Front. Hist. China 2014, 9(1): 102–124
DOI 10.3868/s020-003-014-0005-7

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Timothy Cheek

Chinese Socialism as Vernacular Cosmopolitanism

Abstract This paper follows the life of an idea, a fundamental concept in modern Chinese intellectual life: socialism. It explores this idea as an alternative form of Chinese cosmopolitanism, drawing from Pheng Cheah's identification of two kinds of Chinese cosmopolitanism: mercantile and revolutionary. If part of what we mean by cosmopolitanism is the local use of an external, or international, or otherwise "independent" (relative to local power and practice) ideology or discourse to promote an agent's sense of social good at home and connection to the world, then the ways that socialist thought, ideology and praxis have been employed in China in the twentieth century constitute one such strain of cosmopolitanism. *Shehuizhuyi* (socialism) meant related but significantly different things to Chinese in the twentieth century. This essay argues that Chinese socialism can be viewed as a version of vernacular cosmopolitanism through two examples: Wang Shiwei in the 1940s and Deng Tuo in the 1960s, as well as the discourse of Pan-Asianism before and after the Mao era. Chinese socialism was as much a terrain of debate and contestation about what it means to be "Chinese and modern" as it was a shared vocabulary and set of aspirations. All along it has been able to play the role of cosmopolitan thought for some influential Chinese thinkers and doers—connecting China to the world in order to pursue universal values.

Keywords Socialism, vernacular cosmopolitanism, intellectuals, Wang Shiwei, Deng Tuo, *Begriffsgeschichte*, Pan-Asianism

One of the recurring themes of modernity is cosmopolitanism in its various forms, guises, and contradictions. Cosmopolitanism has figured throughout the story of modern China, from the Confucian universalism of *Tianxia* in the Sinosphere to liberal constitutionalism as a path to join the "civilized" West. It was part of May Fourth iconoclastic attacks on a materialist West and a moribund China. It was part of Marxist revolution for a sleeping populace. Yet, one wing of early twentieth century Chinese cosmopolitan thought and practice, socialism, has

Timothy Cheek (✉)
Institute of Asian Research, and Department of History, University of British Columbia, Vancouver V6T 1Z2, Canada
E-mail: t.cheek@ubc.ca

become cut off from our ideas of cosmopolitanism and indeed now is figured as the opposite: as Chinese, rather than neo-liberal, or as redolent of traditional despotism, rather than of global democratic trends.[1] Socialism, especially under Mao, has come to be seen as anti-cosmopolitan.

This essay challenges that view by suggesting we can see Chinese socialism, including articulations and debates under Mao, as a form of *vernacular cosmopolitanism*. Vernacular cosmopolitanism in cultural theory circles challenges "the seamless veneer of cosmopolitanism" as synonymous with European Enlightenment values. "Vernacular cosmopolitanism," according to Sneja Gunew, "reaches towards global contexts and responsibilities, at the same time that it recognizes that these are always rooted in and permeated by local concerns."[2] My thesis is: Chinese socialism, seen as a site of contestation over shared ideals, goals, and assumptions about how the world works and what to do, is a form of critical re-thinking of globalization, a way to search for locality while embracing universal values and a method for creating solidarity both locally and globally/trans-socially. It has been a form of vernacular cosmopolitanism embraced by non-Western elites (per Werbner, below) in the struggle to find justice for the people of their society and for their society in the world. At the same time, Chinese socialism has also served as a stultifying and repressive political orthodoxy. The tensions and problems in its history throw some light, I propose, on the historical legacy of Chinese socialism as well as on our considerations of vernacular cosmopolitanism as global theory. The present article can only make the case that these are questions worth pursuing, but cannot hope to secure the verdict.

This article looks at two moments in some detail to show the contested nature of *shehuizhuyi* (the Chinese term for "socialism"), as a site of struggle for the right balance between global and local commitments, for the best way to employ the resources of international socialism and local cultural resources to address pressing public concerns. The two moments and conversations are (1) rural China in the 1940s in the midst of the anti-Japanese war, and (2) urban China (Beijing) in the early 1960s as the People's Republic of China (PRC) reeled from the disaster of the Great Leap Forward and the massive famine it caused. We have three core names: Mao Zedong, Wang Shiwei (his interlocutor in 1942), and Deng Tuo (Mao's long-suffering, independent-minded servant in 1961). One case deals with local versus "global" synchronically—Chinese/foreign—and the other about this tension in its diachronic form—present/past within China. I choose these in part because I know them relatively well, but also because they are the least promising sites for this exercise: both subject to the overwhelming sway of state socialism under Mao—usually and rightly characterized as authoritarian

[1] Merle Goldman, *Comrade to Citizen: The Struggle for Political Rights in China*; Pan Wei, ed., *Zhongguo moshi: jiedu renmin gongheguo de 60 nian*; Gao Hua, *Geming niandai*.
[2] Sneja Gunew, "Vernacular Cosmopolitanism," 3.

and nativist. If we can find some stirrings of cosmopolitanism under high Maoism, then it certainly is "there" in the broader story of Chinese socialism. Indeed, as we shall review later in this essay, in the pre- and post-Mao versions of Chinese socialism the cosmopolitan strains are even stronger.

Vernacular Cosmopolitanism as a Lens

Why turn to cultural theorists who work mostly on non-Chinese topics in order to understand better Chinese socialism? Timothy Brook and Bernie Frolic address such a challenge directly in their advocacy of using "civil society," even in its Habermassian formulation, as a useful lens in studying China. Using such a foreign concept, they claim, "has provided an opportunity to confront our conceptual habits as well as to rethink the constraints and possibilities in the state-society relationship in China."[3] We can use vernacular cosmopolitanism in a similar fashion to confront our assumptions about Chinese socialism as well as to rethink the contributions and limitations of socialist thought in China.

A number of cultural studies scholars have found it useful to focus on *vernacular cosmopolitanism*. Pnina Werbner reminds us that vernacular cosmopolitanism has been "at the crux of current debates on cosmopolitanism," noting in particular its contradictory joining of "local specificity and universal enlightenment."[4] Indeed, Werbner's account of vernacular cosmopolitanism highlights the dual, almost dialectical, nature of the concept, pitting West and non-West, elite and non-elite, but all the time finding that whatever version of traveling culture and identity in the broader world, if it is somehow cosmopolitan it must have a consciousness of openness and respect of the Other.[5] What kind of cosmopolitanism works on the ground in an Asian context?

Chinese uses of *shehuizhuyi*, which was intended to translate the term "socialism" from Western and Soviet political theory, is one such example of this process of adopting, adapting, and digesting for local purposes while keeping inspiration from the external or global goal. Indeed, twentieth century Chinese uses of "socialism" can be seen as a version of "vernacular cosmopolitanism" along the lines outlined above. Looking at socialism in this way fulfills Brook's and Frolic's test of useful theory: it opens up new questions and perspectives.

Viewing socialism through the lens of vernacular cosmopolitanism challenges the assumption (or at least tests it) that socialism is antithetical to cosmopolitanism just because Maoism under Mao often was not cosmopolitan. China does not figure prominently in the theoretical literature amongst critical theorists and post-colonial scholars on cosmopolitanism. Where it does, the cosmopolitan badge goes to those

[3] Timothy Brook and B. Michael Frolic, *Civil Society in China*, 4.
[4] Pnina Werbner, "Vernacular Cosmopolitanism," 496–98.
[5] Ibid., 497–98.

