

cooperation was all the more salient writing this in July 2021, in light of political cleavages that undermined Taiwan's ability to tame its worst COVID-19 outbreak to date. Once this immediate crisis fades, Bush pushes Taiwan's leaders to tackle the myriad of systemic challenges, because "[t]o defer choices is itself a choice, and not one that is in the broader public interest" (p. 46). Bush ends with cautious optimism that such determined, timely action is possible: "The people of Taiwan deserve no less" (p. 344).

Ultimately, while *Difficult Choices* triumphs in depth and breadth, reading it also reminds us that no one book can be *the* book on Taiwan, both because there are so many facets to examine and because there are so many voices that should do that work. As an example, Bush explains how the Kuomintang (KMT) takeover of Taiwan was "brutal" (p. 104) and the opposition that flared as a result of the February 28 Incident of 1947 (pp. 22–28) "was quashed quickly and brutally with indiscriminate violence" (p. 105). Yet his descriptions of the 1970s and early 1980s—"when it came to civil liberties and political rights, Taiwan was still a rough place" and "[a] few of the targets of KMT repression had experiences more horrific than being confined to prison" (p. 107)—do not fully capture the extent of the pain suffered even during the waning years of martial law and how that pain still resonates for many in Taiwan.

Similarly, detailed survey data reveal but do not illuminate the experience of younger generations whose identity has been shaped in a democratic Taiwan.¹ The contrasts are diminishing between those whose families arrived after 1945 with the KMT and those whose families were already living in Taiwan. Thus, while *Difficult Choices* provides readers with a thoughtful, clear-eyed exploration of Taiwan, it is, by nature, a book with more brains than heart. And that is exactly what it should be, given who the author is: "a male, Caucasian; . . . a citizen of the United States of America; . . . and so on" (as Bush describes himself when illustrating the role of identity) (p. 187).

After absorbing the deep, astute analysis in *Difficult Choices*, it should be an easy choice for readers to explore additional writings to gain an even more textured understanding from Taiwanese voices. If domestic and foreign audiences heed Bush's seasoned perspective as an outside expert who is rooting for Taiwan's success, the chances will improve that the strength of Taiwan, and the voices in it, will grow.

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Monks in Motion: Buddhism and Modernity across the South China Sea. By JACK MENG-TAT CHIA. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020. xxi, 275 pp. ISBN: 9780190090975 (cloth). doi:10.1017/S0021911821001649

Jack Meng-Tat Chia's masterful book *Monks in Motion: Buddhism and Modernity across the South China Sea* shatters the stereotype of monastic renunciants as avoiding

¹Polling data are often broken into age categories—for example, ten-year age groups. Taiwan's population is also discussed in terms of other groupings, such as "Gen Fivers," or the fifth generation of Taiwanese—used here to denote people who trace their lineage in Taiwan to the period before the KMT's arrival but not including indigenous populations—that starts with people born after 1982 (pp. 200–201).

involvement with worldly affairs, using the examples of three famous monks—Chuk Mor, Yen Pei, and Ashin Jinarakkhita—all of whom demonstrated their devotion to the propagation of Buddhism beyond the Mahāyāna territories of twentieth-century Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia. The book's value stems from the fact that it looks beyond “Greater China” (mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan) and extends this academic conversation to deeper questions about the nature of Mahāyāna Buddhism at its margins in maritime Southeast Asia. In particular, Chia stakes out his nonmainstream position by highlighting the contribution of Chinese migration to the spread and development of Buddhism in the Chinese periphery and by delineating how his three focal diasporic monks made maritime Southeast Asia “an incubator of Buddhist modernism” (p. 3).

In chapter 1, Chia introduces the rich historical background of Chinese migration from China to maritime Southeast Asia in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and how Chinese immigrants played key roles in the importation of folk deities and Chinese Buddhism to that region. This narrative resonates strongly with Jan Nattier's category of “Baggage Buddhism,” which is “deliberately monoethnic in membership at the outset” because it operates not only for religious purposes, but also as a community support network.¹ Initially, most Chinese monks in the region were poorly educated and served as temple and funeral-ritual specialists for Chinese immigrants. This situation changed in the Malay Archipelago at the end of the nineteenth century with the settlement of several Chinese monks (e.g., Beow Lean, Xianhui, and Pen Ching) who not only had proper monastic training, but also crucially contributed to institutional Buddhism through the building of monasteries. In the final part of this chapter, Chia shows how transnational Buddhist networks between China and Southeast Asia played key roles in the spread of Buddhist modernist ideas, in urban development, and in efforts to resist Japanese invasion.

