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alive and works well in the PRC. Thus, China's *hukou* system represents the most important institutionalized exclusion and discrimination in today's world.

Third, Wang offers an overall assessment and deep analysis on the impact of the PRC *hukou* system, both positive and negative (chapter 5). "By circumventing the Lewis Transition, China has so far achieved rapid economic growth and technological sophistication in a stable dual economy with relatively small and slow urbanization. Urban slums have so far remained insignificant in the PRC" (p. 148). Of course, the high cost of such seemingly plausible achievements has to be born by the majority of China's population, the excluded, suffering rural residents.

Fourth, the last chapter forecasts the possible future of China's *hukou* system and offers concluding speculations. Following two sections titled "The Words of Reform" (pp. 181-85) and "The Actions of Reform" (pp. 185-94), the book concludes with "An Early Assessment" (pp. 195-98) and the "Epilogue: The Trends and the Future" (pp. 198-203). It is true that "actions of hukou reform so far have been limited, controlled, and localized, primarily focused on image fixing" (p. 196). I also tend to believe that, under the one-party dictatorship, the hope for fundamental change or a complete abolishment of the *hukou* system is very slim (p. 198). But it might be going too far to say that it is "likely to continue to 2040 or even the end of the twenty-first century" (quoting one leading sociologist) (p. 201), or to argue that "the PRC version of China's *hukou* system is here to stay, even if the CCP is reduced and removed from the scene" (p. 202).

I don't see the logic and rationality for the CCP's removal from the scene without democratization in China. Common sense dictates that democracy involves the majority of the disadvantaged organizing into interest groups and fighting for social justice and equality, either peacefully or violently. This law is universally applicable, and China is no exception.

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SARS IN CHINA: Prelude to Pandemic? *Edited by Arthur Kleinman and James L. Watson. Stanford (California): Stanford University Press. 2006. x, 244 pp. (Graphs.) US\$19.95, paper. ISBN 0-8047-5314-8.*

This book is a product of a conference held at Harvard University right after the SARS epidemic in September 2003. With contributions from academics representing several fields, a journalist and a World Health Organization (WHO) officer, this book attempts to give a balanced view of the global calamity centred on China, and has largely succeeded. The book is composed of four parts: epidemiological and public health background, economic and political consequences, social and psychological consequences, and

globalization issues. Part one begins with a clear and concise description of the epidemiology of SARS (Megan Murray), followed by a month-to-month account of the global development of the epidemic from the WHO's point of view (Alan Schnur). Readers are then briefed on the failure of China's public health system since the country's economic reforms of about 20 years ago (Joan Kaufman). Next, readers are given a captivating description in the first paper of part 2 (Tony Saich) of the series of political events in the spring of 2003 leading to the disgrace of the minister of Public Health and the mayor of the capital. With another journalistic account on the unravelling of the cover-up in Beijing (Erik Eckholm), the readers are able to grasp the profound political implications of the onset of the epidemic in China under the watchful eyes of foreign journalists and international organizations such as the WHO. On the other hand, the economic impact of the disaster is shown to be limited (Thomas G. Rawski).

Even though the first paper in the third part is titled "the psychological responses of the SARS epidemic in Hong Kong" (Dominic T.S. Lee and Yun Kwok Wing), it is still very much about the political consequences of the epidemic. The authors argue that the huge demonstration held in the ex-colony on July 1, 2003, calling for democracy, was very much a result of the popular dissatisfaction with the way the government handled the disaster. The second paper in this part (Hong Zhang) shows how people's reaction to the unprecedented crisis—spreading jokes and black humour—revealed a rapidly changing society, with the rise of an affluent, urban class. The issues of stigma and globalization are treated by the last two papers forming the fourth part. The authors of the paper on stigmatization (Arthur Kleinman and Sing Lee), using mostly data from Hong Kong, make the insightful remark that "if there ever were an appropriate use of stigma in public health policy, SARS would be it" (p. 191). Indeed, global and local policies of quarantine and segregation during the height of the epidemic reinforced stigma not only on the patients, but also on their relatives, neighbours and colleagues. The world has yet to find an effective destigmatization method. The concluding paper on the consequences of SARS for globalization (James Watson) sensibly considers the epidemic a warning of the risks involved in an increasingly globalized society and economy, with parts of the world still emerging from a "premodern agricultural system" (p. 202).

On the whole this book is particularly interesting on two points: first, the political impact of SARS in China, as her rulers finally realized that they could no longer rule in absolute secrecy in an increasingly globalized ecosystem; and second, the persistence and use of stigmatization even in an open society such as Hong Kong, and by an international organization such as the WHO.

One may regret that Taiwan is not addressed in this volume, as the epidemic also produced interesting political consequences, both domestically and in relation to China. Similarly, if the brief historical account of epidemics

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in China on p. 7 were fuller and more up-to-date, it would have provided a better departure point for scrutinizing the first global epidemic of the twenty-first century.

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NARRATIVE OF THE CHINESE ECONOMIC REFORMS: Individual Pathways from Plan to Market. *Edited by Dorothy J. Solinger.* Lewiston (New York), Queenston (Ontario), Lampeter (UK): The Edwin Mellen Press. 2005. v, 127 pp. US\$99.95, cloth. ISBN 0-7734-5929-4.

This is a small book that uses seven life histories—six based on researchers' interviews and observations and one autobiographic—to construct a panoramic view of China's post-socialist transition. Although some writers linked their stories to theoretical issues in anthropology, such as Hairong Yan's discussion of "the subaltern's voice (or lack of it)" and its "representation" in chapter 1, and Tim Oakes' analysis of "the re-creation of history" and "the cultural economy" in chapter 3, the main strength of the book lies in its use of personal narratives to gain a direct and intimate look at China's positionality in the post-socialist world.

China abandoned its socialist modernity project almost 30 years ago, and has incrementally perfected its market economy through the current "Reform and Open" policy. This has produced substantial and tangible improvement in people's material living conditions—the envy of most other post-socialist states. And yet, at least officially and nominally, China is still a socialist state, because the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) still has a monopoly on political power. Hence the issues of China's post-socialist reform as a "contingent process" and the "schizophrenic transformation" that Ann Anagnost points out in the preface.

The split personality of the Chinese economic reform can be seen, on the one hand, in the tremendous opportunities for self-improvement and upward mobility that all seven protagonists in the book actively sought. There are, on the other hand, unforeseen pitfalls and setbacks that they invariably suffered when the CCP launched new programmes or changed existing regulations. One point I found particularly intriguing is that all seven protagonists had come from rural backgrounds. While two remained in the countryside to promote rural entrepreneurship (one for cultural tourism in Guizhou and the other one exporting lamb from Yunnan to Shenzhen), the other five succeeded in establishing themselves in China's major cities (three in Beijing, and the other two in Wuhan, Hubei Province, and Dongying, Shandong Province). Given the rigidity of China's division between the