

Scott Kennedy is an assistant professor in the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures and an adjunct assistant professor in the Department of Political Science at Indiana University. He is the author of The Business of Lobbying in China (Harvard University Press, forthcoming).



Divining China's Future

Scott Kennedy

Wild Grass: Three Stories of Change in Modern China

Ian Johnson

New York: Pantheon, 2004

China's Democratic Future: How It Will Happen and Where It Will Lead

Bruce Gilley

New York: Columbia University Press, 2004

Remaking the Chinese Leviathan: Market Transition and the Politics
of Governance in China

Dali L. Yang

Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004

State and Society in 21st Century China: Crisis, Contention, and Legitimation

Peter Hays Gries and Stanley Rosen, eds.

New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004

After several months of draining fieldwork investigating state-society relations in villages and towns across China, a friend of mine headed for the thriving coastal city of Xiamen for some much-needed rest. He walked down to the beach to feel the sand beneath his feet, put his toes in the water, and stare out at the horizon. However, his peace and quiet was soon interrupted. Two young women, having spotted a conspicuous foreigner, came up to him with camera in hand and asked to have their picture taken with him. Having been approached with the same request countless times before, he rose without uttering a word, smiled, and posed next to the two women until the shutter clicked. With a wave, they were off, and he went back to gazing out to sea. A few hours later, back at his hotel, he received a one-line email from the women, the message

reading: "We hope the rest of your time in China goes well." When my friend returned to his research institute in the north some weeks later, he found an envelope in his mailbox containing the photograph of him with the women. After puzzling for a moment over the picture, it dawned on him: Big Brother has two sisters. They were watching his every move and wanted him to keep that in mind as he contemplated the remainder of his fieldwork on a sensitive political issue.

Later, in recounting his experience to me, my friend said that he thought he had come face to face with the menacing core of the Chinese Communist regime. My reaction to his story was to note all the complexities of modern China: Security agents are not always behind the curtains. He was not roughed up or kicked out of the

country. His research, which paints the state in a negative light, was being published, and he had since gone back to China several times without incident. Therefore, it was a stretch to say that the activities of China's state security apparatus are indicative of the regime as a whole. My friend thought I was being naive.

Our different readings of this encounter capture the essence of a debate among China specialists about the "big story" coming out of that country of 1.3 billion people. Everyone recognizes that the People's Republic of today differs dramatically from the China of the Cultural Revolution (1966–76), and even to an important extent, from the China of the Tiananmen spring of 1989. And China watchers of all stripes agree that the economic reforms initiated 25 years ago are remaking society. Beyond this point, however, specialists differ. Some focus on continuity and point out that although China is changing, the country is still a dictatorship. Believing that market reforms and political rigidity are incompatible, they discern a political trajectory in which the regime is losing legitimacy and will either hang on through brute force and intimidation or perish under pressure from the economically dispossessed or the newly economically empowered. Other China specialists, reversing the stress, contend that although China is still formally authoritarian, the political system has evolved in complex ways that escape simple characterization. Observers of the latter persuasion have no simple story to tell, however, and believe it is too soon to write the Chinese Communist Party's obituary.

While summing up China's present and future as a simple moral tale—with all the complexities counted as part of a "transition" from evil to good—has a certain appeal, the China story is more fittingly told as a complex drama. To put this observation in other terms, observers who paint the China of today with a palette of white and black are less likely to capture a true like-

ness than those who employ a wide range of hues and tints.

The People's Champions

Articles published in academic journals are often referred to as "literature." Anyone who has leafed through a political science journal knows that label is pure conceit. But the term might justifiably be applied to the writing of Ian Johnson, former Beijing correspondent for the *Wall Street Journal*. In between reporting on multinational corporate executives jetting to invest in the Magic Middle Kingdom and the high summitry of Presidents Bill Clinton and Jiang Zemin, Johnson found his true calling: investigating the underbelly of China's Reform era.

His book, *Wild Grass: Three Stories of Change in Modern China*, is a sorrow-filled ethnography of Chinese politics viewed from the perspective of ordinary people who, in their struggles to find justice, unwittingly crash into a system rigged against them. In a manner reminiscent of Franz Kafka, Johnson's interweaving of the personal stories of China's Mr. and Ms. K's into the wider social and political context gives their accounts broader meaning.