Chinese who borrowed, embraced, and adapted Western *liberalism*, or more recently, anti-neoliberalism. Scholars of China, as we shall see in the next section, have followed similar paths and have come to see Chinese socialism as the problem, what has cut China off from the world.

Indeed, viewing Chinese socialism, or revolutionary activity, as cosmopolitan is not new. In 2000 Pheng Cheah posited two kinds of Chinese cosmopolitanism in the twentieth century: mercantile cosmopolitanism of overseas Chinese spread in a commercial web across Southeast Asia, Australia, North and South America, and Europe, and the revolutionary cosmopolitanism of Chinese intellectuals and activists first learning socialism and then exporting it (particularly to Southeast Asia).[6] Cheah sees this history as relevant to the present, particularly in explaining the resurgent transnational interest in Confucianism as an Asian alternative to Western thought. According to Cheah, Confucianism has transformed from its role as parochial unmodernity of the early twentieth century to become the new form of cosmopolitan post-Western international capitalism, while over the same century, socialism has changed from a cosmopolitan force coming into and then out of China (in Maoist revolutionary exports) to become the new parochial, Chinese, form of unmodernity.[7] While Cheah's analysis is insightful, and the inversion of the cosmopolitan roles of traditional Confucianism and socialism is an important guide to us for what to look for in Chinese socialism, we will see that his sad commentary in 2000 about the death of socialism as a resource for global emancipatory theory as articulated by Asian scholars searching for "local" resources may be premature.

Shehuizhuyi and China in the Twentieth Century

Scholars writing in English usually associate cosmopolitan thought in China with liberal thought that draws from Euro-American intellectual models from the late nineteenth and early to mid twentieth century.[8] Recent Sinophone writings give similar prominence to this classical liberal thought in China.[9] In addition, other

[6] Pheng Cheah, *Chinese Cosmopolitanism in Two Senses and Postcolonial National Memory*, esp. 25.

[7] Ibid., 13. This is a lovely inversion of roles reminiscent of Joseph Levenson's eye for such ironic reversals in the same history, see Levenson, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate*.

[8] Best overview still is Jerome B. Grieder, *Intellectuals and the State in Modern China*, based on a sustained reading of original sources; a new interpretation that foregrounds the history of liberalism in China is Edmund S. K. Fung, *The Intellectual Foundations of Chinese Modernity*.

[9] The lives of Republican Era (1911–49) Chinese liberals has become a cottage industry in the PRC since the mid-1990s, particularly biographies of paragons such as Hu Shi and Fu Sinian who stayed with the Nationalist regime after it decamped to Taiwan in 1949 and the woeful fate of Chinese liberals who stayed on in the new PRC after 1949, such as the philosopher Zhang Dongsun and the democratic party leader Luo Longji. For example, see Xu Jilin, ed., *Ershi shiji Zhongguo sixiang shi*.

scholarship has sought to cast Confucian discourse and the statecraft of the Confucian monarchy as a form of cosmopolitan thought and practice.[10] So, there is clearly a multiple history of cosmopolitan conversations in China over the past century and more. But for most China specialists, the cosmopolitan aspects of Chinese socialism, both its suppressed or forgotten streams (anarchism, Trotskyists) but even its main stream (Maoism), have been overlooked, effaced, put into the shadows by the overwhelming light of Maoism under Mao.

Why, then, focus on "socialism," an idea, a word, a corpus of texts, a community of squabbling believers? I am an historian and for me people act, not ideas. People use things, economic, political, and ideological resources, but for me it is people who do these things. Nonetheless, the theory-oriented methodologies and conversations of critical theory and cultural studies provide compelling examples to extend this history into the realm of concepts. Indeed, Edward Said laid down the challenge in 1983 in his seminal essay, "Traveling Theory." Said identified three critical moments in the movement of ideas across cultures: the social conditions of it *origination*, the *institutionalization* and constraining of that theory in a new context, and the possibilities for *revivification* of the radical resources of theory once again.[11] We will see something of just this process for the case of Chinese socialism as vernacular cosmopolitanism in China under Mao and in the post-Mao era.

Socialism in China is usually associated with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and Mao.[12] Indeed the ideology of the state socialist system in China, forged in revolutionary struggle from the 1920s until the CCP's establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, is Marxism-Leninism Mao Zedong Thought (Maoism for short). It was in 1949, and still is today. Nonetheless, how people living in China experienced Maoism in 1950 and in 2013 is significantly different. And the differences in Chinese socialism do not stop there. There was Chinese socialist thought and conversation before Mao and there has been since Mao and likely will be beyond and after the CCP fulfills its historical mission. Socialist ideas, and not just Marx's, came into China via Japan around the turn of 1900 in a flurry of translations from Japanese socialists and theorists. In the

---

[10] Wm. Theodore de Bary explored the connections between Confucian thought and liberalism in *Asian Values and Human Rights: A Confucian Communitarian Perspective*; and Peter Zarrow, *After Empire: The Conceptual Transformation of the Chinese State, 1885–1924*, esp. chs. 1 & 2.

[11] Edward Said, "Traveling Theory," 226–47.

[12] This is, understandably, the view of the CCP and standard histories in China, presented somewhat enthusiastically in film (*Jianguo daye*) and multivolume authorized histories of the Party on the occasion of its 90th anniversary in the summer of 2011. See also the various editions of John King Fairbank, *The United States and China*; or his *The Great Chinese Revolution*; and Maurice Meisner's excellent *Mao's China and After*.

waning days of the Qing dynasty, as the political system in China tottered and imperial powers (including the United States) intervened, foreign ideas seemed like the way to address these problems.

The idea of socialism, and indeed, the very word, came into China via Japan in the linguistic form of "return loan words"—Chinese characters that had been coined into neologisms by Japanese authors translating Western texts in the preceding several decades. The characters for *shehuizhui* were first combined to express *shakaishugi*—the Japanese compound of "society" + "-ism." The Chinese reading of socialist ideas was thus fundamentally framed by these Japanese intermediaries and by the experience of Chinese students in Japan in the 1895–1905 period.[13] That experience of the intellectuals who studied and promoted "socialism" shaped their understanding of its meaning, as Chih-yu Shih has noted.[14] In this case, "socialism" was a part of a thrilling and confusing set of new ideas and concepts that seemed to explain not only the extraordinary and unanticipated *power* of Western imperialism but also the astonishing and admirable development of Japan from a minor player in the old Sinic world order to an emerging military power that sank the Russian navy in a local war in 1905. Socialism came into China in the early 1900s as one of several new offerings for getting China, then weak and subject to depredations by several imperial powers, on the road to "wealth and power."

Socialism in those years was more nearly what we would call anarchist thought (including bomb throwing at decadent aristocrats and abusive monarchs), but the most influential foreign thought was not socialism, it was Darwinism, especially local adaptations of British social Darwinism.[15] In the age of imperialism, the international system "red in tooth and claw," social Darwinism made intuitive sense to reflective Chinese in 1910. Anarchism lived as the angelic twin to the demonic social Darwinist creed, but it was a weak child. Whenever it began to have a social impact, in organizing coops, schools, or demonstrations, the local warlord came crashing down upon the heads of its leaders.

