Setting the Stage, Part I

Overview of the Project

Daniel A. Bell

In June 2020, Indian and Chinese troops fought each other in harsh mountain conditions along the Sino-Indian border, resulting in the deaths of dozens of soldiers. Such skirmishes have flared up since the bloody war between China and India in 1962 that left unresolved border conflicts (in contrast, China has peacefully resolved territorial conflicts with eleven of its other neighbors). Notwithstanding economic ties—today China is India's second largest trading partner—the risk of another full-blown war is ever-present. In February 2021, India and China agreed to pull back troops from the Pangong Lake border hotspot, but tensions remain high, and political and military leaders in the two countries seem to regard each other as natural enemies. There are few cultural and academic exchanges between the two great Asian powers and even economic ties seem to be worsening, with India imposing bans on TikTok, WeChat, and other Chinese apps.

It wasn't always the case. India and China were both members of the nonaligned movement in the 1950s, and Indian prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru went so far as to say that India's foreign policy with China should be based on "brotherhood." In the more distant past, Nehru's ideal may have been closer to the reality. The two countries lived in peaceful coexistence and cultural ties were deep. Buddhism spread peacefully from India to China, to the point that it has become far more influential in China. In the 1920s, the poet Tagore deeply marked Chinese intellectual culture when he visited China. The great Chinese intellectual Liang Shuming regarded Indian culture as the apex of human moral growth. And the learning was mutual: India benefited from China's paper, gunpowder, and silk. Perhaps China's greatest gift to India was the preservation of Buddhist texts, accomplished by Chinese and Indian translators living and working in China. After Buddhism disappeared in India and original texts were lost or destroyed by invaders, these Chinese translations preserved Buddhist *sutras*, which could then be retranslated for Indians. As Amitav Acharya notes, Buddhism would have been lost to Indians

without Chinese help, just as Arabs preserved Greek texts in science and philosophy that would otherwise have been lost.

Our project aims to recover the deep respect and mutual learning between the two great Asian powers with thousands of years of history and such dynamic and diverse cultures. Such respect can improve political ties between India and China. But our aims are primarily academic. The current debates about international political thought and statecraft are based mainly on theories in international relations derived from the Western experience(s). What's missing in these debates are the contributions from ancient Chinese and Indian thinkers. Both India and China had profound political thinkers who developed innovative thoughts and theories of interstate relations that may still have lessons for today. Such political thoughts are not well known outside of China and India. And there is hardly any engagement between intellectuals from India and China.

We should state at the outset that it is controversial to use the terms "India" and "China" to refer to the distant past. As Benjamin Elman and Sheldon Pollock put it, "The countries, nations, regions, or civilizations—depending on how we define these apparently simple but actually quite complex terms—that we now identify by the names China and India have long and complicated histories."[1] The histories of "India" and "China" do indeed have sharp discontinuities, but they also have surprising, millennia-long continuities. Given the complexities, we do not attempt to survey the whole of political thought in both countries/civilizations/political spaces. We limited our focus to "classical" ideas about political thought and statecraft, meaning that (1) they emerged in ancient political spaces that we now call China and India and (2) set the terms for much political debate in subsequent Chinese and Indian history. In China, the "hundred schools of thought" emerged in the Spring and Autumn (770–476 BCE) and Warring States (475–221 BCE) periods, before the country was unified by Qin Shi Huangdi, the self-proclaimed "First Emperor" of China. This period produced complex and profound thoughts and theories about interstate relations, including Confucianism and Legalism, the two most influential schools of political thought in subsequent Chinese political history (Legalism influenced political practices but it was buried as an official ideology for about two thousand years, until it was revived by Chairman Mao in the twentieth century). The two most prominent thinkers of the Confucian school in this period were Confucius (Kongzi) and Mencius (Mengzi), who tended to defend what we would call "rule by soft power" (moral example, education, ritual, persuasion, concern for the people, etc.). Han Feizi synthesized the Legalist tradition that emphasized what we would refer to as "hard power" (building up a strong state, military might, harsh laws, rule by fear, etc.). Xunzi was influential in both traditions. All these thinkers are discussed in depth in our book. In ancient India, two influential schools of political thought—Brahmanical Vedic (subsumed later by the term "Hindu") thought with its emphasis on rule by eternal law and morality (*Dharma*) and Kautilya's emphasis on hard-nosed political realism and self-interested foreign policy—similarly emerged in a period of turmoil and

interstate warfare, although Ashoka temporarily led a unified "empire" and defended values of respect for diverse communities and forms of life, broadly influenced by Buddha's teachings. These three traditions set the terms for much political thought and action in subsequent Indian history, although Kautilya's *Arthasastra* disappeared from official discourse for about fourteen hundred years until it was (literally) rediscovered in the early twentieth century. All these political traditions from ancient India are discussed in depth in our book.

Why bother recovering political traditions from the distant past? The most obvious reason is that these ancient schools of thought offer rich and profound ways of thinking about politics and statecraft and explicitly or implicitly shape much political debate in India and China, similar to the way rich and profound ancient Greek and Judeo-Christian schools of thought set the terms for much political debate in subsequent "Western" history. Just as, say, Augustine's ideas about just war influenced "universal" Christian thinking about just war, so Mencius's ideas about morally justified warfare influenced Confucian thinking about morally justified warfare, and it is worth asking in both cases to what extent the theories have universal value, to what extent the ideals influenced government policies in history, and to what extent they ought to influence policies in the future. In the same vein, the Thucydides Trap is one way of thinking about conflict between states, but Kautilya's insights on forging alliances with the enemy of my enemy may also have lasting value, perhaps more so. At the very least, we should be open to the possibility that hitherto-neglected ancient Indian and Chinese ideas can enrich contemporary thinking about political theory and international relations.

Needless to say, we do not mean to draw direct implications from the past to the present. Many factors other than ancient ideas shape foreign policy thinking and decision-making in modern societies. Capitalism, nationalism, and new technologies set new problems and agendas that could not have been anticipated by ancient thinkers. Still, there may be lessons for today. We discuss thoughts and theories about politics that emerged mainly in what Karl Jaspers famously called the "Axial Age" (ca. eighth to third century BCE): whether in Greece, China, India, and Persia, old traditions and communal ties broke down, leading to social transformations and political chaos, with the consequence that brilliant thinkers from around the globe developed new theories and ways of thinking meant to address new challenges and ways of life. At the same time, proto-modern institutions, such as a complex and meritocratic bureaucratic system, emerged in political contexts such as China. Today, arguably, we are undergoing another period of great social and political transformations, and some of the ideas and institutions that emerged from the "Axial Age" may offer solutions for today's challenges as well (hence we appreciate the opportunity to be published in the "Great Transformations" series by the University of California Press).