In the first story, an amateur lawyer organizes a class-action lawsuit and protests on behalf of several thousand overtaxed peasants who live near the western town of Yan'an, which, ironically, was the Communist Party's base during the civil war. Getting nowhere locally, the lawyer appeals to the central government, only to be beaten senseless by public security goons; after a rump trial back in his home province he is sentenced to five years in a labor camp.

The second case recounts the bitter experiences of Beijing residents who have filed individual and joint suits against the municipal authorities for expropriating their homes in traditional neighborhoods to make way for modern office and apartment buildings without due process or adequate compensation. Their pleas are simply turned

aside by the courts and their homes doomed to be obliterated by the wrecking ball.

The third story is of a middle-aged female practitioner of the spiritual exercise Falun Gong. Rejuvenated by Falun Gong's daily rituals and syncretic belief system, the woman travels repeatedly to Beijing to protest the regime's crackdown on its adherents. She is arrested, returned to her coastal hometown, and ends up beaten to death. Johnson, who won a Pulitzer Prize in 2001 for his reporting on Falun Gong, recounts her daughter's frustrating attempts to find out from the authorities what happened to her mother. Her repeated requests for an honest death certificate and an official investigation are met with arrogance and derision: "Her efforts had been aimed at figuring out the law and getting it to work for her. Now she was being told that this was illegal."

These stories could be read as individual tales of woe of ordinary citizens who are faced with corrupt or inept local officials. But Johnson wants the reader to see how they are part of a wider pattern, the inevitable result of China's political system. With local governments hurting for cash, Beijing has condoned the imposition of myriad taxes and levies on farmers. Municipal officials in Beijing and elsewhere have cozy relationships with developers and profit handsomely when one-story Ming dynasty homes are torn down to make way for flashy office buildings and shopping malls. And it is the authorities in Beijing who have put the heat on local authorities to keep Falun Gong protesters out of the capital.

The reader comes away from *Wild Grass* wondering just how representative these stories are. The officials one encounters in the book are almost without exception one-dimensional, unsympathetic, and condescending bureaucrats and goons. In the Falun Gong story, some local party cadres admit to the idiocy of the crackdown, but these officials appear to be caught in a web woven by

Beijing. Another problem with the book is that one gets the impression that protests almost always fail. Yet, as Dali Yang notes in *Remaking the Chinese Leviathan*, over 30 percent of suits brought by citizens against the Chinese state are successful.

The other puzzle is presented by the ambiguous meaning of the book's subtitle: "Three Stories of Change in Modern China." The ambiguity arises because the author repeatedly highlights important elements of continuity with the past. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP), he points out, still relies on old governance practices, such as having individuals keep tabs on one another and using the petition and appeals process as a way to release the buildup of popular pressure. As others have shown, despite the reputation of the Chinese as compliant, they have been protesting against injustice and rebelling against authoritarian rulers for hundreds of years.¹ Moreover, in Johnson's stories the protesters rarely win; as their demands grow, the state's response hardens. Hence, in the book's most disheartening vignette, Johnson writes that the daughter of the slain Falun Gong practitioner "has come to realize what all people who want to change China eventually learn: the current system is at a dead end, but its death is not in sight."

And yet the message of *Wild Grass* is that China is changing in significant ways. What Johnson's stories reveal—although he does not spell this out—is that Chinese citizens are making great strides in developing the resources necessary to defend themselves against the state: knowledge of substantive issues and the law, a legal system that provides a path (however flawed) to challenge authority, more independent and durable social networks (such as those that bind together Falun Gong adherents or homeowners), and access to technology that facilitates communication of people within China and with the outside world. These resources have left many Chinese undeterred and more willing than ever to challenge authority, and

this is likely what gives Johnson hope that a new day is on the horizon.

The Present as Prologue

Johnson's travels left him sensing that the rumblings of a "slow-motion revolution" would eventually shake the CCP from power, but he humbly acknowledges the impossibility of divining China's political future with any certainty. China-correspondent-turned-Princeton-graduate-student Bruce Gilley, on the other hand, has no qualms about doing so. In *China's Democratic Future*, he boldly predicts that within the next ten to fifteen years, there will be some sort of crisis that will allow farsighted liberal leaders in the CCP to outmaneuver conservatives within the party, forcing it to give up its monopoly on power and leaving a liberal democracy in its wake. To Gilley, all signals—Chinese culture's emphasis on ruler accountability, the country's ongoing economic development that is generating professionals and entrepreneurs, international pressure, and the growing recognition by mid-level cadres that democracy is China's only way to avoid a revolutionary political crisis—point in the direction of a democratic future.