Socialism came into its own in China with Bolshevism and the victory of the Russian Revolution. Li Dazhao, an intellectual leader of the day at Peking University, famous declaimed "The Victory of Bolshevism" in November 1918

---

[13] Lydia Liu, *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture and Translated Modernity—China 1900–1937*.

[14] Chih-yu Shih, *Sinicizing International Relations: Self, Civilization and Intellectual Politics in Subaltern East Asia*.

[15] Excellent and approachable studies include: James Pusey, *China and Charles Darwin*; Peter Zarrow, *Anarchism in Chinese Political Culture*; and Arif Dirlik, *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution*.

and the race was on amongst Chinese intellectuals: how did the Russians pull that off? So, the first liberation that socialism offer and that caught considerable interest amongst China's intellectuals was national liberation—from importune imperial powers (European, US, and increasingly Japanese) and abusive Chinese militarists. The signature event was the May 4, 1919, demonstrations in Beijing against China's signing the Treaty of Versailles—since it gave Germany's concession areas in China not back to China but to the Japanese (Chinese governments never did sign it).

The first effective socialist party in China was not the CCP, but rather the Nationalist Party (the Guomindang, or GMD). The first great socialist political leader was not Mao, but Sun Yat-sen. The first great Chinese articulation of socialism was not Maoism but Sunism—Sun Yat-sen's "Three People's Principles" (usually dated to its final articulation in 1923–24): *minzuzhuyi* 民族主义, *minshengzhuyi* 民生主义, *minquanzhuyi* 民权主义 usually translated as "nationalism," "socialism," and "democracy." The fit of these translations is imperfect and subject to much commentary: but in 1924 Sun intended to establish a state on the Soviet model (with the direct assistance of the Communist International, or Comintern), to create a one-party state that would first earn China's national independence, then deliver social welfare and order, and finally, after a period of "political tutelage" (*xunzheng* 训政) at some future point, oversee the transition to political democracy in China.[16]

The rest of the macro history of Chinese socialism is broadly known: the rise of the CCP, its popularity with students, then workers, then after it was purged by Sun's successor (Chiang Kai-shek) in 1927, rural farmers and lumpen proletariat. In this story, we see the rise of Mao Zedong to supreme leadership between 1935–45, the civil war between GMD and CCP ending in 1949 with Chiang's retreat to Taiwan and Mao's ascension at Tiananmen. Ideological victory for the Communists in short order is followed by repression, first of landlords and capitalists, then intellectuals, and then the folly of the Great Leap Forward (1958–60) and the massive famine it caused, and famously, the Cultural Revolution. The post-Mao era brought ideological relaxation, to some degree, so we wonder: what is socialist about China today?

Beyond the story of Chinese socialism as the story of the CCP and Mao, we need to remember what may be called its pre-history, before the rise of Mao, and its post-history, the uses of Mao and Maoism in post-Mao, reform China. This is the *history of Chinese socialism*, this history of that idea, that concept, that discourse and the people who populated it in its many and contentious forms. In

[16] John Fitzgerald, *Awakening China: Politics, Culture and Class in the Nationalist Revolution*.

that history, Mao and Maoism are an important part, but not necessarily the defining part. We have already seen that state socialism in China springs not from Mao, but from Sun Yat-sen. A full history of Chinese socialism would give due weight to the stirrings of socialist ideas between 1900 and 1925 which were dominated by various conceptions of anarchism put forward by intellectuals and put into practice by a few students and activists around China. Anarchists sent Chinese to do work-study in Europe, even during The Great War (aka WWI)—indeed several future communist leaders studied Marxism in Europe in the 1910s not as Communists (Chinese communist parties were not formed until at least 1920) but as anarchists.[17] As the two Bolshevik parties (the GMD and slightly later the CCP) consolidated their power over the 1920s, they ejected forms of socialism that did not suit their needs: anarchists, those who became known as the Chinese Opposition (who took inspiration in the later 1920s from Leon Trotsky, and thus were also known as Trotskyists—examples being Chen Duxiu after his purge in 1927 and Wang Fanxi).[18] Such a broader history would have to include the contentious history of ideological debates from the 1970s onward, including at least the Li Yizhe poster of 1974, the debates around socialist humanism in the 1980s (notably in the certified PRC press by Zhou Yang and Wang Ruoshui), the democratic heresies of the astrophysicist Fang Lizhi (who credits his sense of democracy to the young Marx and the study of physics, rather than to Locke or Jefferson), and not least the "New Left" intellectuals of the 1990s and today, who seek to find resources for an emancipatory ideology in the residue of Maoism and state socialism.[19]

This story of Chinese socialism as a form of vernacular cosmopolitanism can deepen our understanding of China and of global theory if we take to heart the challenge of Kuan-hsing Chen, the noted Taiwanese cultural theorist, to use "Asia as Method." Writing in Chinese in the radical *Taishe* journal in the 1990s and more recently in English in his 2010 book, Chen proposes that "historical experiences and practices in Asia can be developed as an alternative horizon,

---

[17] Hans J. van de Ven, *From Friend to Comrade: The Founding of the Chinese Communist Party, 1920–1927*; and Yoshihiro Ishikawa, *The Formation of the Chinese Communist Party*.

[18] Wang Fanxi, *Chinese Revolutionary: Memoirs 1919–1949*.

[19] Merle Goldman's work beautifully chronicles dissident voices in Mao's China and after, though I disagree with her assessment that all these dissidents were rejecting socialism; see Goldman, *China's Intellectuals: Advise and Dissent*, and *From Comrade to Citizen*. An excellent study of Fang's ideas is James H. Williams, ''Fang Lizhi's Expanding Universe.'' Bill Brugger and David Kelly provide a nuanced and informed analysis in *Chinese Marxism in the Post-Mao Era*. The New Left intellectuals are represented by Wang Hui, who has several books in English versions, such as *The End of Revolution: China and the Limits of Modernity* and *The Politics of Imagining Asia*—readers should note that in the second volume, Wang Hui is essentially doing what Chen Kuan-hsing suggests by using "Asia as Method" to question Western paradigms for making sense of Asia.

perspective, or method for posing a different set of questions about world history."[20] Chen's politics are explicit and familiar to those engaged in vernacular cosmopolitanism (Chen speaks in terms of "critical cultural studies"): "working and intervening in local spaces without loosing one's commitment to be in dialogue with general theoretical arguments."[21] This could describe many Chinese socialists across the twentieth century, as well.[22]

Shehuizhuyi and Conceptual History

How do we trace genealogies of Chinese socialism as a means to explore an alternative form of Chinese cosmopolitanism? I use the plural, genealogies, to suggest the diversity and complicated linkages between different instantiations of socialist thought and practice in China. Thus, it is particularly helpful to use the Chinese term for socialism, *shehuizhuyi*, as this marker meant related but significantly different things to the Chinese we will meet in this story. Indeed, *shehuizhuyi* was as much a terrain of debate and contestation as it was a shared vocabulary and set of aspirations.

A fine tool to take up this consideration of cosmopolitanisms is conceptual history, particularly as elaborated by Reinhart Koselleck in *Begriffsgeschichte*. Conceptual history, with a general orientation of New Cultural History (per Lynn Hunt and colleagues), provides a frame to tell the life of an idea by looking for fundamental ideas, or concepts, and how they are deployed. Koselleck's *Begriffsgeschichte* approach provides a useful methodology for this approach to the study of political language. Koselleck distinguishes a "concept" from "idea," but what he adds is the proposition that this conceptual history is key to connecting texts to contexts, and ideas to social history. "Without common concepts there is no society," Koselleck claims, "and above all, no political field of action."[23] Concepts are an important category of analysis for historical

[20] Chen, *Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization*, xiii. Chen explicitly draws from early explorations of alternative models for Asia, including Takeuchi Yoshimi's 1960 essay, "Asia as Method," and indirectly from Mizoguchi Yuzo's similar methodological foray into "China as Method." See discussion in the conclusion of this essay, below.

