

*fengjian* 封建 (inheriting regional and local rulers) systems of government, which was one of Gu Yanwu's central concerns, as shown in a number of pieces that Johnston selected.

Gu Yanwu wanted the knowledge he had worked so hard to acquire to be used to save his world, whether in his own time or later, as he wrote in several contexts. There is nothing casual or routine in his *Ri zhi lu*. Perhaps another symptom of Johnston's not conveying this is his acceptance of the translation of *ri zhi* 日知 in Gu's title as "daily knowledge." This is a conventional translation going back at least to the late W.T. deBary's influential *Sources of Chinese Tradition* of 1960 (and still in the update in 2000). I have never quite grasped what "daily knowledge" is intended to mean in English: Knowledge produced day after day, like a daily newspaper? Quotidian knowledge in the sense of what is ordinary, even commonplace? Homespun wisdom, applicable in everyday life? None of that is in the *Ri zhi lu*. In a note that appears at the beginning of the list of contents of the *Ri zhi lu* and tagged with his name, Gu explained how he chose the title. "From when I was young I have immediately made notes of what I grasped in my reading [that others had not]. When there were inconsistencies, from time to time I would go back to revise and fix them. If I later found that some person in the past had it before me, then I would erase my note on it. Continuing this for more than thirty years [i.e., since about 1640, when he gave up trying to pass the provincial-level examination], I now have one set [of items, which were the basis of the first printed version, in 1670]. Drawing on the words of Zixia 子夏 [in *Lunyu* 19.5, about day after day gaining knowledge that previously one did not know<sup>5</sup>], I have entitled it *Record of Knowledge Gained Day by Day (Ri zhi lu)* in order to provide correction for some future superior ruler."

By means of skeptical examination of the evidence in the *ru* heritage of written texts, particularly classics and histories, and their associated bodies of scholarship, Gu's intention and claim was to discover new understanding—true knowledge—that would be the basis of what should be done by individuals at every level of society. My hope is that Johnston's selected translations serve Gu's interest by widening the audience and attracting others to participate in the project of reading Gu Yanwu, who set us the task of acquiring new knowledge day after day.

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Justin Jacobs has given us a highly accessible account of China's transition from Qing Empire to revolutionary party-state from the viewpoint of Xinjiang. His book centers

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<sup>5</sup>More than a few commentators and translators take Zixia's point to be about awareness that one does not know, that one knows that there are unknowns, but why rehearse that on a daily basis?

on the strategies that successive cohorts of Chinese administrators have adopted to manage the “politics of difference” in China’s far northwest, but also contains well-drawn portraits of the leading non-Han actors with whom these men dealt. China’s post-Qing transition was not, he believes, a straightforward step from empire to nation, but from one form of empire to a new, “national empire,” consciously redesigned in light of “best practice” models from around the world. In doing so, these Chinese officials devised a set of “imperial repertoires,” allowing them to manage the province’s patchwork administrative system through “dependent intermediaries” (a category that combines both frontier Han elite and native collaborators), all the while keeping guard against ethnic particularism and revolutionary Han nationalism.

The policy settings of Yang Zengxin 楊增新, Xinjiang’s first post-revolutionary governor, serve as bookends for Jacobs, providing a starting point for the book’s narrative, and food for reflection at its end. Yang rejected the utopian late-Qing drive to rule Xinjiang like an ordinary Chinese province. Instead, his low-taxing regime rested heavily on patrimonial ties to the non-Han elite, whose loyalties were now redirected towards Dihua (today’s Ürümqi)—a Qing empire in microcosm. Yang lingers throughout the book as a model, particularly for those Chinese politicians who balk at the idea of promoting more progressive, but inevitably more anti-Chinese, native leaders. This rehabilitation of Yang Zengxin as a serious political actor mirrors trends in recent Chinese historiography to celebrate his achievements in holding on to Xinjiang, and downplay earlier depictions of him as rapacious and corrupt. There is nothing nostalgic about Jacobs’s treatment of Yang, but he at least emerges as one actor whose (highly conservative) ethnic policies were not compromised from within by more pressing fiscal priorities. The same cannot be said for those who succeeded him.