Why bring classical Chinese and Indian thoughts and theories about politics and statecraft into dialogue with each other? Here, too, there are compelling reasons. It is striking that Indian and Chinese ideas about politics, no matter how

diverse and influenced by the rest of the world and no matter how much interaction between China and India for two or more millennia in other domains, emerged and developed in what appears to be relative isolation from each other, with the possible exception of Buddhism. The rich and diverse Confucian tradition(s) had almost zero impact in India, and the rich and diverse Hindu tradition(s) had almost zero impact in China until the twentieth century. But it is not too late for mutual learning. The gaps and problems in Chinese political traditions can be enriched by engaging with and learning from thoughts and theories in the Indian traditions, and vice versa. We encouraged our contributors to think about what can be learned from the political thoughts of the other country's traditions that discuss similar themes and topics. There is a more practical/political reason for mutual engagement. As we will see, ancient Chinese and Indian ideas continue to be influential in contemporary political debates in China and India and inform diplomatic thinking and policy-making. So Chinese thinkers can learn about what influences thinking about political thought and statecraft in contemporary India, and Indian thinkers can learn about what influences thinking about political thought and statecraft in contemporary China. Cooperation and competition between two great Asian powers will inevitably impact international relations and political futures in Asia and the rest of the world. Deeper mutual understanding can form the basis for mutual appreciation and friendship, or at least help to avoid clashes based on misunderstandings.

In short, there is a dire need to bring the thoughts and theories of profound political thinkers from ancient India and China into dialogue with each other, as well as to think about implications for today's world. This multiyear project aims to remedy this gap. In 2017, the four editors of this book met at Schwarzman College (Tsinghua University, Beijing), and we realized that there was a need for a project that systematically compares classical international political thought from India and China. We are pleased that recent books compare China and India in different ways: the Sheldon Pollock and Benjamin Elman edited volume, *What China and India Once Were*, compares histories of different domains in India and China from the early modern period (ca. 1500–1800) and the Rajiv Ranjan and Guo Changgang edited volume, *China and South Asia*, looks at the changing dynamics and regional powers plays between contemporary China and South Asia.[2] Other books explore classic works from the two great and diverse Asian civilizations, and they are sometimes compared with classic texts in international political thinking from the West, but no book-length manuscript systematically compares classic works in political thought from India and China with each other. So we launched and conceptualized this project with generous support from the Berggruen Institute. From 2017 to 2019, we brought together leading political theorists of international thought for workshops held in China, India, and Thailand. We asked experts in Chinese political theory and international relations to write about the contributions of ancient Chinese theorists, and we asked experts in Indian political theory

and international relations to write about the contributions of ancient Indian theorists. We also invited our contributors to engage with insights from the "other" philosophical tradition and to draw implications for political thinking and international relations theory as well as some policy implications for the modern world.

We held three workshops that resulted in this book. The dialogues coalesced along seven leading themes in international relations theory and global political thought: methodology of studying history and philosophy of interstate relations; moral leadership; amoral realism; empire; just war; diplomacy; and balancing, hegemony, and mandalas. These themes informed classical political thinking in India and China help us to make sense of the present, and they serve to structure our book. Each of the seven sections has an essay by a specialist on ancient Indian political thinking paired with an essay by a specialist on ancient Chinese political thinking. The essays are the product of a multiyear engagement and dialogue. The essays on ancient Chinese political thinking were presented at the Shandong University workshop in 2017, with comments by specialists in ancient Indian political thinking. The essays on ancient Indian political thinkers were presented in Bangkok in 2018 (we had to move the workshop from India to Thailand due to international tensions between India and China at the time), with comments by specialists in ancient Chinese political thinking. The final workshop at Tsinghua University in 2019 involved presentations by experts in both ancient Chinese and Indian political thinking, and we asked presenters to discuss what they had learned from the other "side" over the course of the multiyear exchanges and to draw implications for the theory and practice of contemporary international relations. The essays were further refined over the next year. This overview draws links and implications that are not always explicit in the essays themselves.

METHODOLOGY

The first section focuses on methodological issues. How should we study ancient ideas of interstate relations from ancient India and China? How can the two ancient civilizations be compared? Is it possible to draw implications for the contemporary world from ideas developed in a radically different time and context? The section leads off with Patrick Olivelle's essay. Olivelle—professor of Sanskrit and Indian religions at the University of Texas at Austin—warns against the dangers of "essentialism." There is no "essential" and unchanging Indian (or Chinese) thinking. Ancient Indian thinkers were extremely diverse and each thinker must be discussed in his specific context: who was he or she addressing and why. The terms need to be translated in ways that avoid misunderstanding generated by modern concepts. For example, the terms usually translated as "state" in ancient India refer to small political communities led by a king in a constant state of warfare (the empire of Ashoka is an exception), in contrast to imperial China where the political community was usually a huge territory governed by a

complex bureaucracy. Nor does it make much sense to refer to an "Indian" tradition since the thinkers held such radically different ideas over time and space. Olivelle illustrates his argument by contrasting the ideas of Ashoka, the idealist monarch in the third century BCE; Kautilya, the "realist" political advisor in the first century CE; and Manu, the defender of Brahminism in the second century CE who attempted to defend an international order based on *dharma* (often translated as "moral law") that transcends any particular polity. Olivelle cautiously and tentatively draws implications for the modern world, noting Ashoka's idea that moral foreign policy involves the provision of medical knowledge and medicinal plants abroad (the ancient equivalent, perhaps, of sharing vaccines with other states) and Manu's idea of punishments for planetary ecological crimes and harm to animals.