Chapter 2 provides a detailed account of the life of Chuk Mor, who is widely considered the “Father of Malaysia's Chinese Buddhism” (p. 47). He received monastic education and training in mainland China with many well-known masters, including Taixu; yet, as a Buddhist modernist, he strongly promoted orthodoxy and the deritualization of bereavement in the contexts of Malaysian Chinese customs and practices. In addition, he promoted education for both monastics and the laity by establishing the Triple Wisdom Hall and the Malaysian Buddhist Institute, transforming the religious landscape of postcolonial Malaysia.

Chapter 3 draws on the case of Yen Pei, whose early monastic experience in China—like Chuk Mor's—vitally shaped his contribution to his host country, Chinese- and Buddhist-majority Singapore. Specifically, he imported the humanistic Buddhist ideas of Taixu and Yinshun and promoted various kinds of dharma education as a counterweight to uninformed scripture chanting and blessing seeking. He also became actively involved in elder care, organ donation, and drug abuse prevention in collaboration with local authorities: in short, practicing the bodhisattva spirit in a manner that transformed Buddhism in Singapore.

Chapter 4 focuses on Ashin Jinarakkhita, who is seen as “the first Indonesian-born” *bhikṣu* (p. 118). He attempted to break the religious category of Buddhism as almost synonymous with Chinese identity in his Muslim-majority country and utilized narratives of Borobudur—an ancient Buddhist site—to legitimize Buddhism's native status. Perhaps most importantly, he established the popular Buddhayāna movement, which combines Mahāyāna and Theravāda traditions, in keeping with Indonesia's national motto, “Unity in Diversity” (p. 132). Later, in response to the policy of Chinese assimilation under

¹Jan Nattier, “Buddhism Comes to Main Street,” *Wilson Quarterly* 21, no. 2 (1997): 78.

the rigidly monotheist Suharto government, Jinarakkhita conceptualized Sang Hyang Ādi-Buddha as “the Buddhist version of almighty God” (p. 145) to ensure Buddhism’s survival. While this compromise succeeded in its aim, it also caused tensions amounting to a schism among Buddhayāna monastics.

My minor quibble with this book is that it would have benefited from a more critical examination of the category of “orthodoxy” in modernist discourses that reject heterodox practices arising from Chinese popular customs. It is worth rethinking how “normative” Buddhism is a construct that has never actually existed on the ground, except in rather artificial “reform” situations, such as the “protestant” Buddhist movement in Sri Lanka.

That said, *Monks in Motion* is a must-read for historians and for scholars in Buddhist studies, Chinese diaspora studies, and transnational studies to delve deeper into the connected histories of Buddhist communities. It will inspire scholars to rethink the development of Chinese Buddhism beyond the Mahāyāna territories.

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China and the End of Global Silver, 1873–1937. By AUSTIN DEAN. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2020. 264 pp. ISBN: 9781501752407 (cloth).
doi:10.1017/S0021911821001650

Most scholars of China are already familiar with the critical role of silver in Chinese history. Its steady influx commercialized the economy starting from the Ming dynasty (1368–1644); its alarming outflow precipitated the First Opium War (1839–42); and its continued use kept China out of the gold standard during the twentieth century. Many commodities have undoubtedly reshaped China’s history. Yet silver is unique in both the scale and the duration of its impact; few other commodities have transformed China so completely and for so long.

Despite the importance of this commodity, research on silver in Chinese history remains temporally unbalanced. Scholars have devoted considerable attention to the early modern era, when China was the importer of global silver and “the tomb of European moneys.” Recent books such as *The Silver Way* by Peter Gordon and Juan José Morales and *Baiyin Digu* by journalist Xu Jin (recently translated by Stacy Mosher as *Empire of Silver*) maintain this focus, as they are far more concerned with how silver connected China with the global economy in the early modern period.¹ By contrast, scholars have focused less on the modern era, when China struggled to wean itself from its reliance on silver and reform its monetary system.

Austin Dean’s *China and the End of Global Silver* thus offers an overdue corrective to this historiographical imbalance by retracing the unappreciated impact and enduring legacies of silver for modern China and the international monetary order. It is decidedly

¹Peter Gordon and Juan José Morales, *The Silver Way: China, Spanish America and the Birth of Globalisation, 1565–1815* (Melbourne: Penguin Random House Australia, 2017); Xu Jin, *Baiyin Digu*, translated by Stacy Mosher as *Empire of Silver: A New Monetary History of China* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2021).