Invisible China

In the midst of China’s wild rush to modernize, a surprising note of reality arises: Shanghai, it seems, was once modern indeed, a pulsing center of commerce and art in the heart of the twentieth century. This book immerses us in the golden age of Shanghai urban culture, a modernity at once intrinsically Chinese and profoundly anomalous, blending new and indigenous ideas with those flooding into this “treaty port” from the Western world. A preeminent specialist in Chinese studies, Leo Ou-fan Lee gives us a rare wide-angle view of Shanghai culture in the making. He shows us the architecture and urban spaces in which the new commercial culture flourished, then guides us through the publishing and filmmaking industries that nurtured a whole generation of artists and established a bold new style in urban life known as modeng. In the work of six writers of the time, particularly Shi Zhecun, Mu Shiying, and Eileen Chang, Lee discloses the reflection of Shanghai’s urban landscape—foreign and familiar, oppressive and seductive, traditional and innovative. This work acquires a broader historical and cosmopolitan context with a look at the cultural links between Shanghai and Hong Kong, a virtual genealogy of Chinese modernity from the 1930s to the present day.

Real Estate Photography for Everybody

In this history of China for the 900-year span of the late imperial period, Mote highlights the personal characteristics of the rulers and dynasties and probes the cultural theme of Chinese adaptations to recurrent alien rule. Generational events, personalities, and the spirit of the age combine to yield a comprehensive history of the civilization.

The Age of Confucian Rule

More populous than any other country on earth, China also occupies a unique place in our modern world for the continuity of its history and culture. In this sumptuously illustrated single-volume history, noted historian Patricia Ebrey traces the origins of Chinese culture from prehistoric times to the present. She follows its development from the rise of Confucianism, Buddhism, and the great imperial dynasties to the Mongol, Manchu, and Western intrusions and the modern communist state. Her scope is phenomenal—embracing Chinese arts, culture, economics, society and its treatment of women, foreign policy, emigration, and politics, including the key uprisings of 1919 and 1989 in Tiananmen Square. Both a comprehensive introduction to an extraordinary civilization, and an expert exploration of the continuities and disjunctures of Chinese history, Professor Ebrey’s book has become an indispensable guide to China past and present. Patricia Ebrey is Professor of East Asian Studies and History and the author of Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook (1993).

Remaking the Chinese Empire

Accessible to general readers and full of valuable insights for specialists, China before Mao presents a fresh way of approaching the country’s modern history and shows that in politics, society, culture, and the economy, China was at its most diverse on the eve of World War II.”—BOOK JACKET.

The Open Empire

This volume explores the history of China between the Mongol reunification of China in 1279 under the Yuan dynasty and the Mancha invasion four centuries later, explaining how climate changes profoundly affected the empire during this period. The Mongol takeover in the 1270s changed the course of Chinese history. The Confucian empire, a millennium and a half in the making, was suddenly thrust under foreign occupation. What China had been before its reunification as the Yuan dynasty in 1279 was no longer what it would be in the future. Four centuries later, another wave of steppe invaders would replace the Ming dynasty with yet another foreign occupation.

Cosmopolitanism in China, 1600–1950

The Tang dynasty is often called China’s “golden age,” a period of commercial, religious, and cultural connections from Korea and Japan to the Persian Gulf, and a time of unsurpassed literary creativity. Mark Lewis captures a dynamic era in which the empire reached its greatest geographical extent under Chinese rule, painting and ceramic arts flourished, women played a major role both as rulers and in the economy, and China produced its finest lyric poets in Wang Wei, Li Bo, and Du Fu.
Get Free Chinas Cosmopolitan Empire History Of Imperial China

The Sextants of Beijing: Global Currents in Chinese History

After the collapse of the Han dynasty, China divided along a north-south line. Lewis traces the changes that underlay and resulted from this split in a period that saw China's geographic redefinition, more engagement with the outside world, significant changes to family life, literary and social developments, and the introduction of new religions.

Medieval Chinese Warfare 300-900

In a brisk revisionist history, William Rowe challenges the standard narrative of Qing China as a decadent, inward-looking state that failed to keep pace with the modern West. This original, thought-provoking history of China's last empire is a must-read for understanding the challenges facing China today.