Olivelle's dialogue partner is Roger Ames, humanities chair professor at Peking University in Beijing. Ames has often been criticized for "essentializing" Chinese philosophy in his efforts to show what is unique about Chinese philosophy and how it differs from thinking generated in other contexts. But Ames criticizes the language of "essentialism" itself as inappropriate to understand Chinese philosophy: the different Chinese thinkers, no matter what their orientations, did not adhere to a worldview of "essences" that stands apart and above the ever-changing empirical world. Such Platonic and Christian notions—which may be inherited from earlier Indian metaphysics—are absent from ancient Chinese thinking that assumed a world of constant change. Nor is there anything wrong with generalizing from particular ideas and concepts in Chinese history if the aim is to show contrasts with influential concepts in other traditions, so long as the cultural "translator" is self-conscious about the risks of losing sight of internal diversity in the particular culture. Moreover, historical accuracy matters. The pure normative philosopher might draw implications for the modern world even if it distorts history. But Ames tries to be as accurate as possible in his analysis (and translation) of what thinkers said in the past, while recognizing that the "translator" can never completely transcend his or her own context and field of interpretation. At the end of his essay, Ames invokes the ancient Chinese idea of *tianxia* (often translated as "All-under-heaven") to make sense of the ideal informing China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). *Tianxia* is respectful of diversity and assumes an interdependence of "heaven" and people. In practice, it means a "win-win" scenario with economic benefits for all participants and cultural learning and improvement in ever-changing mutual relations, in contrast to the universal and self-sufficient idea of a "*dharma*" that never changes in time and space. Ames recognizes that there is a large gap between the ideal of *tianxia* and the reality of BRI, but the ideal can and should be employed as a standard to judge success and failure in reality.

What is clear from the dialogue between Olivelle and Ames is that they have converged to a certain extent from radically different starting methodological viewpoints. Olivelle defends the method of the political historian, similar to the

Quentin Skinner school in contextual political theory: it is most important to place thinkers in their context, and to trace in great detail who said what to whom and why. Particularity matters more than generality. Ames defends the method of the normative philosopher who looks at thinkers from ancient China to show the contrast with other civilizations and to draw lessons for today. But they are both cultural pluralists committed to better appreciation and respect for the world's diverse cultures. Both recognize that there are continuities and commonalities (and priorities) that may be distinctive to particular traditions. They both converge on the point that generalizations can be appropriate if they are done self-consciously and in ways that do not flatten the contours of history or marginalize dissident viewpoints in particular traditions. And both thinkers draw thought-provoking implications for the behaviors of states in relation to each other in the contemporary world.

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

The next theme discusses the role of political leadership in international relations. International relations theorists in the West tend to fall into two "camps": one emphasizes economic and military power in explaining outcomes in international relations and the other emphasizes the role of ideas and ideals. Missing, however, is the role of political leadership: To what extent do different kinds of political leaders affect change in international relations? Yan Xuetong, dean of the Institute of International Relations at Tsinghua University in Beijing, has formulated a theory arguing that political leadership is the key "independent variable" that can help explain the rise and fall of great powers (see his works *Ancient Chinese Thought, Modern Chinese Power* and *Leadership and the Rise of Great Powers*).[3] Yan argues for a rigorous scientific theory, "moral realism," that would be appropriate for the modern world and is directly inspired by ancient Chinese political thinkers, especially the ancient Confucian thinker Xunzi (313–238 BCE).

Yan's essay compares Xunzi's thought on interstate politics with that of Kautilya (370–283 BCE). Both thinkers lived in an era of incessant interstate warfare and both wrote the most systematic political theory treatises of their time (Kautilya's thought is more commonly compared with that of Han Feizi—see Xu's chapter in our book—but Yan argues that Han Feizi did not say much about interstate political thought, unlike Xunzi). Their theories, however, are substantially different. As a method, Xunzi draws on history to support his points, while Kautilya's *Arthasastra* uses deductive logic. Xunzi argues for an ideal humane authority who rules with compassion and unifies the political world primarily by means of moral power, whereas Kautilya argues for the need to expand one's territory by means of aggressive warfare and such "Machiavellian" tactics as extensive spying networks that plant lies and sow dissension in enemy states. What they have in common, however, is that both offer proposals for dealing with the nonideal political world.

In Xunzi's case, he has good things to say about the imperfect "hegemon" who can form alliances with other states and is strategically reliable in the sense that he keeps his promises to friends. Kautilya is more cynical: "peace" alliances with other states can and should be broken once they are no longer in the interests of the state with more power. More importantly, from Yan's point of view, both Xunzi and Kautilya argue for the importance of political leadership: a leader, working with capable ministers, can literally make or break a state in an international system characterized by deadly dog-eat-dog competition. Yan concludes that Xunzi's thought hasn't had much impact on contemporary Chinese foreign policy, whereas Kautilya's thought has influenced Indian foreign policy and his theory can provide rich resources for scholars to develop new IR theories.

Rajeev Bhargava, former director of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies in Delhi, argues that Xunzi's thought shares more affinity with the ideals of Emperor Ashoka, who lived in the third century BCE in India (Kautilya's ideas are more commonly compared with those of Han Feizi, the ultra-realist "Legalist" thinker who was Xunzi's student). Bhargava's essay discusses Ashoka's political ideals and argues that they are meant for both intra- and interstate relations. Ashoka is a rare counterexample to the dictum that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely: he became "good" after a history of immorality. Ashoka expanded his state via brutal warfare, including a war on Kalinga that left at least a hundred thousand dead, but then he had a Buddhist-inspired moral conversion. He advocated rule by moral power rather than the brute force of domination, similar to Xunzi's ideal of humane authority. But Ashoka shared the doubts and regrets expressed by Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius in his *Meditations* and Chinese emperor Kangxi in his Final Valedictory: his inscriptions often express self-criticism and regret at the harm he has caused to humans and animals.[4] We know Ashoka's political thinking because his edicts, scattered in more than thirty places throughout India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, have survived across the centuries and can still be seen today on rocks, cave walls, and stone pillars.

