

pensable. That does not require them to agree to his wider conclusions about the “unfinished revolution.” Some readers may question the verdict of failure for Reconstruction, or, indeed, whether Fairclough is so far from Foner, not as he is described here, but as his book actually reads. They will certainly doubt that Louisiana was typical, in its corruption, of politics everywhere else, even in the Reconstructed South. They will wonder whether at least in some former Confederate states and in the other slave states, the results for an emancipated race were so wholly bad or the reversal of fortune so complete—not to mention in the North. They might suggest that the fastening of three constitutional amendments, at least making the pledge of equal protection under the law and a race-blind set of voting requirements, not to mention abolishing slavery, were those gifts that would keep on giving, and that have potential even today for further advances. Yet without that enfranchisement of southern blacks, which was a process so misguided in Fairclough’s view, there would have been no Fourteenth or Fifteenth Amendment at all. Each depended on ratification by southern states. His wish for a Congress that shaped a more centralized or militarily supervised solution to the South does his idealism credit. But as the makers of Reconstruction policy knew, it was political suicide. Any delay on bringing most of the South back into the Union would have cost Republicans dearly in 1868. It almost certainly would have meant the election of a Democratic president or a challenge to the legitimacy of the electoral returns, made without ten states’ votes being counted. It was not just a laggard Congress but a strong public sentiment that made an America with long-term satrapies or a large standing army impossible. In giving African Americans the vote, Republicans let their hopes deceive them about how far race prejudice would counter Reconstruction. But their options were much more limited than Fairclough seems to think.

Read this book, though, even the skeptics must. *The Revolution That Failed* is a monograph that succeeds, and splendidly.

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DANIEL H. INOUE. *Distant Islands: The Japanese American Community in New York City, 1876–1930s*. Foreword by DAVID M. REIMERS. (The George and Sakaye Aratani Nikkei in the Americas Series.) Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2018. Pp. xxi, 363. Cloth \$49.00, paper \$34.95, e-book 27.95.

Daniel H. Inouye’s *Distant Islands: The Japanese American Community in New York City, 1876–1930s*, a rare and thought-provoking book, challenges conventional understanding of Japanese American history. Inouye swings for the fence in multiple ways. It doesn’t matter that he comes up short. The ambition is impres-

sive, and the talent is clear. Scholars of the “racial turn” in immigration and ethnic history should take notice of his use of Max Weber and Pierre Bourdieu in analyzing class and status differences within a supposed ethnic group. There was not one Japanese American community in New York City, Inouye argues. There were five. Four were aligned in a social hierarchy: elite, upper middle, lower middle, and bottom. The fifth consisted of international students, whose fluid position rendered their placement in the hierarchy uncertain.

The book’s thesis about class and status differences is predicated on geographic location. New York City’s Japanese American population—two thousand to three thousand at its peak before World War II—was a tiny fraction of the numbers of coethnics on the West Coast and in Hawaii, which combined were over 250,000. There was no organized anti-Japanese movement in New York, unlike in the other two regions. In addition, there was no ethnically segregated business and residential enclave, which was commonplace in California and Washington as well as among Chinese, Italians, and other immigrant groups in New York City. But the dearth of organized opposition and ethnic solidarity, Inouye makes clear, did not mean the absence of anti-Japanese racism. Even elite business leaders who owned ritzy summer homes on the coast, sent their children to prestigious schools, and hobnobbed with U.S. power brokers were banned by race from borrowing money from American banks. Like their coethnics elsewhere, the city’s Japanese Americans sought to prove their worthiness to whites by various means befitting their class and status positions. A disproportionate number of the men married white women and produced biracial children during a time when doing so was not only against the law in California but frowned upon by the vast majority of Japanese Americans.

The first five of the book’s seven chapters detail one of the city’s Japanese American communities. The analysis is conducted through “storytelling narratives” that describe intimate characteristics and experiences for representatives of each layer in the social hierarchy, starting with voyeuristic revelations about the marriages and lifestyles of the elites. Although each person’s life is unique, the narrative follows a formulaic pattern: Japanese birthplace, education, migration, marriage, kids, career, and sometimes divorce. Inouye can’t flesh out the mentalities of the individuals, because he relies on limited secondary sources, often just one memoir. This is not collective biography nor is it Oscar Handlin’s composite story of the immigrant experience. Inouye’s narrative approach is “essential to telling this story because class and status tensions existed largely in the attitudes, mannerisms, tones of voice, and facial expressions of tier members” (11–12). Here is Bourdieu’s theory of class distinction used to reveal the reproduction of hierarchy within a supposedly unified ethnic community. Class trumps

race. The book's final two chapters address the quasi-successful "ethnocentric" efforts of Buddhists and Christians, respectively. Ultimately, such religious organizations could not unite the five communities under the banner of ancestry, language, or race.

