of the individual, an authority exercised by Confucian scholars over the centuries when they chose to remonstrate against unwise imperial decisions. William C. Jones, in his article entitled “Chinese Law and Liberty in Comparative Historical Perspective”, argues that law never enjoyed the central position it occupied in the modern Western experience, and that it is unlikely to accede to such a position in the future. Madeleine Zelin, in her excellent piece “Economic Freedom in Late Imperial China”, demolishes once and for all the hoary argument that the Chinese imperial state blocked the emergence of commerce, showing convincingly that very sophisticated forms of entrepreneurship and even capitalism existed in the late imperial period. Jérôme Bourgon, in a complex piece entitled “Rights, Freedoms, and Customs in the Making of Chinese Civil Law, 1900–1936”, traces the fascinating and ultimately failed process by which Chinese legal authorities sought to create a civil law in China, but were undermined by their own bureaucratic and statist orientations. In his “The Chinese Party-State under Dictatorship and Democracy on the Mainland and on Taiwan”, William C. Kirby offers one of the most penetrating comparisons I have read of the very similar natures, instincts, and experiences of the two political parties that have dominated modern Chinese history. Elizabeth J. Perry, in her “Workers’ Patrols in the Chinese Revolution: A Case of Institutional Inversion”, shows how both Communists and Nationalists sought to mobilize workers for their cause — and to demobilize them once the cause was one — and how both failed. In her “Discourses of Dissent in Post-Imperial China”, Wen-Hsin Yeh illustrates that twentieth-century Chinese intellectuals both carried forward imperial practices of remonstrance and that new technologies (mass media, use of vernacular language) allowed some intellectuals to go far beyond imperial practices and to build popular support (which rarely stopped the Chinese state from suppressing them). Arlen Meliksetov and Alexander Pantsov, in their “The Stalinization of the People’s Republic of China”, argue ironically that Mao’s Stalinist impulses in the early revolutionary period were slowed by Stalin himself, who preferred that China follow a “new democratic” path. In “Have You Eaten? Have You Divorced? Debating the Meaning of Freedom of Marriage in China”, William P. Alford and Yuanyuan Shen examine the complex debate surrounding the recent reform of the marriage/divorce law in China, finding conflicting visions of individual rights and state responsibilities. In “Realms of Freedom in Post-Mao China”, Jean C. Oi discusses peasant and worker protests and village elections, and wonders whether we might not see in these a calculated decision on the part of the state to “manage discontent”, rather than a positive embrace of freedom. In “Worship, Teachings, and State Power in China and Taiwan”, Robert P. Weller illustrates how local, particularistic religious practices, particularly in Taiwan, helped to shape the emergence of civil society — once the Taiwanese state decided to permit such.

David Ownby
Université de Montréal