

that the *Lienü zhuan* reinforces the belief that permutations of *yin* (identified with female power) and *yang* (identified with male power) can produce all things and events. Yet, because of the danger that the *yin* force will be too strong and thus dominate *yang* (the emperor's rightful authority), it also expressed the imperative need to curtail female influence and mold it along the lines of a more Confucian value system. Contextualizing Liu Xiang's work, Kinney remarks that the historian Sima Qian 司馬遷 (ca. 145–ca. 86 B.C.E.) “was schooled in the belief that the rise and fall of dynasties was at least partly due to the good or destructive influence of the ruler's consort. He therefore regarded the imperial consort as an essential component in dynastic stability: the right sort of woman would support the imperial house; the wrong sort would topple it.” (p. xviii) The ethical behavior of women at court was considered essential to a strong empire. Kinney further emphasizes that “in the majority of narratives found in the *Lienü zhuan*, women are generally portrayed as acting in response to some form of conflict, crisis, or dangerous trend that threatens family or dynasty.” (p. xxx) Those slave-turned-empress, Cinderella-like fairy tales provided common women with a powerful incentive to cultivate their moral character, promising to bring them a better life, a good reputation, and an eternal legacy. Women were valued and praised for their achievements in self-cultivation, and their effective works were given a privileged position.

According to Kinney the unifying theme of the *Lienü zhuan* as a whole can be seen in a reference to “dynastics,” that is “an ideology for reinforcing habits of deference to a family-based hierarchy for the sake of its ongoing continuity and prestige” (p. xxvii). With both eloquence and astuteness she distinguishes between the gender-based notion of patriarchy and dynastics, which “focuses on the transmission and perpetuation of a specific power structure [and] is thus more concerned with maintaining continuity than shoring up masculine power.” She also describes dynastics as a “verbal and behavioral mechanism for perpetuating power, whether it is masculine or not” (p. xxvii). The women in the *Lienü zhuan* are not just seen subordinating themselves to men, but are more importantly perceived as a means to sustain dynastic power or family prestige. For example, in the *Lienü zhuan* the relationship between husband and wife is often described as professional and impersonal. The interests of all individuals, husband or wife, are placed beneath those of the enduring family or unit. “Thus, a woman must perform her occupational duties for the greater glory of her husband's line in the same way as a minister performs his” (p. xxviii). Women are asked to enhance and promote the public good and health and the continuity of the dynasty through their own moral influence and duties.

This translation provides a distinctive and valuable revelatory set of lenses through which to examine the position of Chinese women from a new angle. It also supplies immense thrust to better appreciate the “otherness” of ancient Chinese gender dynamics. Finally, this momentous and timely work of scholarship will enhance, deepen, and heighten our understanding of Chinese gender, history, and culture. It is certainly a must-read book.

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The Making of a New Rural Order in South China: I. Village, Land, and Lineage in Huizhou, 900–1600. By JOSEPH P. MCDERMOTT. Cambridge: CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2013. Pp. xvi + 466. \$99.00 (cloth).

Among a handful of regional merchant groups active in late imperial China, the one from Huizhou, a mountainous prefecture in southeastern China, was by far the most successful. “A town could not be called a town without Huizhou merchants,” as a popular saying goes. From the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries, Huizhou merchants not only dominated the lucrative business of salt distribution, they also managed nation-wide chain pawnshops and were active in the distribution of, among other things, tea and timber. What made Huizhou merchants so successful? Based on decades of reading Huizhou sources, the extremely rich and precious historical records that provide historians “front-row seats ‘inside the belly of the whale’ ” (p. 309), Joseph P. McDermott provides a careful examination of

the economic and social history of late imperial Huizhou and gives a stimulating interpretation to the problem in his new book.

Although the problem will be addressed more systematically in the second volume, which is still under preparation, the first volume gives readers an unambiguous answer. The secret of Huizhou merchants' success lies, as the author points out, not in financial or commercial institutions, but in social institutions that facilitated the flow and pooling of capital and "that are not normally linked to economic life in our understanding of Chinese history" (p. 6). Among the institutions, the ancestral hall was by far the most important, because it often served as a credit association that provided loans to people in need. Therefore, the "local roots of the success of the merchant houses of Huizhou lineages" lay in "a previously elite classical institution that, from the mid-Ming, proved remarkably popular and successful when it assumed some of the basic functions we associate with a bank" (p. 432).