Witchcraft and the Rise of the First Confucian Empire

Shortly after 300 AD, barbarian invaders from Inner Asia toppled China's Western Jin dynasty, leaving the country divided and at war for several centuries. Despite this, the empire gradually formed a unified imperial order. Medieval Chinese Warfare, 300-900 explores the military strategies, institutions and wars that reconstructed the Chinese empire that has survived into modern times. Drawing on classical Chinese sources and the best modern scholarship from China and Japan, David A. Graff connects military affairs with political and social developments to show how China's history was shaped by war.

The Early Chinese Empires

The Tang dynasty is often called China’s “golden age,” a period of commercial, religious, and cultural connections from Korea and Japan to the Persian Gulf, and a time of unsurpassed literary creativity. Mark Lewis captures a dynamic era in which the empire reached its greatest geographical extent under Chinese rule, painting and ceramic arts flourished, women played a major role both as rulers and in the economy, and China produced its finest lyric poets in Wang Wei, Li Bo, and Du Fu.

CHINA’S COSMOPOLITAN EMPIRE

Just over a thousand years ago, the Song dynasty emerged as the most advanced civilization on earth. Within two centuries, China was home to nearly half of all humankind. In this concise history, we learn why the inventiveness of this era has been favorably compared with the European Renaissance, which in many ways the Song transformation surpassed. With the chaotic dissolution of the Tang dynasty, the old aristocratic families vanished. A new class of scholar-officials—products of a meritocratic examination system—took up the task of reshaping Chinese tradition by adapting the precepts of Confucianism to a rapidly changing world. Through fiscal reforms, these elites liberalized the economy, eased the tax burden, and put paper money into circulation. Their redesigned capitals buzzed with traders, while the education system offered advancement to talented men of modest means. Their rationalist approach led to inventions in printing, shipbuilding, weaving, ceramics manufacture, mining, and agriculture. And with the souls of diplomats, they chose peace over war with the aggressors on their borders. Yet persistent military threats from these nomadic tribes—which the Chinese scorned as their cultural inferiors—redefined China’s understanding of its place in the world and solidified a sense of what it meant to be Chinese. The Age of Confucian Rule is an essential introduction to this transformative era. “A scholar should congratulate himself that he has been born in such a time” (Zhao Ruyu, 1194).

China Between Empires

Tang dynasty (618–907) China hummed with cosmopolitan trends. Its capital at Chang’an was the most populous city in the world and was connected via the Silk Road with the critical markets and thriving cultures of Central Asia and the Middle East. In Empire of Style, BaYun Chen reveals a vibrant fashion system that emerged through the efforts of Tang artisans, wearers, and critics of clothing. Across the empire, elite men and women subverted regulations on dress to acquire majestic silks and au courant designs, as shifts in economic and social structures gave rise to what we now recognize as precursors of a modern fashion system: a new consciousness of time, a game of imitation and emulation, and a shift in modes of production. This first book on fashion in premodern China is informed by archaeological sources—paintings, figurines, and silk artifacts—and textual records such as dynastic annals, poetry, tax documents, economic treatises, and sumptuary laws. Tang fashion is shown to have flourished in response to a confluence of social, economic, and political changes that brought innovative weavers and chic court elites to the forefront of history.

From the Ruins of Empire

Enter the golden age of Chinese culture and explore the everyday lives of its people.

China’s First Emperor and His Terracotta Warriors

An innovative approach to early Chinese history, now updated and expanded up to 1800. The Open Empire takes an integrative, thematic approach to early Chinese history, using the concept of the “open empire” to highlight the dynamic, porous nature of China’s past. Hansen builds her chronological narrative on a rich variety of archaeological and literary sources to flesh out the details of daily life, family relations, and social hierarchies. In the Second
Get Free Chinas Cosmopolitan Empire History Of Imperial China

Edition, the narrative has been updated with findings from recent scholarship and streamlined throughout to highlight the main themes. A new chapter on the Qing Empire, 1600-1800, carries the story of the "open empire" up to the birth of modern China.

China's Cosmopolitan Empire

The Tang dynasty is often called China's "golden age," a period of commercial, religious, and cultural connections from Korea and Japan to the Persian Gulf, and a time of unsurpassed literary creativity. Mark Lewis captures a dynamic era in which the empire reached its greatest geographical extent under Chinese rule, painting and ceramic arts flourished, women played a major role both as rulers and in the economy, and China produced its finest lyric poets in Wang Wei, Li Bo, and Du Fu.

