and the United States; and it also has been included in the Trump administration's International Religious Freedom Alliance as an observer.

As mentioned with the COVID-19 response, Taiwan has become a "model" for countries to follow. This is not the first time that Taiwan has been an international model worthy of emulation. The most prominent historical example is Taiwan's economic development during the 1950–1970s. Government-led initiatives and reforms—most importantly, land reform—helped Taiwan mature into an economic powerhouse. The government first reformed the agricultural industry to level the playing field before working to industrialize the country's economy. Taiwan's economic success story is still studied to this day by developing countries. Copper credits this to "intelligent planning," whereby the government directed economic changes without becoming a planned or command economy (206). As discussed throughout this review, Taiwan's international standing is precarious at best—its so-called "international space" has greatly shrunk as a result of its 1971 expulsion from the UN, and more recently from pressure by Beijing. Copper provides an overview of the origin of these issues and how Taiwan has historically relied upon the United States as its safety guarantor. As the China threat grows, the importance of the US military for Taiwan grows. The book provides sufficient background for the reader to better understand how Taiwan got to where it is today and how its history of non-self-rule has shaped its identity.

Copper, in my opinion, downplays at least one seminal event in Taiwan's post-1945 history: the February 28 Massacre played a much more central role in Taiwanese identity and eventual democratization of the island than is depicted in the book. Copper does not explain how the Taiwanese, reacting to KMT rule, rebelled throughout the island, often taking control of key facilities. For a time in early March 1947, the KMT did not control Taiwan. Copper explains how the KMT cracked down on the Taiwanese, but fails to articulate the intent of the brutality: "By the end of March order was restored, but not before thousands of Taiwanese had been killed, including many of Taiwan's potential political leaders" (62). The potential political leaders didn't just happen to die; they were purposefully found and "disappeared" by the KMT. An entire sector of Taiwan's elite (doctors, lawyers, teachers) were viewed as a threat to the KMT, and most were killed. Bodies washed up on the shores of rivers. Execution grounds were established. People were tied to stones and thrown into the ocean. It was a targeted campaign; the victims were just not casualties of fighting.

Copper's explanation for Tsai Ing-wen's use of "228" (as it is called in Taiwan) is incorrect—"In fact, 2-2-8 was a prop in the DPP's campaign to unify its voters and get them to the polls while bringing up an issue the KMT found difficult to deal with" (63). It was not a prop at all. It was a pillar of the Tsai campaign: she promised to work on transitional justice issues and deal with the brutal and corrupt authoritarian legacy of the KMT. Her administration set up the Transitional Justice Commission (TJC) and the Ill-gotten Party Assets Settlement Committee (CIPAS). The two groups have conducted research into the KMT's authoritarian rule, as well as the "Period of the White Terror," a particularly violent period in which the Chiang regime harshly violated the human rights of Taiwanese (and even mainlanders) in the 1950–1960s. The TJC has worked to exonerate thousands of imprisoned and executed political victims. By 2019, nearly 6,000 individuals had been exonerated. The CIPAS has documented property and assets illegally accumulated by the KMT. This was not a "prop," but a necessary (and ongoing) move to help Taiwan acknowledge the atrocities committed by the KMT between 1945 and 1987. Unfortunately, Copper fails to mention the White Terror at all in the book.

In the end, Copper correctly concludes that Taiwan's ultimate status as a nation-state or province has not been settled. He leans toward the inevitably of unification based on economic reasons, since China is Taiwan's largest trading partner. But Copper explains that unification could result in economic chaos: "The island's economy would likely suffer because Taiwan has a different kind of economy and its global trade, upon which its economic health depends, would likely be disrupted" (317). With the ongoing political crackdown in Hong Kong and other human rights abuses in China, it is difficult to imagine that unification could occur peacefully and would not cause the problems that Copper highlights. Copper acknowledges that there is no magic bullet for settling Taiwan's status one way or another. While its status in the international arena is undetermined, the people of Taiwan will continue to carry out commerce, vote in local and national elections, and live as they have for some time.