The story of Japanese Americans in New York City will continue, Inouye tell us, through two succeeding books he plans to publish. The second book of the three-part series will focus on "racially discriminatory laws and social movements [presumably by Japanese Americans] between 1900 and 1930," and the final book on the war and immediate postwar years (3). Set aside Inouye's extraordinary ambition to publish a three-book series. The second book, which covers part of the same time period as the first, raises questions about the relationship between the class dynamics addressed in the first book and the racial dynamics in the second. Did the "social movements" to oppose anti-Japanese racism that will be addressed in the second book create "ethnocentric" efforts like the churches and temples described in the first book? And how did the social movements square with the four-tiered social hierarchy? The choice to write two books covering the same time period is puzzling because the division of labor prevents an understanding of change over time. How did class and race work together in shaping the social identities of Japanese Americans in New York City before World War II? *Distant Islands* provides refreshing counterevidence to the many race-first studies on Japanese Americans. But by withholding the evidence on race and the response to it until the publication of a second book, Inouye has muddied the waters as to the first book's ultimate contribution.

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GORDON H. CHANG. *Ghosts of Gold Mountain: The Epic Story of the Chinese Who Built the Transcontinental Railroad*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2019. Pp. 312. Cloth \$28.00.

When will Americans acknowledge their country's long-standing reliance on the extraordinary work of immigrants?

Last May marked the 150th anniversary of the 1869 completion of the first transcontinental railroad. Scholars and activists from across the country convened not merely to commemorate this remarkable feat but to better understand the twenty thousand Chinese immigrants whose minds and bodies made it possible. In attendance at Utah's "Golden Spike 150" conference, I mused that the timeliest, most accessible and powerful histories often function as both a window into the past and mirror for the present. Such stories collectively ask us to embark on a journey that requires not a celebration of bogus nationalistic metanarratives but the opposite: to study history and truly learn from it. The result

uses history to create a better and wiser future—one that is both more humane and more fully human. In a country still deeply and unnecessarily divided by the fault lines of race and ethnicity, *Ghosts of Gold Mountain* is a book that meets such a challenge. It asks us to respect the role of immigrant "others" in the building of American progress.

Gordon H. Chang is an ideal author for such a study, as this history is, in many ways, personal. It is also in his scholarly wheelhouse. Since 2012, he has codirected Stanford's Chinese Railroad Workers in North America Project, a remarkable interdisciplinary endeavor that draws on immigration, labor, oral, public, spatial, archaeological, and comparative history. While intimately familiar with cutting-edge scholarship in these areas, Chang's genius rests in his ability to craft an engaging narrative with the precision of a seasoned historical detective. Lacking a single document written by a Chinese construction worker, Chang is able to recreate their experiences through the judicious, creative use of payroll accounts, archaeological records, newspapers, folk songs, private correspondence, Congressional testimony, photographs, and descendant interviews.

Chang's story chugs east to west as he documents the journey of the "Railroad Chinese," most of them peasant farmers from impoverished Guangdong Province in southeastern China, to California's gold mines and farms. He asks readers to fill the shoes of these "ghosts," largely forgotten or erased from public memory, as they instead forged lives in iron, grading roadbeds and excavating tunnels through America's most forbidding terrain, hustling to meet the Union Pacific's—primarily Irish—crews in Utah. The Chinese worked harder, more efficiently, and for less pay than their white counterparts who, whenever possible, bolted to the Comstock Lode in search of a bigger payday. Hundreds of Chinese died while facing constant pressure from section bosses to finish the job—in an occupation where blunt force, rapidity, and technology did not always jibe.

Ghosts of Gold Mountain enters important theoretical and historiographic debates, to be sure. Chang assembles evidence to demolish the fictions—concocted after the fact—that discounted the valor of the Railroad Chinese and diminished the dangers they faced. Some had dismissed as legend the Chinese workers' use of ropes and woven baskets at locations such as Cape Horn, where they dangled over cliffs, suspended in midair, to chisel holes in granite and pack them with explosives—as if tunneling under massive snowdrifts and enduring the unyielding racism of their Central Pacific bosses wasn't hazardous or de-meaning enough (88). Readers learn that while the 1867 strike of three thousand Chinese workers in the Sierra Nevada Mountains failed to secure material benefits, it did, if begrudgingly, move CPRR manage-