[21] Chen, *Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization*, xi.

[22] Though similarity is not identity. A few pages later, Chen elaborates on his goals, saying this critical work "opens up new possibilities of reconciliation within the nation and throughout the region," xiv, and is necessary "if the world is to move ahead peacefully," 4. These sentiments could not be ascribed to most Chinese socialists in the 20th century, though they certainly do apply to some *minority voices* in those genealogies.

[23] Reinhart Koselleck, "Begriffsgeschichte and Social History," 74 and quote, 82. An excellent review and assessment of German "history of concepts" is provided in Melvin Richter, *The History of Political and Social Concepts: A Critical Introduction*.

knowledge because "social and political conflicts of the past must be interpreted and opened up via the medium of their contemporary conceptual limits and in terms of the mutually understood, past linguistic usage of participating agents."[24]

The core analytical category here, the concept, is defined by Koselleck as a word representing an idea that is both powerful enough in a certain discourse to direct thought and ambiguous enough to hold within it a range of meanings. One example he gives is of "democracy" in Western political thought which carries a Greek definition of the constitution of a *polis*, the rules of eighteenth century European states, and the expectations of industrialized society—all different meanings but related and able to encompass persistence, change, and novelty within its meaning. He concludes, "Each concept establishes a particular horizon for potential experience and conceivable theory, and in this way sets a limit."[25]

The concept, *shehuizhuyi*, operates in a similar fashion in twentieth and twenty-first century Chinese history. Thus, I look for the ways that understandings of socialism are expressed and debated in China, looking not only for the points of disagreements but also the shared assumptions between disputants, the grounds rules that they accept, the goals they all embrace, the knives and axes they wield against each other. This is my way to find what is "powerful enough in a certain discourse to direct thought and ambiguous enough to hold within it a range of meanings" across considerably different interpretations of *shehuizhuyi* by significant mobilizers of public thought in China and to connect those expressions, disquisitions, orthodoxies, and dissents to social life—that is, to consider, at least briefly, what the use of international socialist discourse meant to those using it and what that record of thinking, that story of a concept, may tell us about Chinese socialism as vernacular cosmopolitanism. We do this by considering in some detail two cases: Wang Shiwei's socialism that privileged the independent revolutionary artist and Deng Tuo's version of Maoism that actively engaged Confucian or "feudal" values. The key point here is that *both* were offered not as opposition to socialism but as versions of Chinese socialism.

Shehuizhuyi Moment One: Wang Shiwei and Mao in Yan'an, 1942

Mao Zedong famously laid down "the line" for revolutionary intellectuals in his "Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art" in May 1942. Mao's themes are now familiar—literature must serve the workers, peasants and soldiers; content should be Party directed, and form should suit elementary readers' needs.

[24] Koselleck, 79.
[25] Ibid., 82.

Public criticism is not welcome, because "If we treat comrades with the ruthless methods required against the enemy, then we are identifying ourselves with the enemy." Mao is exclusive. An act of criticism without Party permission is an act of heresy. Proletarian art, Mao holds, must be subject to the will of the proletariat, especially its leader, the Party. Any other view is the same as the Trotskyite formula, "politics—Marxist, art-bourgeois."[26]

Mao was not laying down the law for his own edification. He had been challenged by leftist intellectuals in the main ideological institutions of Yan'an—the Party newspaper, *Liberation Daily* (*Jiefang ribao*) and the Central Research Institute of the CCP. That February, Mao had launched a study campaign (and purge) known as the Rectification Movement to improve Party ideology, clean up corruption, and get the administration of this poor and marginalized area sorted out.

Some left-wing theorists took Mao at his word to "rectify our Party's work style" to criticize shortcomings in the CCP administration and to put themselves up, as revolutionary artists and intellectuals, as "the conscience of the people." There were two problems with this: who was authorized to make public criticisms, and what to make of local culture and the needs of the rural majority? The leader of this alternative socialism was the noted woman writer, Ding Ling, but it was the cantankerous theorist and translator, Wang Shiwei, who has come to represent this alternative vision of Chinese socialism in Yan'an. Wang is famous for his critical essay, a *zawen* satirical essay in the style of everyone's hero (in Yan'an), Lu Xun, titled, "Wild Lilies" (*Ye baihehua*). But Wang had outlined his approach to these two issues—of authority and locality—earlier. In 1941 Wang tussled with a colleague (Chen Boda) over National Forms of literature—a core issue in Chinese Marxism in the 1930s and 1940s: how to mobilize China's population with a vision that the intellectuals had learned via awkward translation.[27] It was a bit like figuring out how to inspire North American workers to go on strike using only translations of Michel Foucault. Mao favored casting revolutionary ideas in folk Chinese symbols and idioms. Wang, however, was adamant: form was inseparable from content, and modern equaled Western:

> For example, if the communication tools of modern culture—automobiles, trains, steamboats, airplanes… are separated from form (*xingshi*), what

[26] Mao Zedong, translated by McDougall, in *Mao Zedong's "Talks at the Yan'an Conference on Literature and Art,"* 80–81; this translation will be available in *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912–1949*, vol. VIII, Stuart Schram, et al., eds.

[27] The "national forms of literature" debate is well covered in David Holm, *Art & Ideology in Revolutionary China.*

> content can they possibly have? "Old National Forms" would have to be carts, sedan chairs, junks, paper kites, sickles, hoes and such! But how can the essential content of this modern culture—speed, carrying power, precision, efficiency, etc.—be combined with the "Old National Forms."[28]

In Wang's view, the new revolutionary consciousness from Europe and Russia also needed new foreign forms. Yet, he felt the Chinese could make them their own. "I believe that whenever a people (*minzu*) are able in their own way to master something and make it serve them, then essentially it has already become 'national,' no matter if it came from outside or was originally possessed (Today it is an import, tomorrow it is our own)."[29] This openness to foreign or external ideas is a fundamental criterion for any cosmopolitan stand.

In early 1942, Wang made clear his view on the second issue: the role of the individual, especially the role of the revolutionary artist under socialism. In a theory essay titled "Politicians, Artists," Wang proposes a vital, independent and useful role for Communist writers and artists as society's caring but relentless critics of evil. He sets up revolutionary artists as the active loyal opposition, the public Censor, the Ombudsman of revolutionary society itself. Wang insists that the artist alone can maintain a grasp on morality and provide the spiritual inspiration to supplement the military revolution and to check its abuses. Wang borrows Stalin's term and designates artists "engineers of the soul," limiting the job to himself and fellow left-wing writers.[30] This was in utter contravention of Mao's vision of Chinese socialism.