NOTES

1. Election Study Center, "Taiwanese/Chinese Identity (1992/06~2020/06)," National Chengchi University, July 3, 2020, https://tinyurl.com/w4tu29k; and Election Study Center, "Taiwan Independence vs. Unification with the Mainland (1992/06~2020/06)," National Chengchi University, July 3, 2020, https://tinyurl.com/y2det7b4.

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Ghosts of Gold Mountain

The Epic Story of the Chinese Who Built the Transcontinental Railroad

By Gordon H. Chang

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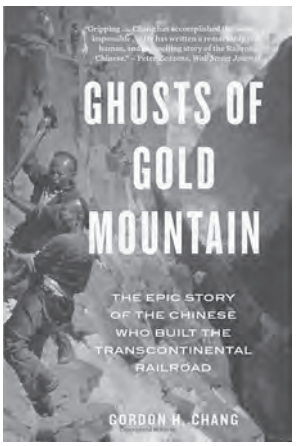
Reviewed by Daniel A. Métraux



The meeting of two huge locomotives on May 10, 1869, of the Central Pacific and Union Pacific Railways at Promontory Point in Utah is one of the most notable events in American history. For the first time, the United States was connected by rail from coast to coast and the journey from New York to San Francico, which before would have taken many grueling months, could now be comfortably completed in less than a week. Fortunately, for all those involved in the construction of the transcontinental railway, almost all the construction was completed by a virtual army of over 20,000 Chinese workers. Their hard work, reliable service, and great ingenuity allowed them to complete the building of the railway from Sacramento to Promontory Point in slightly less than four years. They had to traverse over and through a course of nearly 900 miles, through the High Sierra Mountains and through the harsh, hot deserts of Nevada and Utah to reach their final destination. Their story has almost totally disappeared from history, but author Gordon Chang, a professor of History

and Asian Studies at Stanford University, has pieced together a copious history of the work of these Chinese in his recent book, *The Ghosts of Gold Mountain.*

For five years from 1864 to May 1869, Chinese constituted by far the largest single workforce in American industry to that date, a figure not surpassed in numbers until the Industrial Revolution in the late nineteenth century. The Chinese army of workers represented about 90 percent of the laborers hired by the Central Pacific. They held virtually every position available. They were engineers, laborers, foremen, contractors, masons, cooks, medical practitioners, carpenters, and teamsters: "Thousands more Chinese associated with them as friends and relatives, as part of the immense supply chain that provisioned them for years, and, away from the track in their off-time, as gamblers, opium smokers, prostitutes, and devout worshippers of the gods and spirits who watched over them in their perilous work." (7)

Chang traces the origins of these Chinese to their distant rural villages located in the Pearl River Delta near Guangzhou (Canton) in Guangdong Province in southeastern China. They lived in small villages in four counties (Taishan, Kaiping, Enping, and Xinhui), known collectively as the Siyi counties. Their ancestors had lived there peacefully in small farming communities for centuries, but their tranquil way of life was suddenly devastated by intense conflicts, including the Opium War (1839–1842) and the Taiping Rebellion (1850–1864) a massive uprising against the Qing dynasty that ranks as the nineteenth century's bloodiest war; an estimated twenty million Chinese died, compared to 650,000 deaths in the American Civil War. The destruction of their land and way of life forced a large diaspora of several million Chinese, many of them male and from the Siyi region. Most of them migrated to Southeast Asia (their descendants today live in such places as Singapore and Malaysia), but a growing number also moved to North America. From the early 1850s, when they began to arrive in California in significant numbers in search of gold, to 1868, when many Chinese came to the West Coast to work for the Central Pacific, an estimated 107,000 Chinese came to the United States.

Beyond the fact that there were as many as 20,000 Chinese railway workers employed at various times in the late 1860s, we know very little about them as individuals. The workers sent tens of thousands of letters back home to their families in China, but very few of these letters have survived. Chang fortunately found an advertisement written in Chinese in China urging young men to go to California to work on the railway. Apparently, many Chinese accepted the offer and made the journey to the United States.