The Story of China

Award-winning author Guy Gavriel Kay evokes the dazzling Tang Dynasty of 8th-century China in an masterful story of honor and power. It begins simply. Shen Tai, son of an illustrious general serving the Emperor of Kitai, has spent two years honoring the memory of his late father by burying the bones of the dead from both armies at the site of one of his father's last great battles. In recognition of his labors and his filial piety, an unlikely source has sent him a dangerous gift: 250 Sardian horses. You give a man one of the famed Sardian horses to reward him greatly. You give him four or five to exalt him above his fellows, propel him towards rank, and earn him jealousy, possibly mortal jealousy. Two hundred and fifty is an unthinkable gift, a gift to overwhelm an emperor. Wisely, the gift comes with the stipulation that Tai must claim the horses in person. Otherwise he would probably be dead already.

China's Last Empire

In this fascinating and detailed profile, Benn paints a vivid picture of life in the Tang Dynasty (618-907), traditionally regarded as the golden age of China. 40 line illustrations.

The Inner Life of Empires

A single volume history of China, offering a look into the past of the global superpower and its significance today. Michael Wood has travelled the length and breadth of China, the world’s oldest civilization and longest lasting state, to tell a thrilling story of intense drama, fabulous creativity, and deep humanity that stretches back thousands of years. After a century and a half of foreign invasion, civil war, and revolution, China has once again returned to center stage as a global superpower and the world’s second largest economy. But how did it become so dominant? Wood argues that in order to comprehend the great significance of China today, we must begin with its history. The Story of China takes a fresh look at the Middle Kingdom in the light of the recent massive changes inside the country. Taking into account exciting new archeological discoveries, the book begins with China’s prehistory—the early dynasties, the origins of the Chinese state, and the roots of Chinese culture in the age of Confucius. Wood looks at particular periods and themes that are now being reevaluated by historians, such as the renaissance of the Song with its brilliant scientific discoveries. He paints a vibrant picture of the Qing Empire in the 18th century, just before the European impact, a time when China’s rich and diverse culture was at its height. Then, Wood explores the encounter with the West, the Opium Wars, the clashes with the British, and the extraordinarily rich debates in the late 19th century that pushed China along the path to modernity. Finally, he provides a clear up-to-date account of post-1949 China, including revelations about the 1989 crisis based on newly leaked inside documents, and fresh insights into the new order of President Xi Jinping. All woven together with landscape history and the author’s own travel journals, The Story of China is the indispensable book about the most intriguing and powerful country on the world stage today.

Daily Life in Traditional China

At the height of the Cultural Revolution and the Cold War in 1971, the historian Joseph Levenson made the astute observation that China used to be cosmopolitan on account of Confucianism. At that time, the notion of China, much less Confucianism, as somehow being cosmopolitan may have surprised many of his readers, especially because so many conventional ideas about China-ranging from its "kith and kin" social structure to its purportedly eternal and monolithic state structure-seem to reflect a society that was the very antithesis of cosmopolitanism. Indeed, even now, or perhaps even more so now on account of growing Chinese nationalism, Han chauvinism, and global fears of a rising China, the idea of Chinese cosmopolitanism may strike many as ill conceived. Levenson, as with so much of his scholarship, was clearly on to something important. In fact, in the current academic climate it seems almost irresponsible not to address this. This book is therefore a much-needed pioneering attempt to explore the implications and possibilities of Levenson's potent observation regarding China in relation to the growing scholarship on cosmopolitanism around the world. It is an important intervention in both the current scholarship on modern China and the scholarship on cosmopolitanism in its global articulations.

Under Heaven

This book presents a picture focused on the T'ang period, one of China's acknowledged golden ages. Within a looser web of globalization, the T'ang period and its dynamics offers a distant mirror of our own time. An argument in world history may thus cast light on issues in contemporary politics.

The Search for Modern China

Empire’s Tracks boldly reframes the history of the transcontinental railroad from the perspectives of the Cheyenne, Lakota, and Pawnee Native American tribes, and the Chinese migrants who toiled on its path. In this meticulously

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researched book, Manu Karuka situates the railroad within the violent global histories of colonialism and capitalism. Through an examination of legislative, military, and business records, Karuka deftly explains the imperial foundations of U.S. political economy. Tracing the shared paths of Indigenous and Asian American histories, this multisited interdisciplinary study connects military occupation to exclusionary border policies, a linked chain spanning the heart of U.S. imperialism. This highly original and beautifully wrought book unveils how the transcontinental railroad laid the tracks of the U.S. Empire.

