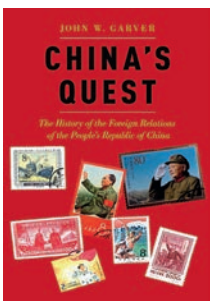


China's quest

John Garver's *China's Quest* is a major addition to the literature covering the People's Republic of China's (PRC's) diplomatic history. Until now there has been no comprehensive single volume text on the topic in English, and Garver is exceptionally qualified for this project, having published books on China's relations with the United States, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Iran, Taiwan, the Middle East, and India. In this book the focus is on China's relations with the five major Asian powers: the USSR/Russian Federation, Japan, India, Iran, and the United States. His conceptual theme is the connection between domestic and international pressures that drive the PRC's foreign relations. This is one of the most important features of this book; too often analysis of international relations ignores what is happening inside a state, focusing instead on geopolitical concerns. Garver's approach gives equal weight to both, and his history is the stronger for it.

Jonathan Fulton



John W. Garver. 2016.
China's Quest: The History of the Foreign Relations of the People's Republic of China
Oxford: Oxford University Press
ISBN 9780190261054

Garver's account explains how these traits, combined with tremendous ambition, explain many of the foreign policy decisions during Mao's rule. It also provides an excellent description of vertical authoritarianism in action; in a subsection about the deterioration of relations with both the USSR and India in the early 1960s titled 'The consequences of Mao's multiple rash decisions', Garver writes, "The swift way in which Mao arrived at these judgements suggests that they were not deeply reasoned. Had either or both of those judgements been submitted for consideration of China's more prudent leaders or their professional staffs, those judgements would almost certainly have been discarded or greatly moderated. But Mao's preeminence within the CCP [Chinese Communist Party] elite was such, and the fate of those who questioned his judgement grim enough, that once Mao rendered a judgement, that judgement was unassailable" (p. 161). His description of Mao's ideological and personal leanings also contributes to a fuller analysis of the PRC's foreign policy during the Mao era.

The second section, 'The happy interregnum', examines the period between 1978–89, bookended by Deng Xiaoping's rise to power and the Tiananmen Square massacre. It emphasizes the necessity of squaring the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP's) ideology with a new approach to economic development before launching the Reform Era; the project remained building socialism in China. In order to accomplish this, the CCP first had to provide an ideological explanation of where the Party had

THE BOOK IS DIVIDED into three chronological sections. The first, 'Forging a revolutionary state', covers the Mao era, from 1949–78. It provides an excellent account of the ideological project of trying to create a new Chinese society, a utopian communist one, and how this influenced the PRC's Cold War relations. The importance of personalities in foreign policy is emphasized, as well as the preferences and perceptions of decision makers. Describing Mao as "an idiosyncratic combination of ideologue and revolutionary realist" (p. 173),

gone wrong under Mao. The consensus decision was that in 1956, when Mao concluded that China still had antagonistic class enemies within, he had made a fundamental error; the problem facing China was not between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, but rather between the low level of development and the peasantry's material needs. This ideological explanation drove the early Reform Era, and helps explain the seemingly impossible contradiction of a communist party ruling over the largest capital-driven development in history. This section provides an excellent account of the competing forces within China during this transitional period, with reformer and conservative factions both struggling for the soul of the Party, and Deng trying to strike a balance. In terms of how this shaped China's foreign policy of the period, Garver's analysis is especially relevant when describing the uneasy relationship between China and the USA, with American leadership expecting China's economic reforms to lead to a form of liberal democratic capitalism, and the PRC's determination to focus on economic development without political reform.

The third section, titled 'The CCP Leninist state besieged', covers the years between 1990 to 2015, a period marked by China's deep integration into the liberal order, its incredible rise in global trade, and its perceived rise to great power status. However, it is a period also marked by domestic tension, as Chinese leaders see their continued rule as threatened by this same liberal system, dominated by liberal ideas. In the wake of Tiananmen, "a rapidly globalizing China was ruled by an anachronistic Leninist elite that saw its authority to rule profoundly threatened by the dynamics of globalization" (p. 464). Here again Garver provides a masterful account of the balancing act Chinese leaders must perform in navigating the international system and at the same time meeting myriad domestic pressures, all the while trying to maintain an ideological justification for the continued rule of the CCP.

Rich in detail but never overwhelming, *China's Quest* provides an excellent historical analysis of the PRC's foreign relations that serves historians, political scientists, international relations specialists, China and Asian studies scholars, and the curious non-specialist reader. Garver's analysis of the international and domestic environment that shaped China's foreign policy, as well as his description of elite perceptions and preferences and ideological considerations, give the fullest single-volume account of the PRC's foreign relations published in English to date.