The owners of the Pacific Central Railroad began searching for reliable workers in 1864 and 1865. At first, they were reluctant to hire Chinese, but when they had a hard time finding other reliable persons and saw how hard and diligently the first few Chinese worked, increasing numbers of Chinese were soon employed. The white owners and managers would hire a Chinese foreman who spoke some English and would leave it up to him to hire the laborers. The owners rarely if ever kept records of their many employees. They simply gave the foremen money to pay a set number of workers. The amount of pay was sufficient to attract a large pool of laborers, though at one point the Chinese did go on strike to (successfully) demand higher pay and shorter hours. Chang estimates that about 1,000 workers died before the work was completed, but we will never know the exact number of deaths.

It would take several trips deep into the High Sierras to fully appreciate the difficult task facing railway engineers and Chinese laborers as they worked to create a usable route through the Sierras. The mountains rise sharply and suddenly from the floor of the Central Valley, and building any mode of transportation over the Sierras is a monumental challenge. The high altitudes of the Sierras—at times over 9,000 feet—make for a barren terrain and a vastly different climate than in nearby Sacramento, and there are very few passes to ease travel. The Chinese had to bore many tunnels through hard rock and on the sides of the mountains. They also devised a system of sheds covering the tracks to keep them free of snow in the colder months. The engineering genius of the railway architects and the demanding work performed mainly by Chinese workers brought about this miraculous event.

Chang's book will benefit all instructors who teach about the history of immigration in the United States. We have here the classic story of a major immigrant group, the Chinese, who came to the United States in great numbers to enhance their fortunes and find a better way of life. Chang carefully examines the difficult lives of Chinese in the middle of the nineteenth century and the factors that led them to move to a totally alien culture. We see how hard they had to work to gain a niche in the American economy, first through gold mining and later as railway workers. In order to succeed, they had to take on difficult tasks while working longer hours at lower pay. As is the case with many new immigrant groups in the United States and other nations, the Chinese faced violent opposition and oppression from nativist groups who feared that the Chinese would deprive them of their livelihoods. The Chinese had a different skin color, had different facial features, wore different kinds of clothes, ate different food, spoke an alien language, and practiced very different religions. Wherever they went, the Chinese experienced extreme cases of racism directed against them. They could not marry whites, they could not become citizens, their job opportunities were greatly restricted, and worst of all, they often experienced violent attacks by white mobs that expelled them from many towns and inflicted harsh bodily injuries.

Bad weather frequently slowed progress. Vast amounts of snowfall from October to April further compounded the difficulties facing the intrepid builders of the railway through the Sierras. Dangerous snowstorms could arrive at any time without warning. Once in June 2010, my daughter and I left a sweltering Sacramento for a day of fishing at Silver Lake high in the Sierras near Lake Tahoe. When we reached an elevation of 8,000 feet, we found ourselves in the midst of a blinding snowstorm that took us several grueling hours to escape. When the Chinese worked in winter, they had to clear snowbanks as high as thirty feet. Many Chinese became victims of sudden unexpected avalanches.

Chang has written a brilliant study of the Chinese railway workers of the late 1860s. Drawing on fading family memories, government records, archaeological reports, and contemporary newspaper accounts, Chang is able to reconstruct their difficult work and social organization that underlay it, with younger workers led and organized by older, mainly Chinese foremen and labor brokers. We learn about the complex camp life of the workers, the horrific conditions of Chinese women who had to work as tireless sex slaves for the young male laborers, and the loneliness of the workers living in an alien culture far away from home. Chang also presents a sad picture of the racism the Chinese faced from many whites in California, although a surprising number of influential whites showed deep appreciation and respect for the work of the railway workers.

Chang writes in a clear and easy-to-understand manner. His depth of research is impressive, and his passion for his subject matter is obvious. *Ghosts of Gold Mountain* is a landmark book suitable for any student interested in history. ■

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