The Troubled Empire

Discover the complexity of China’s past with this multi-faceted portrayal of the storied nation from a leading expert in the field. The newly revised Second Edition of A History of China delivers a comprehensive treatment of the political, economic, social, and cultural history of China that covers all major events and trends that have shaped the country over the centuries. The book is written in a clear and uncomplicated style, sure to be of assistance to undergraduate students with little prior background knowledge in the subject matter. The text examines Chinese history through a global lens to better understand how foreign influences affected domestic policies and practices. It includes discussions of the roles played by non-Chinese ethnic groups in China, like the Tibetans and Uyghurs, and the Mongol and Manchu rulers who held power in China for several centuries. The distinguished author takes pains to incorporate the perspectives and narratives of people traditionally left out of Chinese history, including women, peasants, merchants, and artisans. Readers will also enjoy the inclusion of: A thorough introduction to early and ancient Chinese history, including classical China, the first Chinese empires, and religious and political responses to the period between 220 and 581 CE. An exploration of the restoration of Empire under Sai and Tang, as well as post-Tang society. A discussion of China and the Mongol world, including Mongol rule in China and the isolationism and involvement on the global stage of the Ming dynasty. A treatment of China in global history, including the Qing era, the Republican period, and the Communist era. Perfect for undergraduate students of courses on Chinese history and Central Asian History, the Second Edition of A History of China will also earn a place in the libraries of students studying global history and related classes in history departments and departments of Asian studies.

Big Sister, Little Sister, Red Sister

The Victorian period, viewed in the West as a time of self-confident progress, was experienced by Asians as a catastrophe. As the British gunned down the last heirs to the Mughal Empire, burned down the Summer Palace in Beijing, or humiliated the bankrupt rulers of the Ottoman Empire, it was clear that for Asia to recover a vast intellectual effort would be required. Pankaj Mishra's fascinating, highly entertaining new book tells the story of a remarkable group of men from across the continent who met the challenge of the West. Incidentally travelling, questioning and agonising, they both hated the West and recognised that an Asian renaissance needed to be fuelled in part by engagement with the enemy. Through many setbacks and wrong turns, a powerful, contradictory and ultimately unstoppable series of ideas were created that now lie behind everything from the Chinese Communist Party to Al Qaeda, from Indian nationalism to the Muslim Brotherhood. Mishra allows the reader to see the events of two centuries anew, through the eyes of the journalists, poets, radicals and charismatics who criss-crossed Europe and Asia and created the ideas that lie behind the powerful Asian nations of the twenty-first century.

Early China

The Tang dynasty is often called China’s “golden age,” a period of commercial, religious, and cultural connections from Korea and Japan to the Persian Gulf, and a time of unsurpassed literary creativity. Mark Lewis captures a dynamic era in which the empire reached its greatest geographical extent under Chinese rule, painting and ceramic arts flourished, women played a major role both as rulers and in the economy, and China produced its finest lyric poets in Wang Wei, Li Bo, and Du Fu. The Chinese engaged in extensive trade on sea and land. Merchants from Inner Asia settled in the capital, while Chinese entrepreneurs set off for the wider world, the beginning of a global diaspora. The emergence of an economically and culturally dominant south that was controlled from a northern capital set a pattern for the rest of Chinese imperial history. Poems celebrated the glories of the capital, meditated on individual loneliness in its midst, and described heroic young men and beautiful women who filled city streets and bars. Despite the romantic aura attached to the Tang, it was not a time of unending peace. In 756, General An Lushan led a revolt that shook the country to its core, weakening the government to such a degree that by the early tenth century, regional warlordism gripped many areas, heralding the decline of the Great Tang.

China’s Cosmopolitan Empire

Photographing interiors is not as easy as you might think, and it takes a lot of practice to produce consistently strong, high-impact compositions for your clients. Still, there is money to be made in this field, and whether you’re looking to work as a full-time real estate photographer or develop a side-line business, you’ll need to arm yourself to produce client-pleasing photographs. In this book, Ron Castle introduces you to the skills you need to succeed in real estate photography. You’ll gain insight into some basics of the business, and you’ll learn what kind of equipment you’ll need to do the job. You’ll also learn what and what NOT to photograph, work to produce strong compositions, and find suggestions for an efficient and effective post-processing workflow. The later chapters will consist of several sample home shoots. These images and their captions will provide helpful suggestions and perspectives on what a typical “real-world” real estate shoot entails.