Mao, as we know, won this round. Wang Shiwei was purged and made a negative example for the edification of other left-wing writers. This was a case of "manufactured dissent" common to Stalinist regimes in which a loyal critic is transformed by authorities into an implacable opponent.[31] It is worth noting, nonetheless, that this was a fight *internal* to Chinese socialism. In many ways Wang's "Politicians, Artists" brings to mind John Milton's *Areopagitica* (1644). Both authors served a revolution fueled by high ideals only to find a shocking

---

[28] This quote from Wang Shiwei is drawn from later denunciations of his writings, and the context is discussed in Timothy Cheek, "The Fading of 'Wild Lilies': Wang Shiwei and Mao Zedong's Yan'an Talks in the First CPC Rectification Movement," quote from 29.

[29] Ibid., 31.

[30] Wang Shiwei, "*Zhengzhijia, yishujia*," and other texts by Wang are available in *Wang Shiwei wencun*. I have translated Wang's essay in the English edition of Dai Qing, *Wang Shiwei and "Wild Lilies": Rectification and Purges in the Chinese Communist Party, 1942–1944*, 90–93.

[31] Tom Fisher distinguishes commentary that was legal at time of publication in China that was *retrospectively* designated as "dissent" from examples of "permitted dissent" in the Soviet Thaw of the 1950s in, "Wu Han: The 'Upright Official' as a Model in the Humanities," 183–84.

intolerance when their new leaders took power, both argue the right and necessity for a more free press and betray a priestly self-importance as artists, yet both men's call for freedom of public expression diverged from liberalism in the name of activist or localist needs. There were excluded classes: Papists for Milton, non-leftists for Wang.

Wang Shiwei's socialism was a synchronic version of vernacular cosmopolitanism, drawing from contemporary resources outside his community (Marx, Lenin, Trotsky) to help change it. Wang fought for China while affirming internationalist goals and universal values.

Shehuizhuyi Moment Two: Deng Tuo and Maoism in Beijing, 1961

The year 1961 was the last of the "three hard years" in the PRC ensuing from the failed policies of the Great Leap Forward. The early 1960s saw a concerted effort by the Party Central Committee to discard the rash policies of the Leap and to institute more rational economic operations.[32] As secretary of culture and education in the Beijing CCP Party Committee, and former editor of the CCP's *People's Daily*, Deng Tuo had to praise these reform policies and to encourage intellectuals—especially urban youth—actively to support them. He was not alone. Deng Tuo's essay column, *Evening Chats at Yanshan*, which appeared in the *Beijing Evening News*, was but one of at least three notable Beijing columns of the day. And there were similar essay columns in the provinces. However, Deng's *Evening Chats* were both quite popular in his day, becoming a collected volume in 1963 that was reprinted several times before the Cultural Revolution (as well as after),[33] and it became an object of national opprobrium in the Cultural Revolution, another instance of "manufactured dissent," as the work of the evil leader (Deng Tuo) of the "anti-Party, anti-Socialist, anti-Revolutionary clique, the Three Family Village."

Deng Tuo was a senior official, but his *Evening Chats* appeared under a pen-name, Ma Nancun. Thus, Deng Tuo relied more on the arguments in his essays than on the authority of his position or person to make his points. In *Evening Chats* he was trying to get scholar-cadres to improve their way of working, so they would not succumb again to the heady rhetoric of the Great Leap. He was not trying to change the mechanisms of the state. In these essays Deng Tuo predominantly recommends to his socialist readers values from

[32] Material for this section draws from, Timothy Cheek, *Propaganda and Culture in Mao's China: Deng Tuo and the Intelligentsia*, esp. 215–77. The broader political history is given in Roderick MacFarquhar, *Origins of the Cultural Revolution: 3. The Coming of the Cataclysm*.
[33] Ma Nancun [Deng Tuo], *Yanshan yehua heji*.

traditional Chinese culture, not Mao's sayings. Yet Deng Tuo considered himself a loyal Maoist and presents his cases as ways to improve the CCP.[34] These essays portray a compelling role for China's intellectuals as "theorists" actively engaged in re-ordering Chinese society through service to the Party. Such theorists, as depicted in these popular historical essays of the early 1960s, embody the virtues of the Leninist scholar-official: knowledge (ancient, scientific and based on "hands on" practice), aesthetic perceptiveness, discipline, integrity, tolerant judgment and generalist skills.[35]

Like Wang Shiwei, Deng Tuo continues the strain in Chinese socialism that privileges an elite that "speaks for" the public good. For Deng, this elite is not independent, revolutionary artists, but rather certified Party intellectuals who understand organizational discipline, but who have scholarly and professional skills, as well as administrative experience, and should therefore have the right to speak—within bounds—including the right to criticize policy. As such, both Wang Shiwei and Deng Tuo were employing exogenous models—the modern European artist and the Soviet cadre—to find a way to bridge their inherited roles as "parents to the people" under state Confucianism and the populism of modern nationalism. This is an example of vernacular cosmopolitanism's use of a universal norm (empower the people) to adjust local practices (meritocratic elitism).

Unlike Wang Shiwei, however, Deng Tuo finds value in China's past. He regularly argues for the value of "feudal" examples, that is, values from China's traditional cultural heritage, particularly the Confucian tradition of literati scholars. The texts Deng cites all come from the *Tianxia* universalism of Neo-Confucianism. Deng advocates these "universal values" on the basis of pragmatism: if they help us now, they are good. He quotes with approval the

---

[34] Deng Tuo's faith in Mao is analyzed in Cheek, *Propaganda and Culture*. The key political components of Deng Tuo's thinking are apparent even in the article "Eat Broth Instead of Lamb," which discusses Song dynasty literati: a reliance on scholar-cadres to exercise independent thinking *within the bounds* of CCP leadership. "Buchi yangrou, chi caigeng," *Beijing wanbao*, July 23, 1961 (Ma, 1979, 189–91, translated in *Chinese Law and Government*, XVI: 4, 1983–84, 54–57).

[35] Scholars of traditional China will immediately note the similarity of these attributes with Confucian ideals. Kidder Smith and Peter Bol note three sets of questions confronting Song literati in the eleventh century which we can see parallel ones that animated Deng Tuo's generation: "… [what will be] a new basis that would guide men in the creation of an integrated human society, one dedicated to benefiting all"; "What is human nature? Are literati primarily social actors? Bearers of cultural tradition? … " and "… by what manner of *hsüeh* (study, learning) does one obtain access to [this basis]? Can one rely on cultural traditions, as transmitted by family, schooling or government service? … Can the mind apprehend values directly by contemplating the things of the world? Or does the mind itself contain primordial wisdom that can be tapped by the proper practices?" Smith and Bol., *Sung Dynasty Uses of the I Ching*, 5.

ancient *Book of Rites* on the conservation of labour power—an obvious issue for the government after the abuses of the Leap—but adds the test that such lessons from the past should also be "something everyone has [also] learned through experience in daily life."[36] This *historical pragmatism* is everywhere present in Deng's popular essays. This is his diachronic form of cosmopolitanism engaging the populist strains in Mao's own thinking. The "past" is not usually considered an "external" or "universal" resource in cosmopolitan thought, but the Chinese context is distinct. Beginning with the May Fourth generation's iconoclasm since 1915 China's Confucian heritage was denounced as "foreign" to the needs of a new, modern China. Under Maoism Confucianism became "feudal thought" to be struggled against. Deng's cosmopolitan move was to access this "alienated heritage" of some Confucian values to make utilitarian claims confirmed by current practical experience. The past, then, is not, as it was for Wang Shiwei and Mao, both, something foreign to a lived version of Chinese socialism. Rather, it is a storehouse of human experience of universal application (across time and space) not fundamentally different from contemporary experience; it is the valuable condensation of extensive examples of previous scholar-administrators facing similar administrative and political issues. As Wang Shiwei thought current *foreign* ideas and practices could "become Chinese," so too did Deng Tuo claim that *past* Chinese ideas and practices could be assimilated into socialist culture. These are two fundamental aspects of vernacular cosmopolitanism in Chinese socialism during the Mao era.

