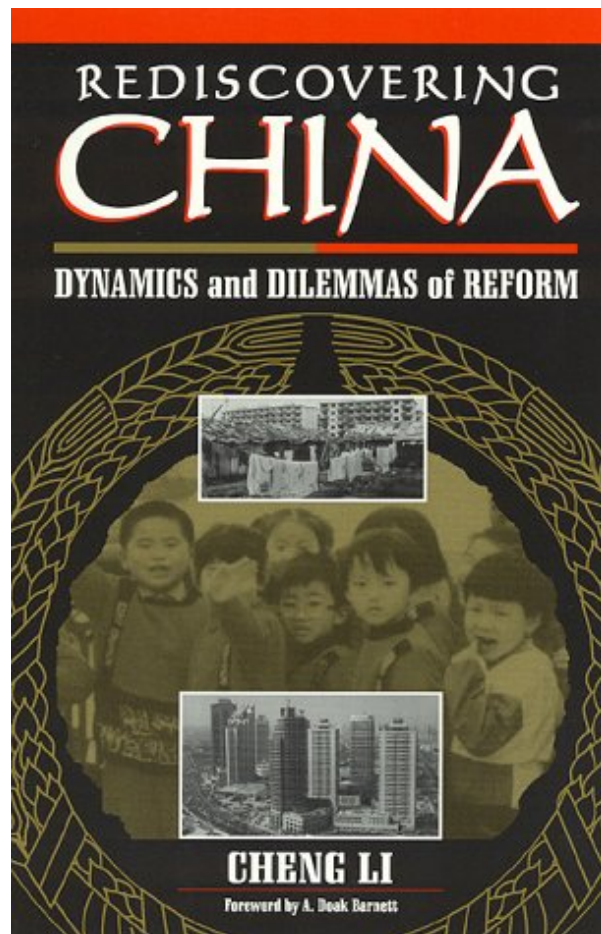
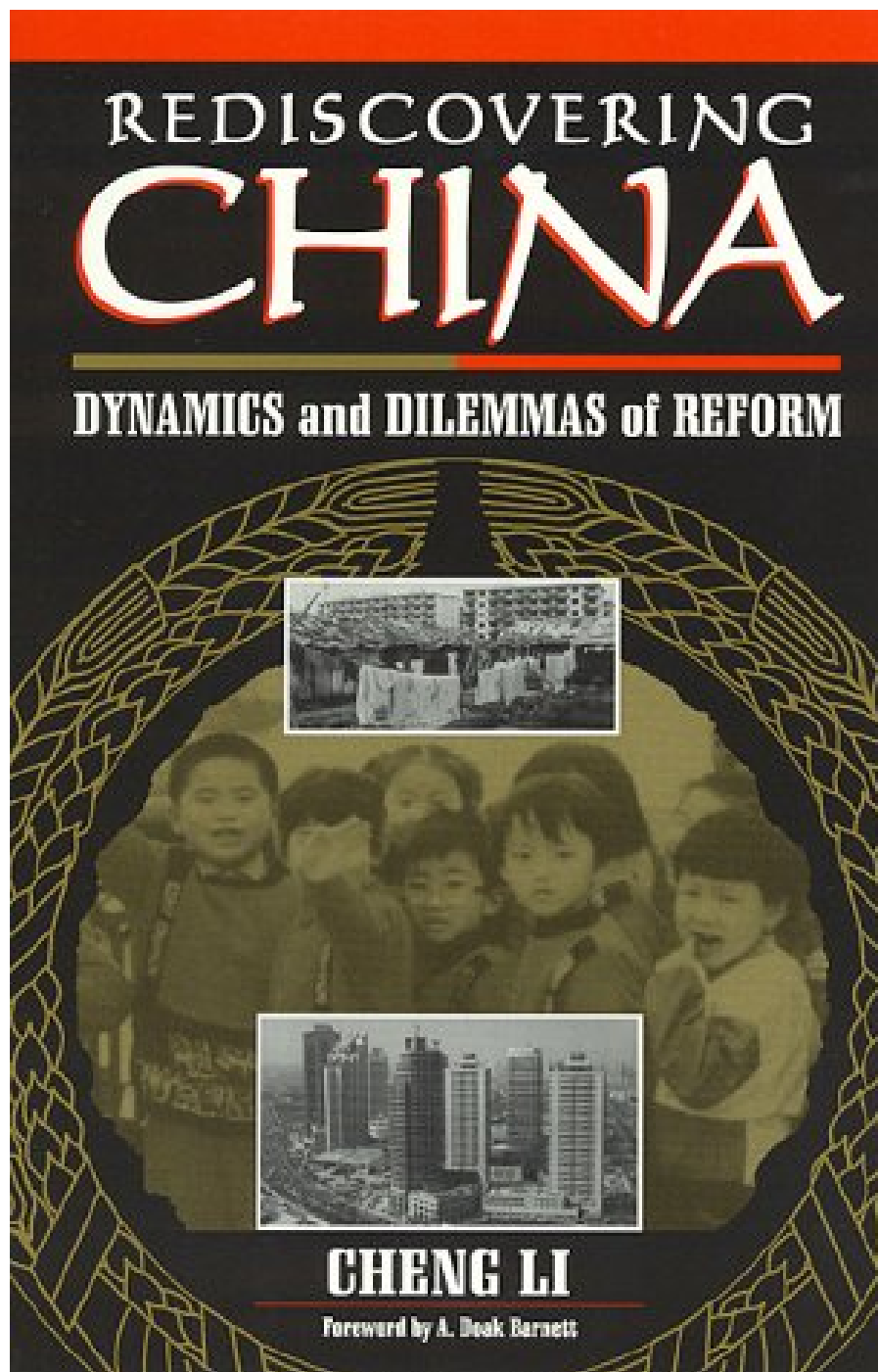