Gilley walks the reader through the various obstacles that may impede the transition from authoritarianism and the steps needed to ensure that China consolidates its new democracy.² He points out the land mines—mass violence, a conflict with Taiwan or some other nationalistic distraction, an economic downturn, military intervention into politics, and inappropriate constitutional design—and shows how they are likely to be defused. There are many people within China who are thinking about these potential crises, Gilley argues, as evidenced by the debate among Chinese intellectuals about democratization, and they will be ready to act if the opportunity arises.

As provocative as *China's Democratic Future* is, it is also highly problematic. Gilley's confidence is partly rooted in the belief that

the factors that supposedly spurred democratization elsewhere, such as economic development, will have the same effect in China. Hence, his claim that "the laws of social science grind away in China as they do elsewhere, whether people like it or not." This suggests a level of consensus among scholars about the sources of democratization that does not exist.³

Gilley's fervently displayed faith in the benefits of democracy also will strike many as an inappropriate insertion of his personal values into the analysis. But a deeper problem with this book is that the author allows his preferences to cloud his political analysis and judgment. He claims that China will democratize because it faces growing crises that the current ossified and corrupt regime is incapable of managing. In his teleological exercise to mine the present for the future, he interprets the data in a light that is most likely to yield a smooth transition to democracy. He bolsters his argument by citing developments—emerging independent media outlets that increase transparency and civil society groups that partly bear the burdens of managing social change, a growing coterie of lawyers and an evolving legal system that help channel protest away from the streets, the removal of corrupt officials by energized local electorates, and active local legislatures that check executive authority—that could just as easily be seen as helping the CCP maintain control.⁴ The Communist Party has condoned these developments precisely because it hopes they will lead to greater stability. And while Gilley details Chinese intellectuals' yearning for democracy, he leaves unanswered the question of whether ordinary Chinese citizens share their (and his) hopes. The polling data he cites indicate that popular support for the CCP rose from the 1980s to the 1990s, but he dismisses these surveys as flawed.

Even assuming that Gilley is right and the CCP gives up its monopoly on power within the next decade or so, his picture of the transition to democracy looks more like

wishful thinking than hard-headed analysis. The political logic that would most likely guide various political factions is nowhere to be seen. For example, Gilley expects that during the transition period China's parliament will reapportion seats to better reflect the interests of populous inland provinces and that a federal, as opposed to unitary, system will be instituted. But if the Communists voluntarily cede power, it is far more likely that, taking a cue from Singapore and Japan, they will push through a constitutional structure and election rules that will give them an advantage over other political parties. Since they will not want to yield authority to localities and since most of the party's current elite have strong ties to the coast, the chances of federalism and reapportionment are slim. In short, *China's Democratic Future* presents an unlikely scenario, not an inevitable future.⁵

Limited Government with Chinese Characteristics

One reason to be cautious in predicting an early demise for the CCP is that its leaders are not a bunch of aging Brezhnevs sitting around while the state atrophies. In his heavily documented study, *Remaking the Chinese Leviathan: Market Transition and the Politics of Governance in China*, University of Chicago political scientist Dali Yang shows China's ruling elites to be smart and pragmatic rulers who will try just about any reform that might improve governance while buttressing their authority. In what is the most comprehensive review of Chinese bureaucratic reform in any language to date, Yang details a blizzard of laws and regulations that have been adopted since the mid-1990s to achieve three goals: 1) shrink government and sell off its sideline businesses; 2) improve economic regulation and make government more responsive to the needs of business; and 3) create a disciplined bureaucracy by expanding transparency and society's access to the policymaking process, and by holding bureaucrats accountable for their actions.

Why did the leadership get religion and put China squarely on the path toward becoming a regulatory state? Yang's answer: failure, weakness, and fear. The political logic of reform in the 1980s was to create as many winners as possible by widely distributing economic benefits, including to officials. While this strategy largely worked for over a decade, by the 1990s declining state-owned enterprises were dragging the regime down with them, and decentralization had inhibited Beijing's ability to rein in maverick and corrupt officials. The Asian financial crisis of 1997–98 set off alarm bells at Zhongnanhai, where the Communist Party has its headquarters, as economic meltdowns toppled leaders across the region.

