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Although the renewal of the Chinese nation is the kernel of President Xi Jinping's China dream, the Tibetan and Uyghur issues continue to pose instability and uncertainty as to the construction of a strong and unified China. China's current ethnic policies are in fact the legacy of former President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao. With this background in mind, it is thus important to understand the Hu-Wen legacy. *On the Fringes of the Harmonious Society: Tibetans and Uyghurs in Socialist China* presents diverse empirical studies to help us evaluate these policies directed by the concept of a "harmonious society" during the Hu-Wen period. Even before one reads this book, when reflecting upon series of disturbing incidents in Tibet and Xinjiang in recent years, it is not hard to imagine that the evaluation might be negative. Because experts such as James Leibold (2013) have predicted that the Hu-Wen legacy is most likely to remain in place for years to come, this edited volume is timely and worthy of serious reading.

The editors of this book are Trine Brox and Ildikó Bellér-Hann of the University of Copenhagen. Brox is an expert of modern Tibetan studies, whereas Bellér-Hann is an expert of Turkic-speaking peoples of Xinjiang, Turkey, and Central Asia. They stress at the outset that they do not want to mislead the readers to think that this book is about how the Tibetans and Uyghurs are challenging the Chinese center's vision for social harmony. Rather, they expect the chapters to lead readers to find out to what extent the idea of social harmony does have positive implications for Tibetans and Uyghurs in terms of their long-term development and to what extent social harmony is propaganda.

Scholars from various disciplines were invited to conduct this academic inquiry. I value this interdisciplinary approach because it allows me, a political scientist working on similar issues, to look at what colleagues in neighboring disciplines would have observed. As it turns out, the reading was enjoyable; I learned a lot from the perspectives of social anthropologists, geographers, ethnomusicologists, human rights activists, and so on. Some of them examine fascinating cases, such as the carpet industry (chapter 4) and "soundscapes" (chapter 11), which would never have been examined in my own political science field, thus making the book an exciting read.

The themes that are woven through these chapters enable us to understand that Tibetans and Uyghurs are quite active in accepting, bargaining, challenging, or dismissing the ideology of the harmonious society and the policies associated with it. Their geographic locations might be on the fringe of the Chinese territory, and their social status, how they are perceived, and how they feel about themselves may sometimes indicate their plight of being marginal. However, it is not quite right to say that they are in the periphery of the Chinese affairs. Their actions, counter-actions, and even inactions have profound meanings for the Chinese nation that the current leaders try to consolidate and revive.

Like what I had anticipated before reading this book, most authors have found disharmony in ethnic relations. Overall, the state has exercised a mixture of repressive policies and positive discriminative policies to manage the Tibetan and Uyghur issues. These practices and policies are not well received most of the time and do have side effects. In Andrew Fischer's longitudinal study (chapter 2), for instance, he discovers that the political and economic environment for Tibetans and Uyghurs to develop is discriminatory and assimilationist. This echoes Henryk Szadziwski in chapter 3, who indicates that the Chinese state's development policies fail to produce the equality and stability that underpin a harmonious society. Szadziwski is the only contributor in this volume who is a human rights activist, not a scholar per se, but he has published well-researched work in academic outlets. In his activist career, he has dealt with many human rights cases. Hence, his chapter is worthy of attention.

Tracy Y. Zhang (chapter 4), Tashi Nyima (chapter 5), Elisa Cencetti (chapter 6), and Françoise Robin (chapter 8) focus on the Tibetan issues. Zhang explores the carpet industry, Nyima and Cencetti address the government's relocating of pastoral communities into urban life, and Robin looks at language policies.

This might just be a matter of personal taste, but I am particularly captivated by Zhang's ethnographic study of the carpet industry in Lhasa, in which she vividly illustrates how the Chinese market reform brings out politics of differences and hierarchies of culture in Tibet. For instance, she observes that "discourses on Tibetan or Chinese culture can be manipulated and then translated into value judgments" (page 99) to affect the "saleability" of carpets from Tibet, other provinces of China, and South Asian countries. It is here that I see clearly how local Tibetans act as active agents in their everyday life to negotiate the new socioeconomic order that the state tries to arrange for them.

Chris Hann (chapter 7), Joanne Smith Finley (chapter 10), Rachel Harris (chapter 11), and Eric T. Schluessel (chapter 12) tackle the issue of the Uyghurs. Hann targets language policy, Smith Finley focuses on ethnic intermarriage between the Han and Uyghurs, Harris investigates religious practices, and Schluessel discusses Uyghur

intellectual writings. Smith Finley has always impressed me by her breadth of studies of diverse issues in Xinjiang. This time, she raises the issue of how the Chinese state has used television broadcasting to promote the idea of interethnic coexistence and, in particular, interethnic marriages. I think it is interesting that she finds no coherent stance among her interviewees and informants on this topic.

Lastly, I shall mention that Harris's work on religious soundscapes is also fascinating. She looks into a special group of Uyghur women known as *büwi* and how they "sonically" negotiate their status through ritual practices. Their work, however, is perceived as a threat instead of a contribution to social harmony.

Probably one can regard Emily T. Yeh's chapter 9 as an exception among all chapters; it sheds light on how cooperation between Tibetans and the Han has been achieved to protect the environment. This is an awakening call to researchers of Tibet, Xinjiang, and other ethnic issues in China. Although I concur with the worrying picture that most authors have found in their chapters, I believe Yeh's work suggests that an even wider coverage of studies should be included in future work for us to evaluate the nuance and complexity of these topics.

In Shih and Chen's edited volume *Tibetan Studies in Comparative Perspective* (2012), there is an advocacy of conducting this kind of research in the spirit of "multi-sited ethnography," which is an approach that George E. Marcus proposes in the *Annual Review of Anthropology* (1995). This approach encourages comparisons beyond the linear spatial plane. Scholars do not need to have any pre-defined theoretical framework, variables, hypotheses, or positions before they investigate. Instead, they allow the exploration in various kinds of cases to lead them. I believe *On the Fringes of the Harmonious Society* is presented in the spirit of multi-sitedness. In this academic journey, we find several instances in which a top-down state-centric approach has been adopted to construct social harmony. Most of the time, it is quite counter-productive. Does Yeh's research imply that a successful model is possible in which harmony is being worked out by Tibetans and the Han themselves? Can a grassroots model or at least a corporatist approach with the endorsement and support of the state be more effective than a purely top-down one?

Outside this edited volume, Ben Hillman (2010) has a study that shows the relative stability and harmony in Diqing in China's Yunnan Province when violent protests erupted across the Tibet Autonomous Region in March 2008. Hillman proposes Diqing as a positive model of development with Tibetan characteristics, which other areas might adopt in order to ease Han-Tibetan tension. These different and contrasting findings and perspectives might be the silver lining that permits scholars, if not central policymakers, to come up with good models to foster genuine social harmony in China.

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