Deng Tuo advocated a moral autonomy and social responsibility for intellectuals that all cosmopolitans would recognize. But the role of morality and the ways Deng Tuo thought it should operate in society were distinctly local. The authority of Deng Tuo's intellectual is general and moral rather than specific and professional. It rests on aesthetic moral cultivation, as well as pragmatic knowledge. His discussion of the role of the fine arts reflects his critical assessment of sources and his traditional identification with literati of the dynastic period. Deng assumes a link between ability in calligraphy and painting and moral excellence, a value shared, not least, by Chairman Mao. After performing a brief piece of evidential scholarship on whether or not the calligraphy attributed to general Zhang Fei really is that of the famous general of the Three Kingdoms period, Zhang Yide, Deng concludes in *Evening Chats*, "and wouldn't a hero like Zhang maintain the brave spirit of writing calligraphy and painting?"[37] The link between ability in the "three arts" (poetry, painting and calligraphy) and the moral rectitude necessary to serve the interests of the nation was made most forcefully in Deng's November 1963 essay on the late-Ming

[36] Ma, 1979, 62; *CL&G*, 1983–84, 46.
[37] Ma, 1979, 468–69.

scholar and painter Zheng Banqiao. "What is the spirit of the 'Banqiao Style'?" asks Deng. "I think it is in every arena of life to be your own master and not be a slave!"

Nonetheless, effective social engagement requires discipline. Deng Tuo's elitist faith in the Party led to his demand for obedience to Party regulations in line with the approach of his patron, the Mayor of Beijing, Peng Zhen. In the essay, "Do Nothing Improper," Deng re-interprets this phrase from Confucius (*fei li wu*; from *Analects* 12:1) to justify a quasi-military "need-to-know" basis for public discussion that is quite the reverse of an "open society." "No matter what work we do," he writes, "there should be fixed rules.… The highest standard in our society's rules of life is to subordinate the rights of the individual to the rights of the group." He interprets the *li* (for the core Confucian value, "rites" or "propriety") as "meaning customary rules, norms and moral standards"—in this case, state secrets and how to protect them.[38]

The startling aspect of Deng Tuo's historical arguments in Mao's China is that these essentially moderate, cosmopolitan, and rational suggestions are made by a man who viewed himself as a loyal Maoist. Unless we think he was mendacious or a fool (and I think neither) his examples challenges us to reassess the cosmopolitan strains even in Maoism under Mao.

Chinese Socialism and Pan-Asianism

Our two examples of different kinds of cosmopolitanism in Chinese socialism—Wang Shiwei's synchronic openness to cultural resources from outside China and Deng Tuo's diachronic receptivity to a critical inheritance of "feudal" Chinese resources within Chinese socialism—are but two examples of a much broader conversation that has been going on in East Asia. That conversation has to do with the context that defines cosmopolitanism in the twentieth century: the confrontation with modernity in its current form—*capitalism*—and for the first half of last century this was most strongly influenced by *imperialism*. It is thus no surprise, that the issues of modernity that Wang Shiwei identified—"speed, carrying power, precision, efficiency"—are at the heart of capitalism modernity. The socialist response to the challenge of capitalist modernity that both Wang and Deng in different decades and with different foci offer are both part of what Kenneth Jowitt theorizes as "the Leninist response to national dependency." Jowitt's approach is explicitly neo-Weberian, and so he sees the communist party as a political formation that successfully combined the type of domination seen in traditional authority that

[38] Ma, 1979, 153–55; *CL&G*, 1983–84, 47–50.

could speak to rural communities not yet transformed by modernity, on the one hand, with the patterns of rational, bureaucratic authority needed to run a successful regime of science, technology, and nationalism in the face of British, American and Japanese political, economic, and military domination, on the other.[39]

This Leninist response, in which both Wang's and Deng's efforts at a vernacular cosmopolitanism exist, was, in turn, part of a larger conversation about or response to early twentieth century capitalist modernity. This larger response is often described as Pan-Asianism. Pan-Asianism was broached in the East Asian public sphere (itself defined by the institutions of capitalist modernity—modern newspapers, telegraphic communication, steamship travel, German-style universities, privileging of industrial capitalism and national armies) by Japanese scholars, journalists and revolutionaries. For China, this was picked up and embraced by Sun Yat-sen, the noted agitator and revolutionary organizer in the first decades of the twentieth century who is now remembered as "the father of the Chinese Republic," but he was drawing from and contributing to that larger conversation.[40] The point of Pan-Asianism for all concerned was precisely how to cope with what "the West" had brought to East Asia over the past half century—that destabilizing mix of imperial aggression (forcing treaty ports in the style beneficial to British and American commercial interests) and fabulous technological developments, all inflected by the ethno-nationalism of late nineteenth century Euro-America and frank racism of the economically and militarily privileged white representatives of these imperial regimes in Asia. In short, how could peoples of Asia regroup and reclaim what we would call their subjectivity. Famously, Rabindranath Tagore captured one response within this conversation, casting "the West" as material and "the East" as spiritual. Early twentieth century propositions of this sort of Pan-Asianism died under the insult of Japanese imperialism that appropriated these ideas for its East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere, the justification that the Japanese military proffered to defend its invasions of China and Southeast Asia in what became part of World War II.

The Pan-Asian conversation as an intellectual, as well as political, response has continued among Chinese and Japanese scholars, surviving the depredations and discrediting of the idea by Japanese imperialism at mid-century. Takeuchi Yoshimi famously called for "Asia as Method" in 1960, as a way to de-colonize

---

[39] Kenneth Jowitt, "The Leninist Phenomenon," 1–50.

[40] Sun Yat-sen, "Da yaxiyazhuyi." See Craig Smith, "Asianism at the Margins of Empire"; and Rustom Bharucha, *Another Asia: Rabindranath Tagore and Okakura Tenshin*. The broader context of the East Asian "Sinic world," over many centuries, is explored in Joshua A. Fogel, *Articulating the Sinosphere*.

the categories and reasoning of scholarly research by Japanese scholars, for finding a ground upon which to stand in the face of the hegemony of modern thought in its Western incarnation while avoiding the irredentism of mid-century Japanese imperial ideology.[41] In 1989 Mizoguchi Yuzo took this call as an epistemological challenge to investigate the Sinic base (*kitai*) of Japanese subjectivity as a way to "re-World" Japan, to find that critical distance from hegemonic Euro-American discourse.[42] Takeuchi's and Mizoguchi's calls have been picked up vigorously by the Taiwanese scholar Chen Kuan-Hsing, who, as we have seen earlier in this essay, also speaks of *Asia as Method* in order to "de-colonialize" thought about Asia. But Chen's goal is not just to find authentic agency for thinkers and doers in one part or all of Asia; his goal is to contribute to an emancipatory project, a global cosmopolitan project, of changing the nature of *Western*, as well as Asian, thinking (i.e., also to "de-imperialize"). This is a global version of vernacular cosmopolitanism, finding "local resources" not only to address issues of social justice in one's locality but also to contribute to a more general human and global conversation. Chen's project has been echoed by Wang Hui, who likewise seeks to contribute to an emancipatory project in English-reading communities as well as in Sinophone communities in essays such as "Reclaiming Asia from the West: Rethinking Global History."[43]

Seen in this broader perspective, the vernacular cosmopolitan strains of Chinese socialism become part of an ongoing conversation of Asian responses to modernity rather than an exception, by-way, or dead-end path. The conversation about Chinese socialism, as we see in the example of Wang Hui, extends beyond the confines of the Chinese Party State, and will likely outlive the current form of the CCP. In this larger perspective, Wang Hui's writing demonstrates a turning, or re-turning of vernacular cosmopolitan urges. Wang Hui explicitly inherits the resources of Maoism, but clearly he embraces the emancipatory claims only. In his historical work, in fact, Wang Hui explores and draws from the variety of thought traditions in modern and traditional China, not to mention contemporary Western critical and cultural theory. As such, Wang Hui produces a newer instantiation of the vernacular cosmopolitan conversation within Chinese socialism.