Ashoka's political morality seems relatively modern because it is designed for a political community characterized by what we would today call moral pluralism. Ashoka's empire was indeed composed of highly diverse religious and social groupings and he argued for a political ethic that binds the various groups, not just in peace but in a kind of harmony that respects, if not celebrates, diversity (a parallel might also be drawn with the Confucian ideal of "diversity in harmony" (和) as opposed to uniformity and sameness (同)). Most original, Ashoka argues not only for a personal ethic characterized by such Buddhist values as compassion and truthfulness but also for an intergroup morality that allows for peaceful coexistence and moral progress. In contrast to, say, Christian missionaries who tried to spread the moral truth and (implicitly or explicitly) downgraded

other moral systems, Ashoka's envoys aimed for mutual learning that requires restrained and respectful speech. If envoys refrain from excessive self-glorification and immoderate criticism of other groups, they can maintain the peace and avoid humiliating people who think differently. And they must also strive to transform their own views via actions, similar to Xunzi's idea of rituals involving members of different social hierarchies that have the effect of lifting participants out of their selfish orbits and generating a sense of common concern. As Bhargava explains, "Ashoka says that those seeking improvement in their ethical views should not only communicate with others with different perspectives in order to learn from them but even follow their precepts, 'obey' them. Thinking as if you were in someone else's shoes may not on occasion be sufficient; you have to act with their shoes on. This practical ethical engagement brings an experiential dimension that could be ethically transformative." Bhargava notes that Ashoka's ideals of tolerance, respect, and mutual learning influenced the thought of India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru (although Yan notes that Nehru also referenced the arch-realist Kautilya). Instead of the physical and verbal violence that so often poison international relations today, Ashoka's ideals can promote mutually enriching relations with other states in a multipolar and multicultural world.

AMORAL REALISM

The next section focuses on the theme of "amoral realism" in international relations. Nearly two millennia before Machiavelli penned the (in)famous line in *The Prince* that rulers must "learn how not to be good," Chinese and India thinkers defended hard-nosed realist approaches to interstate relations that emphasized commitment to maximizing the power of the state and allowed for, if not encouraged, amoral methods such as aggressive warfare and fraud. In the Chinese tradition, the third-century BCE thinker Han Feizi systematized the "Legalist" tradition with its emphasis on rule by fear and harsh punishment. Han Feizi inspired the self-proclaimed First Emperor of China, Qin Shi Huang, who unified China after centuries of constant warfare, but Emperor Qin's dynasty was short-lived and he went down in history as a brutal dictator. In ancient India, Kautilya was not so straightforwardly amoral, but he too was committed to amoral methods as necessary to secure and expand state power in the context of "anarchical" international relations with no higher authority than the individual state. Both ancient thinkers—especially Han Feizi—were more consistently "Machiavellian" than Machiavelli himself, who softened his political theory in *The Discourses*.

Xu Jin of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing systematically compares the international political thought of Han Feizi and Kautilya. His main conclusion is that Han Feizi is a more thoroughgoing "amoral realist." Both thinkers lived in an era of brutal warfare, which led them to develop theories that

prioritized material interests and state power above moral considerations. Han Feizi argues that Confucian-style morality may have been appropriate in an earlier era of peace and material abundance, but such means would lead to disaster in the Warring States period. In chaotic times, stabilization and unification can only be achieved by aggressive warfare abroad and the use of harsh punishment and fear at home. Both thinkers held a pessimistic view of human nature as evil, selfish, materialistic, and untrustworthy, but Kautilya's thought did have a religious foundation with commitment to some sort of ethics. Han Feizi argued for the ruthless pursuit of victory by any means in interstate relations, although he did say that a sovereign who implements an impartial legal system is more likely to succeed. Kautilya similarly allowed for force and fraud in interstate relations, while placing more emphasis on diplomacy than war. He was concerned with the well-being of people and seemed to have more faith in the idea that a wise and moral ruler could be good for his country. In his conclusion, Xu suggests that since states often prioritize national interests in the global arena, both thinkers can help states to develop realistic policies in contemporary times, although he sides with Kautilya's view that the well-being of people should be the moral foundation of any foreign policy.

Deepshikha Shahi of O.P. Jindal Global University even more forcefully argues that we need to look beyond the seemingly immoral (or amoral) methods advocated by political realists. She argues that the hard distinction between morality and realism is the product of Eurocentric international relations and cannot do justice to the thinking of ancient theorists from radically different contexts. Kautilya did defend immoral methods such as targeted assassination, but such methods were meant to preempt worse means such as warfare. Similar to modern theories of just war, organized violence should be a last resort. Moreover, immoral methods were meant to serve moral goals in international relations. At home, the ruler should be driven by the ideal that "in the happiness of his subjects lies his happiness" and abroad the conqueror state should respect the value systems of the subjects of the enemy state to the point that the distinction between self and other becomes blurred. Han Feizi prioritized warfare and showed less obvious concern for the well-being of people at home and abroad. But his theory of the successful ruler may have been underpinned by an underlying moral concern. Unlike Kautilya's counsel that the ruler's source of power comes from moral-energetic action, Han Feizi argued that the ruler's power is increased by nonaction (*wu wei*). Once the ruler sets the law in place, he should withdraw to a mysterious and inaccessible realm, and show his face only when absolutely necessary. Such nonaction is necessary both to maintain a sense of awe and to ensure that the ruler refrains from showing his desires and thus be open to manipulation by his ministers. The effect, however, is to ensure that subjects are not frequently the targets of arbitrary power from the top and to ensure that mediocre rulers do not do too much damage to the polity. The exchange between Xu and Shahi is striking because both

thinkers charitably construe the thoughts of the political theorists from the less familiar tradition.

EMPIRE

The next theme is empire, and both interlocutors compare ancient Chinese and Indian ideas of empire that differ from Eurocentric notions of empire. Such "defamiliarization" opens new normative possibilities for future international relations inspired by ideas and practices from the past. Zhou Fangyin, dean of the School of International Relations at Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, asks the question, was ancient China an empire, and if so, in what sense? If empire is defined in a broad sense as a great power that establishes a hierarchical order with some degree of control over less powerful political entities composed of different nationalities and cultures, then China did establish and maintain an empire in East Asia. But the Chinese empire had distinctive features that differ from its Western counterparts. At the heart of the Chinese empire was the ideal of political unification, so that there was always a pressure to reunify when the empire was broken into smaller parts.[5] The assumption was that the well-being of the people could only be secured via a stable and unified political entity rather than through a separatist regime. Another contrast with empires in the Western world is that the ideal of political unity did not translate into a highly expansionary foreign policy. More often than not, the rulers of Chinese empires relied on "soft power"—rule by example, ritual propriety, and moral education—to expand beyond the core area of Chinese civilization: "China usually does not exercise effective administrative control over its neighboring countries, does not collect taxes, does not control their armed forces, and has limited impact on their foreign relations." Such institutions as the civil examination system were spread to tributary states such as Korea and Vietnam largely through peaceful means. Zhou recognizes the counterarguments of "realists" who point to occasional violent conflicts launched by Chinese rulers, but he argues that the East Asian regional order established by various kinds of "tributary systems" relied less on coercion and forceable imposition of rulers, institutions, and unequal treaties compared to European empires. Even when the Chinese empire had the capacity to expand militarily, it often refrained from doing so.

