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Reviews of Books

Given Issei fears about being confused with the Chinese, further exploration of the connections to and comparisons with the Chinese (such as how Japanese “picture brides” were allowed to immigrate when most Chinese wives were not) could have enriched the work. Still, this is a thought-provoking book that suggests several avenues for future research and presents significant new heritage language material.

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WESLEY SASAKI-UEMURA


Fifteen years ago, in his influential essay “From *The Uprooted* to *The Transplanted*: The Writing of American Immigration History, 1951–1989,” Rudolph Vecoli observed a paradigm shift in immigration history between 1951, when Oscar Handlin published *The Uprooted*, and 1985, when John Bodnar published *The Transplanted*. A key feature of this change, according to Vecoli, is from an American-centeredness to an international perspective. Immigrant experience is no longer a one-way street to the Promised Land but a multifaceted process that involves migration, return migration, and re-migration. *Chinese American Transnationalism: The Flow of People, Resources, and Ideas between China and America during the Exclusion Era* serves as a model example of this new scholarship. Using the concept of transnationalism, the book examines different dimensions of a constant trans-Pacific interchange among Chinese immigrants between the United States as their host society and their homeland, China.

Six of the eight essays are drawn from the authors’ earlier publications. The opening chapter by Erika Lee is a fascinating rendition of the creative strategies utilized by immigrants to get around exclusion laws. The simple fact that some 300,000 Chinese entered the United States between 1849 and 1882 is a telling example of how successfully Chinese immigrants defeated the discriminative laws. Chapters 2 and 3, by Madeline Hsu and the editor herself, provide illuminating examples about how those successes were made possible. While Hsu focuses on the role of Jinshanzhuang, a unique Chinese institution, Sucheng Chan explores the lives of
Chinese women in a notoriously male-dominated bachelor society. Reading Chan’s essay reminds me of similar stories about Irish women in nineteenth-century America as told by Hasia Diner in *Erin’s Daughters in America*. Haiming Liu’s piece on Chinese herbalists is one of the most interesting. Liu’s observation that “Chinese herbal medicine can be seen as an instance of reverse assimilation” rings true in many Chinese communities, including John Day, Oregon, where the Kam Wah Chung Museum commemorates the legacy of an Ing “doc” Hay. The next three chapters, by Yong Chen, Shehong Chen, and Him Mark Lai, explore this trans-Pacific exchange in the political, ideological, and educational realms. Adding more complexity to the picture, Chapter 8, by Xiao-huang Yin, takes readers back to the perpetual immigrant issue—identity formation and development for the second-generation—through a nuanced analysis of two of the earlier Chinese American texts: Pardee Lowe’s *Father and Glorious Descendant* (1943) and Snow Wong’s *Fifth Chinese Daughter* (1945).

Chan should be commended for continuing to produce solid scholarship in Asian American history. For this particular volume, I would certainly concur with her statement, “If faculty teaching Chinese American or, more broadly, Asian American [history] can choose only one book about the exclusion era to assign in their classes, this book is it” (p. x).

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*Coolies and Cane: Race, Labor, and Sugar in the Age of Emancipation*. By Moon-Ho Jung. (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006. x + 275 pp. $48.95)

Focusing on attempts to import Chinese contract labor to Louisiana sugar plantations in the decade after the Civil War, this book argues for the importance of the Chinese “coolie” in the construction of race, nation, and citizenship in the United States. The narrative develops on three levels: the local, national, and transnational. All three are interesting but are given unequal emphasis and not always well integrated.

The local narrative focuses on Louisiana debates over the importation of Chinese labor. It is well placed in the context of post-war dislocations of the plantation economy, other attempts to recruit labor, and Chinese experiences on the plantations. Much of