Thus motivated, the Chinese leadership performed radical surgery. Thousands of officials have been fired, most industrial ministries have been shuttered, and the military and government agencies have been forced to give up their sideline businesses (the military was compensated with higher budgets). The decentralization of the 1980s has been reversed, and Beijing now has much greater authority over tax collection, bank lending, investments, stock exchange listings, safety and environmental standards, drug certification, maritime safety, and customs. National and local agencies have set up websites with detailed, real-time information about their policies and regulations.⁶ There are sometimes response periods for draft rules and public hearings on national and local regulations. Bidding on state construction projects and the broader government procurement process has been made more transparent and fair, in part through the use of online auctions. Auditing and anti-corruption offices have greater authority to root out malfeasance. And legislatures, especially local ones, now provide genuine oversight over executive agencies.

Yang's cataloging of these initiatives is invaluable, but just as Johnson and Gilley overstate the regime's failings, Yang goes too far in the other direction—seeing the

glass as two-thirds full, with the water level rising. Surely the central leadership is not as corrupt or insensitive as presumed by Johnson and Gilley, but in Yang's telling, they are all well-intentioned, rational, and committed to making the country a better place in which to live. Former president Jiang Zemin is portrayed as being aghast at the extent of corruption, as is former premier Zhu Rongji. Even Li Peng, one of the real black hands following the country-wide unrest that culminated in the events in Tiananmen Square, is recast as a reformer because of his stewardship of the National People's Congress. (In interviews I have conducted, liberal insiders were critical of Li Peng.) So some skepticism seems to be in order, not least—as Johnson notes—because of the many business and political perks enjoyed by the families of the top leadership, who collectively constitute the “princeling party.” Similarly, the leadership is portrayed as fully unified and in possession of significant resources for implementing its plans. That picture conflicts with the predominant view of independent analysts that there are disagreements within the leadership and that bureaucratic conflicts in Beijing, and between the center and the localities, critically shape policy.⁷ If Yang is not persuasive on this point, it is because he pays inadequate attention to the gap between elite preferences and policy outcomes.

In addition, while standards, authority, and procedures are being clarified and routinized to an extent, one can still see some of the old style of governance at work. There is a campaign-like feel to these initiatives which suggests that once leaders' attention shifts, enforcement will wane. Bureaucrats will not be service-oriented, and auditors will be less diligent. On the other side of the coin, wherever Beijing focuses its spotlight, government officials tend to get carried away. If Ian Johnson's peasants are any indication, tax collectors are too aggressive. And squeamishness aside, does stealing

from the till or taking bribes, even millions, justify a bullet to the back of the head?

Finally, the most important question to be asked is whether these reforms are working. Yang makes a noble effort to search for clues, but the evidence is still too meager to allow him to say anything definitive. Tax receipts are up, but so are budget deficits. The official rate of nonperforming bank loans is down, but this is partly due to accounting gimmicks, not wiser lending. Yang points to signs of improvement on the corruption front, but other China specialists have found that corruption is on the rise.⁸ Yang repeatedly admits that there is variation in the adoption and implementation of regulatory reforms, yet he stresses that the general trajectory is more significant. But, to borrow an insight from statisticians, if there is wide deviation from the mean, the variation deserves attention. Since the regime is likely to be most endangered when governance is ineffective and oppressive, we need the clearest possible picture of just how deep and wide the reform measures actually are.

Beyond the “Mandate of Mammon”

At any given time, hundreds of protests and wildcat strikes are taking place in China. In 2003, the country's courts received almost 4 million petitions from ordinary citizens seeking redress of grievances.⁹ Protest is so common that the phrase “maintaining stability” can only be a codeword for continued CCP rule. By any other measure, China is obviously unstable.¹⁰ However, as the contributors to the evenhanded *State and Society in 21st Century China* show, Beijing has a variety of tools with which to weather the storm.

The central theme of this collection of essays is the issue of legitimacy.¹¹ And as Oxford University's Vivienne Shue explains, the CCP's legitimacy is not staked on simple economic performance (what contributor Harley Balzer of Georgetown University calls the “Mandate of Mammon”). Societal confirmation of a regime's right to rule can

be derived from multiple sources. The three most important sources in China, Shue explains, have been the right to determine the validity of knowledge and the parameters of morality (Truth), a commitment to the betterment of society (Benevolence), and defense of the country's international honor and security (Glory). A fourth source of support—legal-electoral legitimacy—is, of course, increasingly relevant, though not of the CCP's choosing.