A problem of economic history thus becomes one of social history: how "the previously elite classical institution," the lineage, came to dominate Huizhou society. The six chapters of the book take pains to trace the rise of the lineage and especially the difficulties it encountered along its march to domination. More concretely, the book's first three chapters reconstruct the evolution of four types of Huizhou village institutions from the Song to the mid-Ming. The last three chapters provide a detailed case study of an important Huizhou lineage, emphasizing the economic and social difficulties behind the management of lineage estates, especially mountain land.

The social landscape of Huizhou in the Song and Yuan was characterized by "a musical quartet" (p. 53): village worship associations, shrines of popular religious cults, formal religious institutions, and kinship institutions all played important roles in village life and competed with each other for followers. The village worship association, an inclusive territorial institution that was often coterminous with a natural village, sought members only from within its village area and its household membership numbered in the tens. However, it was active in guiding a village's communal affairs and was the basic community unit of larger social organizations. The popular cult centered around the cult of a popular deity and attracted followers far beyond one village and usually provided the basis for extensive alliances dedicated to the collective worship of a shared deity. The formal religious organizations were also popular in the Song and Yuan, because by constructing a Buddhist or Daoist cloister or chapel and donating landed properties to it, a kinship group was able to evade labor service charges and have their ancestors looked after.

The three types of village institutions connected to kinship institutions in different ways. The village worship association and popular cult, though different in size and membership, were organized to worship a tutelary deity, which was often regarded as the founding ancestor of a kinship group. Meanwhile, cloisters or chapels were constructed principally to take care of one family's ancestors. The institutions thus crisscrossed kinship groups. However, they were nonetheless coterminous with the latter before the rise of the lineage: important tutelary deities were not monopolized by one kinship group, their cults were seldom exclusive, and a great variety of surname groups were involved as its advocates, members, managers, and devotees.

The kinship institutions still had a long way to go before they dominated the social landscape of Huizhou. The two types of large kinship organizations in the Song and Yuan, the large communal family and trust-based lineage, achieved some form of popularity and had followers in Huizhou. But both confronted certain inherent tensions that were difficult to resolve: growing membership versus limited common resources, promises of economic equality versus generational and gender hierarchies, and the powers of managers versus the interests of the members (p. 110). These built-in tensions plagued lineages, including the land trust of the Dou lineage of Shanhe village, Qimen county.

Founded by a wealthy local boss in the early Ming, the trust was composed principally of nearly 1,500 fiscal *mu* of paddy land and registered mountain land. The Chengs emphasized the profits from tax-free mountain land, principally because the performance of the paddy land was hardly satisfactory: while the land price increased four times, the rent increased only two-thirds during the Ming (p. 272). However, the management of mountain land confronted greater difficulties than that of paddy fields, not only because of the much longer growth cycle of trees (usually twenty to thirty years), which made it necessary to create a "future market" of timber in Huizhou, but also because of the complicated social

relations involved in the renting, growing, felling, shipping, and selling of timber (owners, tenants, hire labor, merchants, etc.). In addition, private interests within the lineage also had their parts to play, and theft and embezzlement were not uncommon. These difficulties, from time to time, put the management of mountain land to the test.

Nevertheless, the lineage got the edge in spite of difficulties. From the late fourteenth to the mid-sixteenth centuries Huizhou lineages set about forming sacrificial and charitable land trusts, compiling lineage genealogies, and setting up ancestral halls “in unprecedented degree” (p. 169). This development is due to two important changes starting from the early Ming. Social disruption during the Yuan-Ming transition devastated many old families and facilitated the rise of new rural elites who took advantage of the special circumstance to expand their landownership, extend their power, and thereby begin to challenge the power and position of other institutions in Huizhou villages. Meanwhile, the Ming state sought to restrain the autonomy of both Buddhist establishments and village worship associations and voiced support for increasingly strident neo-Confucian calls for stronger kinship institutions. By finding new avenues of income, especially through money-lending, Huizhou lineages also adopted new strategies of survival over time. Therefore, the development of lineages gained momentum starting from the early Ming. The rise of the lineage is a long-term process of social reconstitution in which the other village institutions began to be deprived of their autonomy, a process that placed the social matrix of Huizhou merchants’ national success in order.

There are many reasons to praise McDermott’s book. In contrast to the common practice of addressing problems of economic history in economic terms, the author reminds us of the social origins of commercial success. Rather than assuming the rise of lineage to have been a smooth social process, the author demonstrates that the process was full of historical contingency. Furthermore, our understanding of late imperial Chinese rural life has been enriched by the book’s careful reconstruction of village institutions in the Song and Yuan and the detailed investigation of the management of lineage estates in the Ming. Future historians will find the book indispensable when they explore the economic and social history of rural institutions in the Song, Yuan, and Ming periods.

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