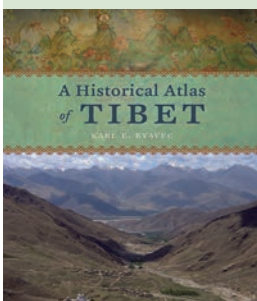
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Also online at newbooks.asia/review/china-quest

A historical atlas of Tibet

Karl Ryavec's book is a remarkable addition to the study of Tibet; more a cartographic history in fact than a historical atlas. For what Ryavec manages to do, far more than simply to present historical information in a series of maps, is to offer a new kind of history of the Tibetan plateau, a new way of understanding the landscape and the people who inhabit it.

Simon Wickhamsmith



Karl E. Ryavec. 2015.
A Historical Atlas of Tibet
University of Chicago Press
ISBN 9780226732442

the shifting sands of affiliation. The Gelukpa control over Tibet, manifested architecturally in the construction of the Potala on the Marpo Ri (in the northeastern quarter of Lhasa) during the second half of the 17th century, also manifested in the building and appropriation of monasteries by the Gelukpa. Thus, even within the environs of Lhasa, we can see for instance that the Rato monastery (seat of the Rato reincarnations) not only switched allegiance from Kadampa to Gelukpa during the Pakmodrupa (1354–1642) period, but is also here listed as a 'new construction'. During the Ganden Phodrang period it is shown as an established monastery. As we see a microhistory of this one monastery, but in the narrative context, we begin to ask questions about the process of such switchings of allegiance, about how the Geluk monastery of Rato itself grew in parallel with the importance of the Rato tulku in the local and religious polities. These questions, of course, are not ones that an atlas will answer, but they come more readily to mind perhaps – or at least come to mind in more explicit shapes – from within a scalar, graphic form, than from within a linear, verbal form.

Answers to such questions can be discovered and interrogated from other sources, and I think that Ryavec's project could have done more to point the reader to scholarship from which more detailed histories might be gleaned. Such scholarship might be familiar to some readers, but the lack of such a bibliography emphasizes how sometimes the target audience for the book is not really made clear. Tibetologists will read the data, I suspect, in very different ways from those who are unfamiliar with Tibetan political and religious history. The texts that accompany the maps provide a clear and elegant historical overview, but they may not present the depth of material required by someone familiar with Tibet. That said, the book's primary focus is of course not to give a written history, but a history through maps, and in this regard it is a most valuable contribution.

RYAVEC'S ACHIEVEMENT is to present a basic factual narrative of Tibetan history in words, while at the same time plotting the implications of this history within an implied three-dimensional geographic and topographic space. In this way, the reader grasps the important developments of Tibetan political and religious history in terms of physical distance as much as of intellectual breadth.

For instance, if we look simply at the expansion of Lhasa (insets of maps 13, 16, 29, and 35), we can see very clearly the dramatic changes that occurred during the Ganden Phodrang period (1642–1951), initiated by the 'Great' Fifth Dalai Lama Lozang Gyatsho (1617–82). Reading these maps as visual intelligence, showing the adaptations to, and relationships between, the political and the religious, we can also observe

Ryavec's specific aim with his atlas is "to map the historical growth and spread of Tibetan civilization across the Tibetan Plateau and bordering hill regions, from prehistorical times to the annexation of the Tibetan state by China in the 1950s" (p. 5). This is a very tall order, and elsewhere in the book he points out that, having spent 20 years on this project, he would have liked another 20 years to go deeper and to produce more maps to show different aspects of Tibetan history. Nonetheless, the enthusiasm with which other Tibetologists have clearly greeted the individual maps as he produced them reveals how very important this book, even in its current form, is.

This is clearly an excellent resource for every scholar of Tibet and Inner Asia, and the author is to be congratulated for his focus and determination in producing such a series of elegant and usable maps. I would, however, have liked a gazetteer of every monastery and fortress and town, with Wylie transcription, so that they could be found easily in successive maps. As a Mongolist, notwithstanding that Mongolia is not on the Tibetan Plateau, I would have very much appreciated a more detailed cartographical account of the development of Tibetan Buddhism northwards. In a perfect world, geared to my wishes, Map 43 ('Important Tibeto-Mongol monasteries founded during the Qing period') could have been adapted to show the gradual elimination of Buddhism during the 'Great Repression' of the late 1930s. These are minor concerns, though, and personal ones, and I hope very much that the author does indeed intend to continue editing, and increasing the number of, these maps, perhaps moving them online at some point. Indeed, it can be used very profitably alongside such online resources as the Tibet Himalaya Digital Library (www.thlib.org) and the Tibetan Buddhism Resource Center (www.tbrc.org).

There are so many ways to approach the movement of history, and of the people and landscapes that effect its movement. Karl Ryavec's magnificent atlas, the first to present Tibet as the focus of historical study, encourages us to look at Tibet – and, by extension, the shifting polities of Inner Asia as a whole – in a new way, to formulate new questions and to interrogate and challenge the old answers.

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Also online at newbooks.asia/atlas-tibet