What's lacking, perhaps, is a knockdown argument against the realist school: that the Chinese empire did not use military force against peripheral regions even when it was in its long-term interest to do so. Still, it is worth investigating the hypothesis that Chinese empires relied less on violence and coercion compared to European empires; and even if it is not always historically accurate, the myth about China's past may play a role in restraining Chinese foreign policy in the future. In his conclusion, Zhou argues that the ancient Indian empires similarly had a clear opposition to war and did not pursue systematic colonization of foreign

countries. But there are important differences between the Indian and Chinese empires; most notably, Zhou argues that the ideal of "grand unification" was not so prevalent in India's past. Such differences in political culture help to explain why the Indian empires were more often characterized by periods of division compared to China's empires: Zhou points out that the grand unification in India was often founded by foreign nationalities such as the Sultanate of Delhi and the Mughal empire (it is possible to overstate this difference: the Maurya empire was not founded by a foreign nationality and Chinese empires were sometimes reunified by foreign nationalities such as the Mongolians and the Manchus).

Upinder Singh, professor of history at Ashoka University, concurs with Zhou that both China and India had hierarchically ordered empires, not only because they had a degree of control over peripheral regions but also in the sense that thinkers from the core areas expressed the idea of a morally superior civilization opposed to the culture of "barbarians" (foreigners and tribals) in surrounding areas (as we will see in Pardesi's essay, such an outlook was more common in Chinese history). Unlike the Chinese empires, the Indian ideal of empires explicitly distinguished between emperors and kings. The emperor was supposed to rule over other kings: "What is emphasized in India is political paramountcy among a hierarchy of rulers rather than political unification. An ancient Indian emperor did not have to eliminate other kings; he had to get them to acknowledge his paramountcy." Arguably, a parallel can be drawn with tributary rulers in Korea and Vietnam who paid symbolic obeisance to Chinese emperors in exchange for security and economic benefits. But the Indian emperors more explicitly allowed for a multistate order, and the idea of empire coexisted with the idea of expansionist regional kingdoms, which was rare in the Chinese case.

In Indian thought, there is a strong tension between the extremes of nonviolence and idealization of a violent warrior ethic. On the one hand, there was a strong commitment to nonviolence. In the Indian context, "the symbol that emerged fairly early as a symbol of empire is the wheel (*cakra*). The *cakravartin* is an emperor, a great paramount king, universal victor, whose chariot wheels roll everywhere unimpeded, and who is victorious over the four quarters of the earth" (ancient Chinese thinkers also thought of the earth as a place with four quarters). Singh shows that the ideal is important in Jaina, Buddhist, and Brahmanical texts. In the Jain tradition, the *cakravartin* is a great emperor who follows the wheel and brings the whole world under his sway without indulging in any violence. In the Buddhist tradition, Ashoka deployed the symbol of the wheel to represent the ideal of *dhamma*, meaning nonviolence toward all living human beings, including humans and animals. The Sanskrit epics, however, allowed for, and sometimes glorified, martial virtues. In the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, the ideal of the paramount king has moral qualities that are explicitly combined with exceptional warrior qualities, although in the *Mahabharata* the old-world warrior ethic of the *Ksatriya* who blindly fights unto death is replaced with a new-age warrior who is

assailed with questioning and doubt. Kautilya's *Arthasastra* puts forward the goal of a great king who should aim to enjoy the earth without sharing it with any other ruler, and Kautilya allows for carefully planned war as a means to accomplish his aim. Indian monarchs, with the exception of Ashoka, advertised and celebrated their martial victories, even though "the violence of war is aestheticized through the use of poetic language."

Indian emperors were supposed to be highly energetic and vigorous rulers, followed (according to the poet Kalidasa) by its opposite in the form of renunciation: the sage-king was supposed to give up power and go off to the forest to live out the rest of his live performing yoga and meditation. In contrast, the Chinese ideal *wu wei* (rule by nonaction) was meant to be a long-lasting strategy, and renunciation is not celebrated in classic Chinese texts. What is common in both Chinese and Indian empires was the emphasis on rule by culture and economic benefits with lots of room for local autonomy, even if the empires expanded by means of war. Of course, the practice often deviated from the ideal, but neither Indian nor Chinese empires expanded beyond neighboring regions (Indian empires were land-based polities) and they largely refrained from naked economic exploitation and annexation of territory, in contrast to European colonialism. In a contemporary context, of course, China and India would need to drop the myth of moral superiority and allow for learning from the cultures of other states, no matter how small. But it may not be a bad outcome if the world's two most populous countries, inspired by ancient ideals and practices, aim to (re)establish establishing hierarchical orders within their regions by leading with moral example at home and providing security, health, and economic benefits to surrounding weaker powers.

JUST WAR

The next section turns directly to the theme of just war: When is it morally justified to launch a war against another country? What are the morally justified rules of combat (if any)? What are the obligations of "conquering powers" after a war is fought and won? Ancient Indian and Chinese thinking about just war may help to enrich contemporary debates, if not positively influence the actions of states in the future. In ancient India, the text that engages most closely with these questions is the *Mahabharata*, one of the two major Sanskrit epics of ancient India (the other is the *Ramayana*). The text, probably compiled between 500 BCE and 500 CE, narrates stories that took place much earlier. The text revolves around a family feud turning into a bloody catastrophic war, known as the Bharata War / Kuruksetra War, traditionally described as a *dharmayuddha*, or just war. Kanad Sinha, professor of ancient Indian and world history at the University of Kolkata, discusses the notion of *dharmayuddha*, or just war, as well as the intense debates about war and peace that preceded the war. The debates revolved around the extreme ideologies of martial heroism (of the *ksatriya* caste) and nonviolence. The protagonists

debated difficult and agonizing questions: Should a wrong be avenged or forgiven? Is violence justified to obtain a rightful end? Even if a war is justified, what are the rules to conduct it? Even if a side proves to be morally superior, what if it takes the wrong steps? Sinha argues that the *Mahabharata* ideal of *Anrishamsya* (noncruelty) should be central to modern thinking about just war in the contemporary world as well. Ancient Chinese thinkers did not make the value of noncruelty central to their debates, but arguably it's similar to the Confucian value of 仁 (*ren*, humaneness), except that the value of noncruelty in ancient India developed into a form of moral consciousness that applied equally to humans and animals. Still, there are clear differences with ancient Chinese debates about just war. In terms of form, female protagonists were active participants in ancient Indian debates, whereas female voices were largely silent in ancient China (or at least, they do not show up in written recorded history). In terms of substance, the ancient Indian debates revolved around the polar opposites of pacifism and martial heroism, whereas neither of these extremes were parts of debates in ancient China. On the one hand, Chinese thinkers were not pacifist advocates of nonviolence (even Mozi allowed for the possibility of defensive war); on the other hand, they never celebrated martial virtues (even advocates of aggressive war such as Han Feizi recognized that war is, at best, a necessary evil and they did not valorize militant aggression and war as a manly effort).

