

by Lo – but battles on the high seas remained rare events. China had various fire-arms, even simple flame throwers, but the extent to which such weapons, including primitive artillery, were used on the oceans is unclear. The traces left by Song and Yuan sailors and migrants in different parts of South-East Asia and elsewhere are mostly the result of commerce.

Taiwan's past does not occupy a central place in Lo's book. In recent years, Fujianese and other historians have provided evidence that this island was in close touch with the Song and Yuan. However, readers themselves should find responses to such delicate questions. Another issue concerns the editing of the book. One ought to congratulate Elleman for his courage and enthusiasm, but unfortunately there are several incorrect transcriptions of Chinese words and the citation of some sources could be improved. My final observation is this: Lo's book should have come out a long time ago. It certainly is more profound in nature than the early account by Din Da-san, José and Francisco F. Olesa Muñido et al., *El poder naval chino desde sus orígenes hasta la caída de la dinastía Ming* (Barcelona, 1965), and it compares well with Jacques Dars' *La marine chinoise du Xe siècle au XIVe siècle* (Paris, 1992).

**Roderich Ptak**

Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich

YAN XUETONG (阎学通):

*Ancient Chinese Thought, Modern Chinese Power.*

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A note on the translation (p. ix), says that Yan Xuetong, professor for international relations at Tsinghua University, is “obviously” not arguing for the re-establishment of a monarchical system led by one sage who would save the world with his moral goodness. This excuses translating wǎng by “humane authority”, rather than “King” or “Sage king”. We may be relieved that a “Chinese” theory of international relations, such as this book has been written to provide, will not amount to a re-establishment of monarchy, but given the fundamental role of monarchy, and of the qualities of the monarch in early Chinese political thought, one may well ask how such political thought can serve us today.

The work has three parts, preceded by an introduction by Daniel A. Bell, the volume's editor, and editor of the series which it inaugurated, The Princeton China Series. Yan presents his view of ancient Chinese thought and modern Chinese power in the first part, “Comments” are given by three younger scholars: Yang Qianru, Xu Jin and Wang Rihua, and finally Yan responds to his commentators. Three appendixes complete the volume: the first by Xun Jin offers a potted history of the period for the uninitiated, the second is a conversation between Yan and Lu Xin about himself as a “realist scholar”, and finally Yan gives an account of “why there is no Chinese School of international relations theory”.

Historical accuracy is one point that Yang Qianru picks up on in her comments; Yan reads the Western Zhōu texts to produce a theory, not to be accurate. This is a tension in the three main chapters where the author first discusses “Pre-Qin political philosophy”, “Xunzi's interstate philosophy” and finally, written with Huang Yuxing, “Hegemony in *Stratagems*”, that is, the *Stratagems* in the Warring States (Zhànguó cè). This last

is a refreshing choice of text, along with a fairly broad textual base: Guanzi alongside Laozi, Confucius, Mencius, Xunzi, Hanfeizi and Mozi. One is grateful for the plurality of voices that are heard here, a key aspect of the period, which is interesting for the question of how states relate to one another (despite the equivocation in the use of “state”), since a multitude of “states” were involved in a power struggle.

*The Strategems of the Warring States*, a wonderful pageant of villains and heroes, as well as examples of the art of persuasion, is used here to great effect. Its title is one source of one name for the period, Warring States. But if this period was characterized by (interstate) war, why turn to it for a theory of international relations? They do not seem to have been very good at conducting their international affairs, if we are to take “warring states” at face value. Calling a period the Dark Ages, as used to be customary in the West, hardly encourages one to look there for illumination; and looking for peace in the Warring States may seem as farfetched. But why accept the term? Of course one might argue that the theory was wonderful, and just met with bad luck. And as to “Pre-Qin”, another favoured term, well that does not augur too well either. Unification came under the Qin through war, not from the peaceful efforts of diplomats. And some of the sections here suggest a very hawkish view of international relations (“Comprehensive national power is the power base of hegemony”, p. 112, “Struggle for hegemony is the core of international politics”, p. 137), whereas others point to the abyss dividing current debate about politics from what is considered important in the Western Zhōu. “The core of hegemonic political power is the employment of worthy and able ministers” (p. 117). And as to legitimacy “A hegemon is legitimate on the basis of acknowledgement by the Zhōu Son of Heaven”. Some of these injunctions can be translated into policy for now (“recruit talented persons according to international standards irrespective of the nationalities” p. 143) but the Son of Heaven has, apparently, vanished without replacement. And of course the term “hegemon”, *bà*, has very different resonances then and now: then applicable to those princes who acquired leadership among the states despite not being the Zhōu Son of Heaven; now it simply refers to superpowers.

One might think that one norm governing international relations is that of justice, a norm with a formidable pedigree in the West. And one may argue that the Central States knew no such norm. *Yí* is often translated “righteousness” or “justice”, but that is more a fig-leaf covering nakedness, felt as embarrassing by some, than an accurate representation of the term. Here *yí* is indeed translated justice (e.g. p. 54 from the *Mencius*, p. 62 with reference to Confucius, p. 87 with reference to *Xunzi*). A desideratum is a discussion of the relation between early Chinese ethical terms and those in current use.

Thucydides serves as a benchmark for certain, rather hawkish, views of international relations (p. 202); the Athenians’ conduct in the Melian dialogue gives us the slogan, as translated here, “the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must”. But Thucydides is presumably a rare figure in UN debates. The days of classically educated statesmen such as Gladstone are long gone. But can one use ancient thought to provide contemporary theory? The Mohists are well known for their doubts in this respect. A Thucydidean sound bite is one thing, deriving a detailed theory of modern international relations by reading ancient history another. The volume will interest the curious (and patient) reader, politician or political theorist, uninformed about Western Zhōu writings and thought. And a one liner for the UN? How about: “Making agreements and not being resentful, you can get the world to follow you” (p. 124, from *Zhànguòcè*)?

**R.A.H. King**  
University of Berne