Since different types of protests challenge different sources of legitimacy, Beijing has responded to resistance in a variety of ways. The Communist leadership felt threatened by Falun Gong because of the latter's counterclaims to Beijing's definition of Truth and its massive 1999 demonstration in Beijing, and, as a result, the leadership ordered a drastic crackdown. The same outcome has befallen the China Democratic Party and others that have organized to challenge the CCP's monopoly rule. By contrast, workers and peasants protesting lost wages, inadequate pensions and social services, unfair taxation, and expropriated land have been met with a dual strategy: big sticks against the organizers and some carrots as palliatives for the rest. Beijing has had to tread gingerly in response to nationalist critics—mostly university students and intellectuals who chastise Beijing for being too soft on the United States, Japan, and Taiwan—since stifling such expression runs the risk of making the government appear to be an inadequate defender of China's dignity.

As the contributors to this volume demonstrate, it is necessary to see how divisions within the state affect the nature and consequences of political protest. Economic complaints are most often directed at local businesses and governments, allowing Beijing to avoid blame and play the role of outside arbiter.¹² On the other hand, when Beijing tries to enforce compliance with reforms, it can run into obstinate local officials. The University of California scholar

Kevin O'Brien reports that when a central ministry leader with whom he was traveling ordered a village cadre to release the latest election results, he said, "I'm your bosses' bosses' bosses' boss, so turn over the results." To which the village head replied, "Because you're my bosses' bosses' bosses' boss, go to hell!" And protesters sometimes find local allies, as when village chiefs organize villagers to protest against taxes levied by higher levels of government.

Besides having varied tactics for playing defense against the dissatisfied, the CCP leadership is also playing offense. In addition to the bureaucratic reforms described by Yang, the most important may be its efforts to co-opt the new business elite. As George Washington University's Bruce Dickson shows, the party has remade itself ideologically into an ally of business and is recruiting entrepreneurs as members at such a fast rate that peasants and workers are no longer in the majority. Thirty percent of entrepreneurs—meaning several *million*—are now party members. Chinese Communists look more like Rockefeller Republicans every day. At the same time, the CCP has kept a lid on most business associations that might be able to represent their members' interests. While my own research shows that businesspeople have been able to lobby the Chinese government to shape national economic policies even in industries where associations are dormant, few have demanded sweeping change.¹³ For the most part, they are pushing for incremental reform to routinize their access and improve policy-making. Entrepreneurs are not unswervingly committed to the party, but neither are they likely to lead a charge against it.

From One China to Many Chinas

A colleague once remarked that because China is so large one can safely say that X is true and the opposite of X is also true. The conflicting views of China in the books reviewed here bring to mind the story of the blind men and the elephant, in which each

man in turn describes the elephant according to whichever part of the beast he is grasping. Some might suggest that a possible explanation for this disagreement is analysts' contrasting ability to be unbiased and neutral. Hence, some people see one clear picture (either the CCP is unreformable and bound to be replaced, or the CCP is earnestly taking every measure possible to reform itself), while other observers see a more complex scene. Another possibility, raised by those who see a more menacing CCP, is that some of those who paint a more positive or nuanced picture do so because they know Big Brother's little sisters are watching and do not want to lose their access to the country.¹⁴

Even if there is some truth to these claims—and my sense is that there is less here than some fear—an essential reason for disagreements among analysts is the wide variation in economic, social, and political circumstances that exist simultaneously across contemporary China. Struggling coal miners, exploited peasants, laid-off steelworkers, latch-key kids, Muslim Uighurs, Falun Gong adherents, and Marxist stalwarts share the same land as venture capitalists, Netizens, software programmers, homeowners, ambulance-chasing lawyers, punk rockers, spoiled brats, and avant-garde artists. Stand on any street corner in Beijing, and within minutes watch all of these people pass by. Some regions and industries are blossoming, while others are suffering under the double whammy of a postcommunist hangover and the invading forces of globalization. Traveling from coastal Shanghai to inland Guizhou feels literally like a trip back in time.¹⁵ Some elements of the Chinese state, as Dali Yang tells us, have adopted sophisticated and transparent methods of regulation, while others adhere to draconian tactics. Variation is not a subplot in China; it is the main story.