Empire's Tracks

A critical new interpretation of the early history of Chinese civilization based on the most recent scholarship and archaeological discoveries.

China’s Cosmopolitan Empire

Contests long-standing claims that Confucianism came to prominence under China’s Emperor Wu. When did Confucianism become the reigning political ideology of imperial China? A pervasive narrative holds it was during the
reign of Emperor Wu of the Han dynasty (141–87 BCE). In this book, Liang Cai maintains that such a date would have been too early and provides a new account of this transformation. A hidden narrative in Sima Qian’s The Grand Scribe’s Records (Shi ji) shows that Confucians were a powerless minority in the political realm of this period. Cai argues that the notorious witchcraft scandal of 91–87 BCE reshuffled the power structure of the Western Han bureaucracy and provided Confucians an opportune moment to seize power, evolve into a new elite class, and set the tenor of political discourse for centuries to come.

The Age of Openness

This lively and elegant book by the acclaimed historian Jonathan D. Spence reconstructs an extraordinary episode in the early intercourse between Europe and China. It is the story of John Hu, a lowly but devout Chinese Catholic, who in 1722 accompanied a Jesuit missionary on a journey to France—a journey that ended with Hu’s confinement in a lunatic asylum. At once a triumph of historical detective work and a gripping narrative, The Question of Hu deftly probes the collision of two cultures, with their different definitions of faith, madness, and moral obligation.

Empire of Style

"This volume traces the development of cosmopolitan cultural techniques through which ancient empires managed difference in order to establish regimes of domination. Its case studies of Near Eastern and Mediterranean empires combine to demonstrate the centrality of cosmopolitanism to the establishment and endurance of trans-cultural political orders"--

The Question of Hu

The birth of the modern world as told through the remarkable story of one eighteenth-century family. They were abolitionists, speculators, slave owners, government officials, and occasional politicians. They were observers of the anxieties and dramas of empire. And they were from one family. The Inner Life of Empires tells the intimate history of the Johnstones—four sisters and seven brothers who lived in Scotland and around the globe in the fast-changing eighteenth century. Piecing together their voyages, marriages, debts, and lawsuits, and examining their ideas, sentiments, and values, renowned historian Emma Rothschild illuminates a tumultuous period that created the modern economy, the British Empire, and the philosophical Enlightenment. One of the sisters joined a rebel army, was imprisoned in Edinburgh Castle, and escaped in disguise in 1746. Her younger brother was a close friend of Adam Smith and David Hume. Another brother was fluent in Persian and Bengali, and married to a celebrated poet. He was the owner of a slave known only as "Bell or Belinda," who journeyed from Calcutta to Virginia, was accused in Scotland of infanticide, and was the last person judged to be a slave by a court in the British isles. In Grenada, India, Jamaica, and Florida, the Johnstones embodied the connections between European, American, and Asian empires. Their family history offers insights into a time when distinctions between the public and private, home and overseas, and slavery and servitude were in constant flux. Based on multiple archives, documents, and letters, The Inner Life of Empires looks at one family’s complex story to describe the origins of the modern political, economic, and intellectual world.

The Origins of the Chinese Nation

In contrast to the economic and cultural dominance by the south and the east coast over the past several centuries, influence in China in the early Middle Ages was centered in the north and featured a significantly multicultural society. Many events that were profoundly formative for the future of East Asian civilization occurred during this period, although much of this multiculturalism has long been obscured due to the Confucian monopoly of written records. Multicultural China in the Early Middle Ages endeavors to expose a number of long-hidden non-Sinitic characteristics and manifestations of heritage, some lasting to this very day. Sampie Chen investigates several foundational aspects of Chinese culture during this period, including the legendary unicorn and the fabled heroine Mulan, to determine the origin and development of the lore. His meticulous research yields surprising results. For instance, he finds that the character Mulan is not of Chinese origin and that Central Asian influences are to be found in language, religion, governance, and other fundamental characteristics of Chinese culture. As Victor Mair writes in the Foreword, "While not everyone will acquiesce in the entirety of Dr. Chen's findings, no reputable scholar can afford to ignore them with impunity." These "foreign"-origin elements were largely the legacy of the Tuoba, whose descendants in fact dominated China's political and cultural stage for nearly a millennium. Long before the Mongols, the Tuoba set a precedent for "using the civilized to rule the civilized" by attracting a large number of sedentary Central Asians to East Asia. This not only added a strong pre-Islamic Iranian layer to the contemporary Sinitic culture but also commenced China's golden age under the cosmopolitan Tang dynasty, whose nominally "Chinese" ruling house is revealed by Chen to be the biological and cultural heir of the Tuoba.