The arc of the book is defined by a shift from what Jacobs aptly calls the “ethno-elitist” approach of Yang and his ilk, to various “ethnopolulist” programs, primarily inspired by the neighboring Soviet Union. Jacobs shows how Chinese warlords, the Guomindang (GMD), and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) were drawn into a bidding war of anti-Han populism, which rose to a dangerous crescendo in the late 1940s. Pragmatism trumps principle here, and Jacobs sees little difference between rival GMD and CCP techniques of alliance-building. Indeed, he credits Chiang Kai-shek 蔣介石 with ceding greater practical authority to native leaders than the CCP ever did, by raising Masud Sabri to the position of provincial governor in 1947. With each side eager to grab what non-Han legitimacy they could get, conservative “ethno-elitist” policies blend with the progressive “ethnopolulist,” creating some delicious ironies. We find the Soviets lobbying the Mongolian People’s Republic to grant a Kazakh rebel the aristocratic title of “khan,” for example, while Guomindang officials sketch out a blueprint for the creation of a “Hunza Autonomous Region.” The risks evident in this political brinkmanship emerge most clearly in the book’s final section, an original and valuable account of the post-1949 Xinjiang exiles. Here we see how the Nationalist Party’s preferred Uyghur allies ditched the party and choose instead to base themselves in Turkey, forcing the GMD to rely on less impressive front-men to prop up a Xinjiang provincial government-in-exile in Taiwan. Jacobs convincingly points to these ongoing rivalries as a factor in the historic weakness of the international Uyghur lobby.

Jacobs’s fast-moving account has been built out of an exhaustive reading of the archive of Chinese rule in Republican Xinjiang, with many of its richest pickings presented in

direct quotation. He draws heavily on official pronouncements such as Yang Zengxin's highly quotable *Records from the Studio of Rectification* (*Buguozhai wendu* 補過齋文牘), but also taps into private musings, including GMD leader Wu Zhongxin's recently published diary. British, American, and Soviet perspectives enter into the account, but the book is primarily a view from the governor's desk in Dihua. Lest there be any doubt, this Chinese corpus gives Jacobs plenty of scope to adopt a critical stance. The files he draws on to describe the "birthpangs of Chinese affirmative action" in the 1950s, for example, are among the most damning indictment of the Communist Party's failure in Xinjiang that one is likely to find. The more worthwhile question to ask here is how far an emphasis on rhetorical positioning, much of it directed towards an external audience, can shed light on the inner workings of these successive provincial regimes. Some of the book's most insightful moments come when Jacobs turns to a more material reading of Republican Xinjiang politics, for example his analysis of Sheng Shicai's 盛世才 province-wide cultural organizations as extractive institutions. Jacobs's extensive use of quotation also leads to slips, where his voice blurs with that of his source, e.g. when the troops of the rebel East Turkistan Republic inexplicably turn into "bandits" (148).

There is obviously much at stake in the narration of this period of Xinjiang's history. Writing in the wake of the New Qing History, Jacobs is well aware of the provocative implications of labeling China as an "empire among empires," and he is unsparing towards the early PRC's nationality policy: "the ethnopopulist platform of the Chinese Communist state was hollow and insincere" (193). Yet while endorsing "empire" as a piece of social-scientific terminology (a "type of state"), he explicitly rejects terms such as colonialism and imperialism, seeing them only of interest as part of the discourse of the day. As a corollary to this stance, the book is skeptical towards efforts to frame the Xinjiang conflict in national terms, let alone the idea of an ongoing national liberation struggle, which some Uyghurs imagine themselves to be engaged in. Local grievances therefore play little role in explaining outbreaks of communal violence in Xinjiang. Echoing the post-facto Soviet condemnation of the Muslim uprising of 1931–33, Jacobs describes this event as a grab for "ethno-elitist class privileges" (86). Likewise, his account of the 1940s East Turkistan Republic will lend weight to revisionist trends to treat this event as a Soviet conspiracy from start to finish. The evidence presented here is incontestable, but we get little sense of why this Soviet agitation fell on fertile ground.

These are a handful of the points at which specialists will profit from engaging with this book. Among the book's great achievements is to present these interpretations of complicated events and key individuals in Xinjiang's recently past in a fluid, at times novelistic style, making it at the same time an ideal entry point into the field. Anyone taking a new interest in Xinjiang, or looking for a narrative of Chinese modernity with which to destabilize familiar stories deriving from the metropole and China's coastal treaty ports, should look no further than this book. It deserves to be a fixture of reading lists on Xinjiang and Republican China for years to come.