Daniel A. Bell, dean of the School of Political Science and Public Administration at Shandong University, turns to the thought of Mencius (372–289 BCE), arguably the most influential thinker in the Confucian tradition after Confucius himself. Bell asserts that Western debates on just and unjust war have largely ignored Chinese contributions and he attempts to formulate a Confucian perspective inspired mainly by the philosophy of Mencius. Mencius is famously criticized for being too idealistic. He does uphold an ideal theory of sage-kings who govern the world by means of rites and virtues rather than coercion that seems far removed from the real world. However, Mencius also puts forward principles designed to provide practical, morally informed guidance for the nonideal world of competing states (Mencius was writing in the Warring States period), particularly when rulers must decide whether or not to go to war. He is severely critical of rulers who launched ruthless wars of conquest simply to increase their territory. But states can defend themselves if their rulers are supported by the people. Mencius also argues that wars of conquest can be justified if the aim is to bring peace to foreign lands, so long as particular conditions are in place: the conquerors must try to liberate the people who are being oppressed by tyrants; the people must welcome their conquerors and the welcome must be long-lasting; and the wars of conquest must be led by virtuous rulers who can make a plausible claim to have the world's support. Bell argues that such conditions can inform modern debates about humanitarian intervention to liberate people who are being oppressed by their own rulers.

Sinha endorses Mencius's view that the forceful liberation of people from unjust rule is justified when the people welcome the force (and the welcome is long-lasting), and he draws implications for the modern world: "India's military intervention in liberating Bangladesh would have been justified according to Mencius. But the same cannot be said about the presence of American forces in Iraq. Mencius would raise controversial but relevant questions about Chinese control over Tibet or India's handling of Kashmir." Bell, however, argues that Mencius would restrict invasion of another country only to circumstances when foreign rulers engage in systematic and purposeful killing similar to what we could call today genocide. War involves killing and it is only justified to prevent more killing. Bell and Sinha do agree that Mencius is handicapped by his view that human nature tends to be good, along with the implication that it is just a matter of getting people to follow their naturally good instincts. Mencius doesn't allow for the possibility that some people can be born bad and cannot be changed. Nor does he think the people as a whole can be misguided and in favor of war, to the point of being bloodthirsty and fundamentally immoral. In the *Mahabharata*, by contrast, the people themselves can be wrong and immoral, so moral rulers sometimes need to go against the people. There is also a glaring contrast with respect to views about just conduct in war. The more tragic view of human nature in the *Mahabharata* informed detailed prescriptions of *jus in bello*, such as the rule against killing non-combatants. Mencius, however, preferred to bury his head in the sand: perhaps the thought that violence in war is so incompatible with his view of human nature left him unwilling to think through in detail the implications of going to war. Not surprisingly, Xunzi, who argued that human nature tends to be bad, specified rules of combat that more closely approximate both those in the *Mahabharata* and modern Western views of justice in war.

DIPLOMACY

The next theme is diplomacy in international relations. Diplomacy involves managing relations with other states, typically by a country's representatives abroad. Similar to arguments about just war, arguments about diplomacy flourished in ancient China and ancient India, especially when states coexisted and competed in the equivalent of a multistate system. In the case of India, the views about diplomacy inherited from the *Mahabharata* continue to have great influence. Drawing on extensive fieldwork with India's Ministry of External Affairs, Deep K. Datta-Ray shows that modern-day diplomats in India's foreign service often think in terms of categories set by the *Mahabharata* and that such ideas continue to influence policy. If we want to understand India's foreign policy, Eurocentric categories are not always helpful. In this essay, Datta-Ray, senior visiting fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, argues in a more normative vein that Mahatma Gandhi drew inspiration from the *Mahabharata* and solved an

unsettled paradox from that text: the question of how to defend without offense. Gandhi's answer was to extend the idea of nonviolence. Far from the sort of passivity condemned by *ksatriya* adherents of martial heroism in the *Mahabharata*, the ideal of nonviolence is an *active* commitment to disinterested action: "Its success is contingent on its practitioner entirely giving up any interest in themselves, laying themselves open to offense, and in absorbing it, converting it." The practitioner of nonviolence aims to convert the aggressor via the spectacle of the effects of aggression, for example by making the British realize the true evil of the opium trade. Arguably, Gandhi's active nonviolence cannot work with perpetrators of violence who lack any moral conscience (Hitler comes to mind). But Datta-Ray shows that the ideal had direct and positive impact on the foreign policy of India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. Inspired by Gandhi's ideal of nonviolence as a global vision, Nehru committed to peaceful use of nuclear energy and proposed a ban on nuclear testing. More recently, however, India's foreign policy seems to have traded disinterested diplomacy in favor of a more "modern" commitment to purely self-interested tit-for-tat aggression. Datta-Ray criticizes India's airstrike against Jaish-e-Mohammed inside Pakistan by nuclear-capable fighter-bombers in February 2019. India described the airstrike as a "nonmilitary preemptive action," but it could have escalated into a nuclear exchange had Islamabad not exercised self-restraint.