Shanghai Modern

Unifier or destroyer, law-maker or tyrant? China's First Emperor (258-210 BC) has been the subject of debate for over 2,000 years. He gave us the name by which China is known in the West and, by his unification or elimination of six states, he created imperial China. He stressed the rule of law but suppressed all opposition, burning books and burying scholars alive. His military achievements are reflected in the astonishing terracotta soldiers—a veritable buried army—that surround his tomb, and his Great Wall still fascinates the world. Despite his achievements, however, the First Emperor has been vilified since his death. China's First Emperor and His Terracotta Warriors describes his life and times and reflects the historical arguments over the real founder of China and one of the most important men in Chinese history.

A History of China

They were the most famous women in China. As the country battled through a hundred years of wars, revolutions and seismic transformations, the three Soong sisters from Shanghai were at the center of power, and each of them left an indelible mark on history. Red Sister, Ching-ling, married the ‘Father of China’, Sun Yat-sen, and rose to be Mao’s vice-chair. Little Sister, May-ling, became Madame Chiang Kai-shek, first lady of pre-Communist Nationalist
China and a major political figure in her own right. Big Sister, Ei-ling, became Chiang’s unofficial main adviser - and made herself one of China’s richest women. Big Sister, Little Sister, Red Sister is a gripping story of love, war, intrigue, bravery, glamour and betrayal, which takes us on a sweeping journey from Canton to Hawaii to New York, from exiles’ quarters in Japan and Berlin to secret meeting rooms in Moscow, and from the compounds of the Communist elite in Beijing to the corridors of power in democratic Taiwan. In a group biography that is by turns intimate and epic, Jung Chang reveals the lives of three extraordinary women who helped shape twentieth-century China.

The Cambridge Illustrated History of China

Covering more than four centuries of Chinese history, this work chronicles the various dynasties, the ideas of reformist Confucian scholars, and China's poets, novelists, artists, students, and leaders

Tang China

In this major new study, Nicolas Tackett proposes that the Northern Song Dynasty (960–1127) witnessed both the maturation of an East Asian inter-state system and the emergence of a new worldview and sense of Chinese identity among educated elites. These developments together had sweeping repercussions for the course of Chinese history, while also demonstrating that there has existed in world history a viable alternative to the modern system of nation-states. Utilising a wide array of historical, literary, and archaeological sources, chapters focus on diplomatic sociability, cosmopolitan travel, military strategy, border demarcation, ethnic consciousness, and the cultural geography of Northeast Asia. In this groundbreaking new approach to the history of the East Asian inter-state system, Tackett argues for a concrete example of a pre-modern nationalism, explores the development of this nationalism, and treats modern nationalism as just one iteration of a phenomenon with a much longer history.

China’s Golden Age

In 221 bc the First Emperor of Qin unified the lands that would become the heart of a Chinese empire. Though forged by conquest, this vast domain depended for its political survival on a fundamental reshaping of Chinese culture. With this informative book, we are present at the creation of an ancient imperial order whose major features would endure for two millennia. The Qin and Han constitute the “classical period” of Chinese history—a role played by the Greeks and Romans in the West. Mark Edward Lewis highlights the key challenges faced by the court officials and scholars who set about governing an empire of such scale and diversity of peoples. He traces the drastic measures taken to transcend, without eliminating, these regional differences: the invention of the emperor as the divine embodiment of the state; the establishment of a common script for communication and a state-sponsored canon for the propagation of Confucian ideals; the flourishing of the great families, whose domination of local society rested on wealth, landholding, and elaborate kinship structures; the demilitarization of the interior; and the impact of non-Chinese warrior-nomads in setting the boundaries of an emerging Chinese identity. The first of a six-volume series on the history of imperial China, The Early Chinese Empires illuminates many formative events in China’s long history of imperialism—events whose residual influence can still be discerned today.