Looking ahead, we have to admit that despite the daily headlines of protests and perhaps one's own desires, the CCP has so far

been relatively successful at suppressing or redirecting potential opponents and at bringing new social forces into its fold. The Communist Party's legitimacy is not unchallenged, but as Vivienne Shue reminds us, the legitimacy of most states is regularly a subject of contention. My sense is that in ten years analysts will still be debating how it is that the CCP has defied expectations to remain in power. A key source of discontent are the three transitions underway: from a planned to a market economy, from agriculture to industry and services, and from rural to urban. But if wise policies are adopted, the economy has the potential to continue to grow rapidly enough to provide significant opportunity for a wide swath of the population and make it through this transitional period.¹⁶ The party will also continue to play its other cards, including trying to persuade the public that China is on the right track and that the CCP is the best train conductor available. And of course, there will still be a place for Big Brother and his sisters to keep resentment from boiling over into revolution.

But an equally important lesson that emerges from recent research is that the status quo is not static. Even if the Communists are still in power in a decade, they will not be the same Communists of Mao's day or even the present day. The face of society will undergo a transformation as a more independent and educated generation emerges. As a consequence, the nature of state-society relations will also likely evolve. If you find continuity in one place, then just look in another place to see change percolating up. In short, we will continue to go to China and find stories to tell, some we cannot yet imagine. ●

Notes

1. See Elizabeth J. Perry, *Challenging the Mandate of Heaven: Social Protest and State Power in China* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2001).

2. Others have made a similar prediction, but they have not carried the discussion much beyond

outlining the transition. See, for example, Arthur Waldron, "China's Coming Constitutional Challenges," *Orbis*, vol. 39 (winter 1995), pp. 19–35; and "The Chinese Sickness," *Commentary* (July/August 2003), pp. 36–43.

3. For an excellent critique of the democratization scholarship, see Gerardo L. Munck, "The Regime Question: Theory Building in Democracy Studies," *World Politics*, vol. 54 (October 2001), pp. 119–44.

4. The lawyer Gordon Chang agrees that the Communist regime cannot endure, but he famously predicted that chaos and violence are much more likely to follow in the wake of regime change than democracy. See Gordon S. Chang, *The Coming Collapse of China* (New York: Random House, 2001).

5. For a balanced assessment, see Richard Baum, "China After Deng: Ten Scenarios in Search of Reality," *China Quarterly*, vol. 145 (March 1996), pp. 153–75.

6. Although the Chinese-language sites are more complete, the English-language website of the Ministry of Commerce (english.mofcom.gov.cn) is a useful example.

7. See Murray Scot Tanner, *The Politics of Lawmaking in Post-Mao China: Institutions, Processes, and Democratic Prospects* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999); and Joseph Fewsmith, *China Since Tiananmen: The Politics of Transition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

8. Andrew Wedeman, "Anticorruption Campaigns and the Intensification of Corruption in China," *Journal of Contemporary China*, vol. 14, no. 42 (February 2005), pp. 90–113; and Melanie Manion, *Corruption by Design: Building Clean Government in Mainland China and Hong Kong* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

9. Kathy Chen, "Chinese Protests Grow More Frequent, Violent," *Wall Street Journal*, November 5, 2004.

10. To the extent instability involves positive change, it is not necessarily bad. See H. Lyman Miller, "How Do We Know If China Is Unstable?" in *Is China Unstable?* ed. David Shambaugh (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2000), pp. 18–25.

11. For an excellent work that examines protest in China but gives less attention to legitimacy, see Elizabeth J. Perry and Mark Selden, eds., *Chinese Society: Change, Conflict and Resistance*, 2nd ed. (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003).

12. There is, however, wide regional variation in the demands and targets of workers. Along the well-developed coast, workers are primarily upset with their companies or local governments. By contrast, in northeastern China, where large state-owned enterprises once dominated the economy, protests have been more intense, with workers' ire directed ultimately at the national leadership. See William Hurst, "Understanding Contentious Collective Action by Chinese Laid-Off Workers: The Importance of Regional Political Economy," *Studies in Comparative International Development*, vol. 39 (summer 2004), pp. 94–120.

13. See Scott Kennedy, *The Business of Lobbying in China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, forthcoming).

14. For a recent version of this charge, see Perry Link, "China: The Anaconda in the Chandelier," *New York Review of Books*, April 11, 2002, pp. 67–70.

15. On how Guizhou is faring with reforms, see Daniel B. Wright, *The Promise of the Revolution: Stories of Fulfillment and Struggle in China's Hinterland* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003).

16. On China's growth potential, see Arthur Kroeber, "Growth: How Long Can It Last?" *China Economic Quarterly*, vol. 8 (Fourth Quarter, 2004), pp. 35–40.