However, his writings in English demonstrate a turning in this local appropriation of external resources, by positioning his version of Chinese

---

[41] Takeuchi Yoshimi, "Asia as Method (1960)," 149–65, and Chen Kuan-Hsing, "Takeuchi Yoshimi's 1960 'Asia as Method'," 317–24.

[42] Mizoguchi Yuzo, *Hoho to shite no Chugoku*.

[43] Wang Hui, "Reclaiming Asia From the West: Rethinking Global History," and Wang Hui, *The Politics of Imagining Asia*, edited engage works by both Takeuchi and Mizoguchi, though interestingly they do not engage Mizoguchi's *Japan as Method*. See also, Jenco, *Chinese Thought as Global Theory*.

socialist vernacular cosmopolitanism as a resource for intervening in cosmopolitan conversations in America, Britain, and globally to anyone willing to read in English. For example, Wang Hui declares, "A new idea of Asia—which is neither the beginning of a linear world history nor its end, neither self-sufficient subject nor subordinating object—provides an opportunity to reconstruct world history.… The aim is not to create a new cold war but to end forever the old one and its derivative forms; it is not to reconstruct the colonial relationship but to eliminate its remnants and stop new colonizing possibilities from emerging." [44] Vernacular cosmopolitanism can describe the efforts of these East Asian thinkers, and particularly the cases in this essay of those working within Chinese socialism, to find subjectivity (agency) within capitalist modernity drawing from both their current local resources (which now include socialism) and ideas from abroad. In turn, they can describe the contributions of their theorizing to global conversations and praxis as one "local" resource for a shared twenty-first century social condition.[45] Global capitalism is now bigger than Western civilization, indeed can be conceptualized as alienated from its most recent producers (wherein the industrial capitalism of London and New York now controls and directs those cities in ways that are out of local control just as much as they have been controlling Beijing, Tokyo, or Jakarta). The resources of Chinese vernacular cosmopolitanism, included in the Chinese socialist experience, are offered by Chen and Wang as substantive contributions to dealing with this global challenge. Thus, to understand Chinese socialism in terms of vernacular cosmopolitanism has a value beyond simply understanding more fully the Chinese past.

Conclusion: Four Lessons

We can draw four lessons from this short genealogy of vernacular cosmopolitanism with Chinese characteristics.

Lesson One: Chinese socialism is plural, contested, and enduring. It is "of the same size" as discourse on cosmopolitanism and vernacular cosmopolitanism. It is one of those fundamental ideas (i.e., a concept) that shape social life. Maoism cannot represent *all* of Chinese socialism, even during the Mao era, and so criticism of Mao and Maoism should not be conflated with critical assessments of the whole range of Chinese socialism. Chinese socialism clearly contains some themes dedicated to universal values of human dignity and agency and reflects a diversity of approaches (we have seen at least two in the Mao period in

[44] These writings, of course, are in Chinese. For example: *Wang Hui zixuan ji* or "Quzhengzhihua de zhengzhi."
[45] Jenco, *Chinese Thought as Global Theory*.

Wang Shiwei and Deng Tuo). There are certainly more pre- and post-Mao Chinese socialisms that share a "family resemblance" to vernacular cosmopolitanism. So, Chinese socialism has many characteristics that put us in mind of vernacular cosmopolitanism and vernacular cosmopolitanism reminds us that Chinese socialism is not monolithic.

Lesson Two: Chinese socialism reflects a tension between local and universal commitments. Like vernacular cosmopolitanism, it operates with this dialectic. Similarly, it is shaped by the borrowed words, the synthetic propositions it uses; it is animated by the tug between the clarion call of activism and the tolerant acknowledgement of diversity, and it is embodied in the institutions and organizational discourse through which it is articulated and applied. It appears to be of a similar nature to vernacular cosmopolitanism. Thus, the history of Chinese socialism—pre-Mao, Mao era, and post-Mao—is likely to offer concrete examples useful to a refining and deepening of global theory of vernacular cosmopolitanism.

Lesson Three: Too much of either extreme of the dialectic leads to bad results. Too much solidarity (particularly in the service of well-meant activism), too much focus on vernacular needs, led to bad result in the case of Chinese socialism. Too little solidarity and too much focus on global norms of cosmopolitan toleration leaves the speaker or community unconnected to their local society, at the prey of not necessarily very nice political and economic forces. The experience of Chinese socialists offers sobering examples of such extremes that those of us who aspire to similar goals would do well to consider.

Lesson Four: Enduring contributions of shehuizhuyi. First, this is another worthy (if sobering) example of the human desire to bring about social justice, based in Chinese experience but openly drawing inspiration from and speaking to experience and intellectual resources from around the world. It has noble goals. Second, this is a discourse that makes a frank and articulate analysis of power and interest (state power, economic power; interests of class, capital, media owners). It is largely practical in orientation. Third, Chinese socialism is a discourse that demands both *global* and *local* analysis of problems and formulation of solutions. No satisfactory Chinese socialist proposition fails to address both sides of the vernacular cosmopolitan project. Fourth, the very history of Chinese socialism, as one instantiation of cosmopolitanism, shows us that what is considered "internal" or "local," or in our current case, what is considered "Chinese," at any one moment is instead a hybrid melding of various resources from more than one origin for thinking and acting. Fifth, Chinese socialism confronts us continually with uncomfortable questions: Why would not my ideals, if implemented, not likewise lead to despotism or marginalization? Is there a cogent and coherent discourse that can be as effective as state socialism but as fair as anarchism or the promise of Trotsky's later followers, or the

promises of China's critical intellectuals like Wang Hui? Why have Wang Hui and the inheritors of critical socialism turned to supporting the current Chinese state? Tough questions, amounting to the challenge: "What makes me think that the same failings do not apply to me and to the emancipatory discourse that I use?" This indicates that Chinese socialism may be something "good to think with" along the lines of Chen's "Asia as Method."

Acknowledgements This paper was first presented at the conference, "Asia-Pacific Cultures: Multiculturalism, Sustainability, Transformation," National University of Singapore, July 2011, and in revised form at the international workshop on "Rethinking Modern China," East China Normal University, Shanghai, June 2013. My thanks to participants in both meetings for comments, especially Sneja Gunew, Robbie Goh and Paul Rae, and the anonymous peer reviewers of this journal for insightful suggestions.