Imperial China 900-1800

As the glittering skyline in Shanghai seemingly attests, China has quickly transformed itself from a place of stark poverty into a modern, urban, technologically savvy economic powerhouse. But as Scott Rozelle and Natalie Hell show in Invisible China, the truth is much more complicated and might be a serious cause for concern. China’s growth has relied heavily on unskilled labor. Most of the workers who have fueled the country’s rise come from rural villages and have never been to high school. While this national growth strategy has been effective for three decades, the unskilled wage rate is finally rising, inducing companies inside China to automate at an unprecedented rate and triggering an exodus of companies seeking cheaper labor in other countries. Ten years ago, almost every product for sale in an American Walmart was made in China. Today, that is no longer the case. With the changing demand for labor, China seems to have no good back-up plan. For all of its investment in physical infrastructure, for decades China failed to invest enough in its people. Recent progress may come too late. Drawing on extensive surveys on the ground in China, Rozelle and Hell reveal that while China may be the second-largest economy in the world, its labor force has one of the lowest levels of education of any comparable country. Over half of China’s population—as well as a vast majority of its children—are from rural areas. Their low levels of basic education may leave many unable to find work in the formal workplace as China’s economy changes and manufacturing jobs move elsewhere. In Invisible China, Rozelle and Hell speak not only to an urgent humanitarian concern but also a potential economic crisis that could upend economies and foreign relations around the globe. If too many are left structurally unemployable, the implications both inside and outside of China could be serious. Understanding the situation in China today is essential if we are to avoid a potential crisis of international proportions. This book is an urgent and timely call to action that should be read by economists, policymakers, the business community, and general readers alike.

Multicultural China in the Early Middle Ages

The Silk Road is as iconic in world history as the Colossus of Rhodes or the Suez Canal. But what was it, exactly? It conjures up a hazy image of a caravan of camels laden with silk on a dusty desert track, reaching from China to Rome. The reality was different--and far more interesting--as revealed in this new history. In The Silk Road, Valerie Hansen describes the remarkable archeological finds that revolutionize our understanding of these trade routes. For centuries, key records remained hidden—sometimes deliberately buried by bureaucrats for safe keeping. But the sands of the Taklamakan Desert have revealed fascinating material, sometimes preserved by illiterate locals who recycled official documents to make insoles for shoes or garments for the dead. Hansen explores seven oases along the road, from Xi’an to Samarkand, where merchants, envoys, pilgrims, and travelers mixed in cosmopolitan communities, tolerant of religions from Buddhism to Zoroastrianism. There was no single, continuous road, but a chain of markets that traded between east and west. China and the Roman Empire had only few direct trade. China’s main partners were the peoples of modern-day Iran, whose tombs in China reveal much about their Zoroastrian beliefs. Silk was not the most important good on the road; paper, invented in China before Julius Caesar was born, had a bigger impact in Europe, while metals, spices, and glass were just as important as silk. Perhaps most significant of all was the road’s transmission of ideas, technologies, and artistic motifs. The Silk Road is a fascinating story of
archeological discovery, cultural transmission, and the intricate chains across Central Asia and China.

The Silk Road

Remaking the Chinese Empire examines China’s development from an empire into a modern state through the lens of Sino-Korean political relations during the Qing period. Incorporating Korea into the historical narrative of the Chinese empire, it demonstrates that the Manchu regime used its relations with Chos?n Korea to establish, legitimize, and consolidate its identity as the civilized center of the world, as a cosmopolitan empire, and as a modern sovereign state. For the Manchu regime and for the Chos?n Dynasty, the relationship was one of mutual dependence, central to building and maintaining political legitimacy. Yuanchong Wang illuminates how this relationship served as the very model for China’s foreign relations. Ultimately, this precipitated contests, conflicts, and compromises among empires and states in East Asia, Inner Asia, and Southeast Asia – in particular, in the nineteenth century when international law reached the Chinese world. By adopting a long-term and cross-border perspective on high politics at the empire’s core and periphery, Wang revises our understanding of the rise and transformation of the last imperial dynasty of China. His work reveals new insights on the clashes between China’s foreign relations system and its Western counterpart, imperialism and colonialism in the Chinese world, and the formation of modern sovereign states in East Asia. Most significantly, Remaking the Chinese Empire breaks free of the established, national history-oriented paradigm, establishing a new paradigm through which to observe and analyze the Korean impact on the Qing Dynasty.

Cosmopolitanism and Empire

A chronicle of the unexpectedly rich and varied history of China deflates myths about the country's monolithic and isolated status, revealing its long traditions of influence on and from other Asian countries and the West through trade, technology, and religion.

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