Zhao Yujia, who teaches international relations at Shandong University, similarly argues in a normative vein: ideals inspired by ancient political thought can help to deal with the challenges of modern-day diplomacy. She notes that China has not been very successful in promoting its vision of "win-win" Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects. According to public opinion to date in English-speaking countries, a majority of respondents accept China's win-win economic rationale for the projects, but less than five percent accept China's ideal of "military conservativeness," meaning that China aims at peaceful development rather than seeking to leverage BRI projects for military gains (there may be more support for China's view in developing, non-English-speaking countries). Such findings suggest that China has failed to gain the trust of other countries via its diplomacy. In response, Zhao suggests looking to both history and philosophy. The historical case is China's success at gaining the trust of the Wu Sun independent federacy during the "ancient silk road" with Central Asia in 139–114 BCE. The Han dynasty rulers succeeded by informing the Wu Sun about the Han's economic and military capabilities. The Wu Sun were able to form a good understanding of the Han's strategic interests, thus allowing for trust-building. Zhao argues that the ancient Confucian ideal of "brightness" (明) helps to makes sense of the process of trust-building. "Brightness" is a virtue of exemplary persons (君子), but it also underpins the kind of trust-building that characterizes successful diplomacy. If rulers and diplomats are honest and transparent about their intentions and act in accordance with

clear and transparent rules, they can gain the trust of friends and allies and thus rule the world as a "good hegemon" (in Xunzi's sense of the hegemon who gains friends and allies through strategic reliability). Conversely, it is difficult to trust a state that is opaque or deceitful about its military capabilities.

Datta-Ray also endorses the virtue of brightness in diplomacy and emphasizes that it goes beyond ties bound merely by self-interest. The *Zuo Zhuan*, an ancient Chinese commentary on the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, recorded a story that the King of Zhou and the Lord of Zheng exchanged their sons as hostages to enhance their bilateral relation. However, the Lord of Zheng still secretly sent troops to seize Zhou's grain, thus undermining the possibility of trust between states. A ruler may stop loving his son after a long separation and his son can be sacrificed for the national interest. In other words, this weak sense of reciprocity, with states striking deals that are mutually advantageous, is fragile. The deals may have been transparent and honest at one point in time, but once the situation changes and the deal is no longer advantageous to one of the states, that state can simply opt out of the deal. A more modern example might be the Trump administration's decision to renegotiate or scrap free trade accords with allies and friends on the grounds that those deals no longer benefit the United States. What's lacking in these cases is a deeper sense of reciprocity and trust that comes from shared values and attachment to a common good. For Xunzi, shared rituals over time generate a sense of community. The rituals themselves need to embody other-regarding actions that prove one's sincerity. Ashoka-style self-restrained speech can also contribute to a stronger sense of reciprocity that survives changing fortunes and power relations. What might this mean for China's BRI projects? Zhao is not explicit, but win-win economic relations that materially benefit both states, even if they are transparent and honest, are not sufficient to build lasting trust. Deeper ties with surrounding countries can only be built by such means as Xunzi-style ritualized cultural exchanges and Ashoka-style restrained and respectful speech.[6] Of course, foreign policy is not entirely independent of domestic policy. The Chinese government will find it difficult to gain the trust of neighbors and trading partners if it doesn't treat its own citizens with humanity and compassion.

BALANCING, HEGEMONY, AND MANDALAS

The final section of our book is titled "Balancing, Hegemony, and Mandalas." Both of these essays—historical in nature—argue that balancing theories in mainstream (i.e., Westcentric) international relations theory cannot explain the maintenance and change of international order in ancient China and India. Qi Haixia, professor in the Department of International Relations at Tsinghua University in Beijing, asks, why did China's Spring and Autumn and Warring States (SAWS) period end with the unification of the Qin dynasty? Qi explains that the Spring and Autumn

period was relatively stable, with limited warfare, because states were bound by a patriarchal feudal order with *Zhou Tianzi* at its core. Different kinship states competed within this order, but warfare was limited by "just war" norms such as courtesy in the process of war and the obligation to stop fighting once the goal had been achieved. "Good" hegemons in Xunzi's sense emerged from this global order—stronger powers gained the trust of weaker powers and provided security against invading "barbarians." This order, however, gradually declined. Hegemons grew in power and paid only lip service to *Zhou Tianzi*, and warfare became a more straightforward affair of brutal conquest and annexation; as Qi puts it, "In order to win, ignoring rules became the 'only rule.'" Patriarchal clans ties broke down and rulers sought out political talent, regardless of family background. Confucius, Mencius, Xunzi, and Han Feizi roamed from state to state offering different kinds of political advice, but they converged on the need for some form of political meritocracy and helped to break down rule by patriarchal clans. Qi concludes that the "balance of threat" theory can explain the emergence of balancing behavior but cannot account for its success or failure. As the Qin's state power grew, the Wei and Qi states did attempt balancing efforts. But the Qin managed to thwart their efforts by "allying with faraway states while attacking those nearby, reducing the readiness of the relatively distant states of Qi and Chu, and making its eventual unification of the six kingdoms a foregone conclusion."

The Qin's strategy may not have been directly inspired by Kautilya's theory of the mandala, but Kautilyas's theory can, arguably, better explain Qin's success compared to theories about balance derived from the Western historical experience. Kautilya imagined an international order similar to the Warring States period, with states using amoral means, including war if necessary, to expand their power relative to other states. In this situation, neighboring states should be treated as natural enemies, but faraway states—the enemy of my enemy—could potentially serve as (temporary) friends. A relatively small state such as Qin, if it intelligently forges alliances with faraway states for the purpose of attacking those nearby, can eventually grow in size and influence, if not become a self-declared empire.

Manjeet S. Pardesi, senior lecturer in international relations at Victoria University of Wellington, invokes Kautilya's theory to explain the international order of ancient India. The Mauryas did establish a hegemonic international order dominated by a single policy for five and half decades (ca. 260–205 BCE). But Mauryan domination was exceptional and relatively fleeting and ancient India was not typically characterized by a balance-of-power system. In the nine centuries from the emergence of territorial states in ancient India (ca. 600 BCE) until the second phase of hegemony under the Gupta empire (post-320 BCE), the interstate order of ancient India typically consisted of a de-centered mandalas, with five "circles" of states characterized by relations of amity (in the case of faraway states) and enmity (in the case of contiguous states). Power relations often shifted within the mandala

order that was informed by a "deep structure" of political and cultural heterogeneity. Pardesi draws contrasts with ancient China. Even if the Qin achieved victory in the Warring States period by means of Kautilya-like strategies, other factors help to explain the transformation of an ancient Chinese multi-polity system into a relatively *long-lasting* empire (though the Qin dynasty itself lasted only fifteen years). First, the quest for political peace is absent in the Indian textual tradition (with the exception of Ashoka). The default assumption was that small states were constantly competing with each other for territorial gain. In contrast, China's multiple philosophical traditions agreed on the ideal of a unified polity that provided peace to *tianxia* (all-under-heaven) long before the emergence of an all-encompassing empire. Second, the Mauryan empire was short-lived because the mode of empire-building was informed by the norm of *dharma* that left vanquished rulers, states, and their traditions intact, and hence was prone to fragmentation. In contrast, empire-building in China was characterized by bureaucratic incorporation of the vanquished kingdoms and empire-wide standardization of the "soft technologies" of governance such as a unified script and advanced transportation and communication system. Third, ancient India was an "open" region of South-Western Eurasia that had close contact with other large and culturally sophisticated empires. Triumphant rulers such as Ashoka could pronounce themselves as heads of the civilized world, but they knew there were serious competitors out there. In contrast, Rome and Greece (and India) were far away from China, so ancient Chinese rulers could more consistently view themselves as heads of the civilized world surrounded by "barbarians."