References

Bharucha, Rustom. *Another Asia: Rabindranath Tagore and Okakura Tenshin*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Brook, Timothy, and B. Michael Frolic. *Civil Society in China*. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1997.

Brugger, Bill, and David Kelly. *Chinese Marxism in the Post-Mao Era*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980.

Cheah, Pheng. *Chinese Cosmopolitanism in Two Senses and Postcolonial National Memory*. Berkeley: University of California New Faculty Lecture Series, 2000, accessed July 10, 2013, http://escholarship.org/uc/item/8qv9f5tv.

Cheek, Timothy. *Propaganda and Culture in Mao's China: Deng Tuo and the Intelligentsia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Chen, Kuan-hsing. *Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.

———. "Takeuchi Yoshimi's 1960 'Asia as Method'." *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 13, no. 2 (2012): 317–24.

Dai Qing. *Wang Shiwei and "Wild Lilies": Rectification and Purges in the Chinese Communist Party, 1942–1944*. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1994.

de Bary, Wm. Theodore. *Asian Values and Human Rights: A Confucian Communitarian Perspective*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000.

Dirlik, Arif. *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

Fairbank, John King. *The United States and China*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, first edition 1948, latest revision in the 1983.

———. *The Great Chinese Revolution*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987.

Fisher, Tom. "Wu Han: The 'Upright Official' as a Model in the Humanities." In *China's Establishment Intellectuals*, 155–84. Edited by Carol Lee Hamrin and Timothy Cheek.

Armonk, NYC: M. E. Sharpe, 1986.
Fitzgerald, John. *Awakening China: Politics, Culture and Class in the Nationalist Revolution*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996.
Fogel, Joshua A. *Articulating the Sinosphere: Sino-Japanese Relations in Space and Time*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009.
Fung, Edmund S.K. *The Intellectual Foundations of Chinese Modernity*. NYC: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
Gao Hua. *Geming niandai* (The age of revolution). Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 2010.
Goldman, Merle. *China's Intellectuals: Advise and Dissent*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981.
———. *Comrade to Citizen: The Struggle for Political Rights in China*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007.
Grieder, Jerome. *Intellectuals and the State in Modern China.* NYC: The Free Press, 1981.
Gunew, Sneja. "Vernacular Cosmopolitanism." The Law and Society Speakers Series, University of British Columbia (Oct. 15, 2010).
Holm, David. *Art and Ideology in Revolutionary China*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.
Ishikawa, Yoshihiro. *The Formation of the Chinese Communist Party*. Translated by Joshua A. Fogel. NYC: Columbia University Press, 2013.
Jenco, Leigh, ed. *Chinese Thought as Global Theory: Diversifying Knowledge Production in the Social Sciences and Humanities*. Forthcoming, 2014.
Jowitt, Kenneth. "The Leninist Phenomenon." In *New World Order: The Leninist Extinction*, 1–50. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.
Judge, Joan. *Print and Politics: "Shibao" and the Culture of Reform in Late Qing China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997.
Koselleck, Reinhart. "*Begriffsgeschichte* and Social History." In Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, 73–91. Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press, 1985.
Levenson, Joseph. *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate: A Trilogy*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958, 1964, 1965.
Liu, Lydia. *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture and Translated Modernity—China 1900–1937*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993.
Ma Nancun [Deng Tuo]. *Yanshan yehua heji* (Evening chats at Yanshan, collected volume). Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 1963; and revised edition 1979.
MacFarquhar, Roderick. *Origins of the Cultural Revolution: 3. The Coming of the Cataclysm*. NYC: Columbia University Press, 1997.
Schram, Stuart, et al., eds. *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912–1949*, vol. VIII. Armonk, NYC: M. E. Sharpe, 2014.
Mao Zedong's "Talks at the Yan'an Conference on Literature and Art." Translated by Bonnie S. McDougall. Ann Arbor: Michigan Papers in Chinese Studies, no. 33, 1980.
Meisner, Maurice. *Mao's China and After*, 3rd edition. NYC: The Free Press, 1999.
Mizoguchi Yuzo. *Hoho to shite no Chugoku* (China as method). Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1989.
Pan Wei, ed. *Zhongguo moshi: jiedu renmin gongheguo de 60 nian* (The China model:

Reading 60 years of the People's Republic). Beijing: Zhongyang bianyi chubanshe, 2009.
Pusey, James. *China and Charles Darwin*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Asia Series, 1983.
Richter, Melvin. *The History of Political and Social Concepts: A Critical Introduction*. NYC: Oxford University Press, 1995 [Chinese translation: *Zhengzhi he shehui gainian shi yanjiu*]. Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe, 2010.
Said, Edward. "Traveling Theory." In Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic*, 226–47. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983.
Shih, Chih-yu. *Sinicizing International Relations: Self, Civilization and Intellectual Politics in Subaltern East Asia*. NYC: Palgrave, 2013.
Smith, Craig. "Asianism at the Margins of Empire." University of British Columbia, PhD diss., forthcoming, 2014.
Smith, Kidder and Peter Bol, eds., *Sung Dynasty Uses of the I Ching*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990.
Sun, Yat-sen. "*Da yaxiyazhuyi"* (Pan Asianism, 1924), the English translation reprinted at http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Sun_Yat_Sen%27s_speech_on_Pan-Asianism, accessed Oct. 6, 2013.
Takeuchi, Yoshimi. "Asia as Method (1960)." Translated in Takeuchi, *What is Modernity? Writings of Takeuchi Yoshimi*, 149–65. NYC: Columbia University Press, 2005.
van de Ven, Hans J. *From Friend to Comrade: The Founding of the Chinese Communist Party, 1920–1927*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.
Wang, Fanxi. *Chinese Revolutionary: Memoirs 1919–1949*. Translated by Gregor Benton. NYC: Oxford University Press, 1980.
Wang Hui. *Wang Hui zixuan ji* (Wang Hui's self-selected articles). Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 1997.
———. "Reclaiming Asia from the West: Rethinking Global History." *Japan Foucus*, Feb. 23, 2005. http://www.japanfocus.org/-Wang-Hui/1781, accessed Oct. 6, 2013.
———. "Quzhengzhihua de zhengzhi: baquan de duozhong goucheng yu liushi niandai de xiaoshi" (The politics of de-politicization: The multiple formations of hegemony and dissolution of the 1960s). *Kaifang shidai* (Open times, Guangzhou), no. 2 (2007): 5–41.
———. *The End of Revolution: China and the Limits of Modernity*. London: Verso, 2011.
———. *The Politics of Imagining Asia*. Editedy by Theodore Huters. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011.
Wang Shiwei. *Wang Shiwei wencun* (Depository of Wang Shiwei's writings). Shanghai: Sanlian shudian, 1998.
Werbner, Pnina. "Vernacular Cosmpolitanism." *Theory, Culture and Society* 23, nos. 2–3 (2006), 496–98.
Williams, James H. "Fang Lizhi's Expanding Universe." *The China Quarterly*, no. 123 (1990), 459–84.
Xu Jilin, ed. *Ershi shiji Zhongguo sixiang shi* (Twentieth century Chinese intellectual history), 2 vols. Shanghai: Dongfang chuban zhongxin, 2000.
Zarrow, Peter. *Anarchism in Chinese Political Culture*. NYC: Columbia University Press, 1990.
———. *After Empire: The Conceptual Transformation of the Chinese State, 1885–1924*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012.