REDISCOVERING CHINA: DYNAMICS AND DILEMMAS OF REFORM BY CHENG LI



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Review

This important book, based on Cheng's wide travels and research in China in 1993-95 as a fellow of the U.S.-based Institute of Current World Affairs, dispels several myths. (Foreign Affairs)

By walking the reader through China from the vantage point of local residents who live daily through chaotic changes and pressing concerns, the book gives a human face to China's complex transformation. . . . The depth of Li's conversations with locals and the breadth of personal contacts on which those were based are extraordinarily impressive and are unlikely to be matched by non-Chinese speakers. . . . The book's immediacy and wealth of information make a unique and major contribution. Together, the variegated data help build a strong case against what Li calls 'serious misconceptions' in the West about contemporary China. . . . Li's arguments are compelling not only because of his intellectual sensitivity but also because of his intellectual integrity. Balance and objectivity are strong qualities of this work. (Yan Sun, associate professor of art history, Gettysburg College American Political Science Review)

Li explores the meaning of China's reforms to the people who are both suffering and enjoying them. Based in Shanghai during the mid-1990s, Li (Rediscover)

Informative and exciting. . . . Students and scholars of China will benefit from reading this book, even if they do travel to China, because Li has seen things and talked to people that are not easily accessible to Westerners. Those who have not had a chance to visit recently should also read this book simply to catch up with the monumental changes now occurring. (Journal of Asian Studies)

Cheng Li . . . provides intriguing insights into the minutiae of everyday economic and social life through vignettes on the lifestyles, hopes and problems of individual entrepreneurs, migrant workers, factory managers, taxi drivers and others whom he meets on his travels. He builds a persuasive argument which needs to be taken seriously in weighing up the scenarios for China's future. (The China Journal)

By the end of *Rediscovering China*, every reader will have learned something new His cast is rich, and so are the anecdotes [the author] tells. (Far Eastern Economic Review)

Extraordinary. . . . A revealing and compelling profile. . . . The book is a delight to read. . . . Full of stimulating ideas and insights as well as useful facts. Anyone desiring to increase their understanding of the historic changes now taking place in the largest and most rapidly developing nation in the world?whether they already know a great deal or only very little about China?will be richly rewarded by reading it. (from the foreword by A. Do ak Barnett, author of *China on the Eve of Communist Takeover*)

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Li has written a warts-and-all account of 1990s China which includes numerous examples of corruption and other such vices, all the more convincing because of his Chinese background. This is certain to have a profound impact on China, begetting all kinds of new economic and social problems. He should go back and write a sequel, once the dust has settled. (Colina MacDougall *Asian Affairs*)

Eye-opening. For those who see China only on television and remember only its high economic growth rates, the author's moving description and thoughtful analysis of China's 200 million surplus rural laborers, millions of mostly middle-aged, off-post urban workers, and the hard-to solve issues of state-owned enterprises will bring to light the huge costs and the negative aspects of reform. Finally, for those who have doubts about the extent of China's economic development, even a casual reading of this book will put those doubts to rest. As an overseas Chinese who cares a great deal about my native land, I am deeply moved. (Ming Tsui, *Millsaps College Asian Thought & Society*)

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This engrossing and evocative account of the profound changes overtaking China explores the major dilemmas it confronts at the turn of the millennium. Shanghai-born and Western-educated, Cheng Li provides the unique dual perspective of a local resident and a political scientist who returned to his homeland to observe from the grassroots China's remarkable social transformations. During his travels, Li interviewed people from all walks of life, including local officials, technocrats, entrepreneurs, intellectuals, and migrant laborers. His first-hand account shows how broad changes in rural industrialization, urban privatization, and internal migration have deeply influenced people's lives and ways of thinking. The magnitude of these transformations is unprecedented in Chinese history. His account brings a sense of immediacy to the crucial issues that have bedeviled the country: official corruption, growing disparities between rich and poor, the halting reform of state-owned enterprises, transportation and infrastructure bottlenecks, and environmental degradation. In rediscovering his native country, full of energy, irony, paradox, and contradiction, Li challenges some mainstream perceptions of China and presents a fresh perspective on U.S.-Sino relations during this period of uncertainty. His clear-eyed and engaging account provides the reader with the sounds and smells, tastes and textures of this rapidly changing country.

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Thumbs Up

By A Customer

Very informative and enjoyable. And Objective. A lot of depth into social, economic, and political issues in China through vivid interviews and revealing statistical data. The author is an American professor spending two years of social study in China. He did not stay in fancy hotel while in China, but rather went to rural areas, rode public transportation, and interviewed the working class as well as billionaires. The author exposed some serious social issues in China, nevertheless one can sense his passion for this country. As a Chinese I am very proud of Professor Li and his work. This is a great book for Americans who are interested in China and who would like to know more about real China that has been somewhat twisted by the popular western media.

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

The author brings a unique perspective

By randyj@tulsa.com

The author of "Rediscovering China: Dynamics and Dilemmas of Reform" brings a unique perspective to his book, namely the viewpoint of one who has experienced both Chinese and American cultures firsthand. Born in Shanghai, Li Cheng came to the United States to study, later returning to China to write a series of articles, the updated versions of which form the basis of this book. The experiences he relates contain much more depth, much more richness of human interaction than comparable books written by native Western authors. He eloquently points out flaws in American stereotypical thinking about China, as well as criticizing Chinese leadership. I think Jiang ZeMin would do well to heed some of Li Cheng's recommendations.

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