Pardesi argues provocatively that a de-centered mandala regional order also characterizes relations between states in the Indo-Pacific. Rather than apply contemporary IR theories that emerged from the Western historical experience to the Asian region (the "Thucydides trap" is only the latest example), it makes more sense to view the Indo-Pacific "as four (partially) overlapping *mandalas* (or subregions): South Asia, Southeast Asia, Northeast Asia, and Oceania." The mandala framework has several key features that contrast with the Thucydidean power transition theory. First, the Indo-Pacific is a relatively open region that includes external powers such as the United States. Second, it is a de-centered region, both in the political sense that there are multiple power centers and in the "ideational" sense that there are several competing political and economic models. Third, the secondary smaller states try to maintain autonomy in their strategic decision-making. Fourth, the Indo-Pacific region has multiple domination seekers that are neither hegemonic nor practice systemic balance-of-power politics. Pardesi suggests that the de-centered mandala order should also serve as an ideal for Asia's future, but arguably Kautilya's theory would need to be updated. If proposals for global peace and interstate collaboration to deal with pandemics and climate change are to make any headway, for example, it may be necessary to reject

Kautilya's view that rulers are motivated first and foremost by self-interest and states should always try to expand their territory.

MOVING FORWARD

In the next introductory essay, Amitav Acharya discusses why it is important to compare classical political thought in India and China from the perspective of an international relations theorist. Such a comparison would counter Eurocentrism and what he calls the "Greco-Romanocentrism" that is rampant in all branches of the social sciences and humanities. In international relations, theoretical debates tend to center on the West, even when they are comparative. Han Feizi is compared to Machiavelli and Kautilya is compared to Machiavelli, but Han Feizi and Kautilya are rarely compared to each other. So the first benefit of systematic comparison between ancient Chinese and Indian political thought is that each "side" can learn from the "other": experts in classical Chinese thought can learn about classical Indian thought, and vice versa. Our book is the first work that systematically compares ancient thoughts and theories about international politics between the two great Asian civilizations. In that sense, it is an original and important work, but we realize it's only a beginning, and we hope to generate more intellectual engagement of this sort. It's not just that India and China can learn *about* the other; they can also learn *from* the other. Political thoughts and theories from ancient India can help address the issues and problems that thoughts and theories from ancient China may not have been able to answer adequately, and vice versa. For example, Kautilya's mandala theory can help to explain Qin's success in the Warring States period, and Mencius's theory of just war may add some nuance to ancient Indian views on warfare that oscillated between the extremes of nonviolence and idealization of martial heroics.

That said, Acharya cautions about the limitations and dangers of comparison, including the belief about history repeating itself and essentializations of concepts and countries (see also Olivelle's chapter). Another risk is cultural arrogance, as when leaders and regime intellectuals in China and India glorify their cultures to justify present-day foreign policies and downgrade the contributions of other powers. Our contributors do their best to avoid crude nationalist narratives that downgrade other cultures and trace a direct line between past glory and present-day politics. This volume's purpose is primarily educational: to identify and debate political ideas and institutions from ancient India and China on their own terms, in their own time and context, without standards and concepts set by "Greco-Romanocentrism." We cannot entirely avoid using concepts and ideas from Western histories (not to mention that we are writing in the English language), but our contributors do their best to gain a relatively undistorted view of ancient Indian and Chinese ideas and thoughts about politics and statecraft.

Beyond the intellectual benefits, there are also compelling political reasons to care about theories from ancient China and ancient India. The theories formulated by thinkers in long-dead civilizations founded on assumptions that seem empirically wrong or morally obtuse from modern perspectives are primarily of historical interest, without implications for decision-making in the modern world. But India and China are very much "live" civilizations with a deep sense of history. Thinkers and leaders in India and China seek inspiration from ancient ideals in their history, just as American thinkers and leaders seek inspiration from the (much more recent) ideals of the Founding Fathers. Since we are rapidly moving toward a multipolar age with China and India as leading economic and military powers, it is important to understand classical political thought about statecraft in India and China. If categories and values that inform foreign policies in India and China can be explained, at least partly, by categories and values inspired from ancient theories and thinkers, then those seeking to understand the contemporary foreign policies of India and China need to understand those intellectual foundations. The parochial universalism of theories derived entirely from ancient Greek, Roman, or Christian sources won't be sufficient. That said, good understanding *per se* is not sufficient. Knowledge about intellectual foundations can be used for good or bad purposes. A state can use knowledge about another state to more effectively destroy it. A better outcome is that China and India, with deeper mutual understanding, can (re)establish peaceful, economically beneficial, and culturally enriching ties.

NOTES

1.   Sheldon Pollock and Benjamin Elman, eds., *What China and India Once Were: The Pasts That May Shape the Global Future* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 4.

2.   Pollock and Elman, *What China and India Once Were*; and Rajiv Ranjan and Guo Changgang, eds., *China and South Asia: Changing Regional Dynamics, Development and Power Play* (Delhi: Routledge India, 2021).

3.   Yan Xuetong, *Ancient Chinese Thought, Modern Chinese Power*, ed. Daniel A. Bell and Sun Zhe, trans. Edmund Ryden (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011); and Yan Xuetong, *Leadership and the Rise of Great Powers* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019).

4.   See Jonathan D. Spence, *Emperor of China: Self-Portrait of K'ang-hsi* (New York: Vintage Books, 1988).

5.   See Yuri Pines, *The Everlasting Empire: The Political Culture of Ancient China and Its Imperial Legacy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012).

6.   See Daniel A. Bell and Wang Pei, *Just Hierarchy: Why Social Hierarchies Matter in China and the Rest of the World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020), chap. 3.