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(meaning unripe grain), and underreporting grain and land (Thaxton 2008; Gao 2013). According to Eisenman, honest peasants were working hard in the “churches of Maoism” because they were indoctrinated by the Party. However, his examples for quasi-religious rituals are mostly taken from the peak of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1969), and are not representative of the whole commune era. In any case, if Joshua Eisenman uses comprehensive empirical research and challenges previous research’s emphasis on resistance within the communes, he should at least mention and engage with these studies.

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KATIA BUFFETRILLE

This book is the fruit of a thesis defended at the University of Paris X-Nanterre in 2014. Valérie Vandenabeele studied Pudacuo 普達措, China’s first national park, situated in Kham, eastern Tibet (now the Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture 迪慶) and created on the initiative of The Nature Conservancy, a United States NGO. The author concentrated her research on three Tibetan villages, one situated inside the park and two others on its periphery.

A general introduction is followed by three long sections. The first studies the way in which peripheral areas are integrated in the People’s Republic of China and presents the history of the region using the accounts of inhabitants and official annals, then goes on to examine the creation of the Shangri-la tourist park and its transformation into an “earthly paradise,” instrumentalising the cultural identity of Tibetans. The second section focuses on the Tibetan populations that live in the park and on its periphery, their traditional way of life as farmers and stock breeders, then their adaptation to the modern world and to the economy of tourism brought about by the creation of the park. The author questions “the tourist rhetoric based on the widespread cliché that Tibetan Buddhist beliefs include respecting other living beings and converge with conservation” (p. 221). The third and final section deals with the way in which the park was received in China, describing the process of its creation and the integration of the “local populations into contemporary society under cover of ecology and tourism” (p. 335).

One cannot but congratulate the sinologist Valérie Vandenabeele for her choice of this innovative subject. However, since she neither speaks nor reads Tibetan, she has – with the exception of Western sources – based her work mainly on Chinese sources and interviews held in Chinese, which has led her to study this Tibetan territory through a Chinese prism, that is, that of the coloniser. Strongly Sino-centred references therefore lead her to place the Tibetans in the “Tang Era” (p. 48) rather than in their royal era and in “Yunnan” (p. 81) rather than in Kham, or, more seriously, to create amalgams between Chinese and Tibetan representations, such as this one on p. 25: “the Sinogram *she*, ‘society,’ which in the past designated ‘territorial god’ (...). Although this representation is conveyed by Chinese script, it should be seen in a Tibetan context where communities are also structured around ‘territorial gods.’” The author does not explain the precise way in which her Tibetan informants use the Chinese word *she* 社 (do they know of this ancient meaning, or is it just her making the connection?), nor does she investigate the respective content of these representations. Yet the “territorial god” in Tibet has been

thoroughly studied by, among others, the authors listed in the bibliography, who should have been read with greater attention. Amalgams such as these lead not only the reader astray, but also the author herself, who later tells us that according to the villagers of Hongpo 紅坡, their territorial god is a "demon" (p. 230), a term that Tibetans would never use for this god. Here again, rendering non-Chinese concepts and representations via Chinese proves limited.

Moreover, on p. 20 we read that "the town of Shangri-la, the administrative centre of this prefecture and administrative centre of the district, was previously known under the Chinese name of Zhongdian," and that in the late 2000s, "the specificity of the clothes and the visibility of Buddhism gave one the impression of being in Tibet." Yet the region of Gyalthang – a toponym that appears for the first time on p. 70 – clearly belongs to the sphere of Tibetan culture, and its inhabitants never considered themselves within a Chinese frame of references. Lack of knowledge of the Tibetan world has led the author to describe the association of mountain and water (pp. 126 and 285) as "a perfect example of Chinese landscape" whilst in Tibet it represents the perfect example of a sacred place. Moreover, it is not because "the local populations cannot read Tibetan" (p. 120) that the inscriptions in this language are always smaller than the Chinese. The reason is simply that the language and writing of the coloniser take precedence over that of the colonised.

A lack of rigour is at the root of anachronisms but also inaccuracies such as on p. 53, where we learn that the tenth Karmapa lived in the seventeenth century "between Lijiang and Shangri-la." Although the choice of the very recent toponym of Shangri-la is perhaps understandable in a contemporary context, it is a pity that it is overused. Furthermore, the assertion (p. 61, and p. 61 n. 3) that "Lhasa was taken in three days (...) against which the Tibetan authorities had organised no resistance, since the Dalai Lama had already fled to India" is difficult to defend. Whilst it is true that the Dalai Lama did leave for Dromo (Yatung) in the valley of Chumbi (central Tibet) in the face of the Chinese advance in 1950, it was only in 1959 that he fled to India.

The third section, which deals with the creation of the park, is by far the best. Valérie Vandenabeele explains the intrigues and issues surrounding the park, the objectives of the various players, and the methods they used to achieve them. The important role of the Diqing authorities and the benefit Beijing gained from opening this "national park with provincial status" are highlighted.

Work based on Chinese sources would be totally legitimate provided it defined its boundaries more modestly, and was presented, for example, as an analysis of Chinese discourse and practices in a context of colonisation. It is more than regrettable that the author did not have the benefit of a co-direction by a Tibetologist. Moreover, certain articles that might have given a Tibetan point of view on the region in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were not consulted (Peter Schwieger 2010; 2011; 2016).

Nonetheless, despite the weaknesses described above, Valérie Vandenabeele's work has the merit of showing how economic development of the region has been achieved through the creation of Pudacuo Park, with the aim of attracting mass tourism but with no consideration whatsoever for environmental damage, and accompanied by the folklorisation of the local culture, a phenomenon that can be seen in other Tibetan regions.

■ Translated by Elizabeth Guill.

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***Caring in Times of Precarity:
A Study of Single Women Doing
Creative Work in Shanghai.***
Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

GLADYS PAK LEI CHONG

Single women in China, socially stigmatised and marginalised as *shengnü* (剩女, literally, leftover women), are popular subjects of cultural productions that deserve but are yet to receive systematic scholarly attention. Yiu Fai Chow's *Caring in Times of Precarity: A Study of Single Women Doing Creative Work in Shanghai* is a pioneering study that examines the relationship between single women and creative work. Apart from being an academic, Chow is also a creative writer, and this role has given him "direct access" and curiosity for this exceptional ethnographic and political project. The author has brought his observations in the East Asian context to a theoretical level, shedding new light on the dynamics and complexities of precarity, while also shifting the gaze from the political economy to the politics of (self)-care.

This book is distinguished by its resistance to "distoricizing and flattening precarious experiences" (p. 13). Chow discerningly draws "Asia as method" (Chen 2010) to accentuate the use of Shanghai and China so as to enrich and rethink the theoretical scholarship in single womanhood and precarity in creative work. By bringing in the subjective experiences of single women, the author demonstrates the importance of empirical understanding that