instance, that "Even the most liberal of rights theorists, such as Liang Qichao and Yan Fu, believed that individual rights . . . were little more than a means to collective state ends" (p. 147). To give just one example of a competing view, here is Gao Yihan (1884–1968), a prolific contributor to *New Youth*, in 1915: "The state is not in itself the final end of life. . . . The only way that the people can make progress toward their final end is through their rights. Therefore, it is sufficient for the state to stand behind the people, using its powers to encourage and support the realization of the people's goals" (translation from *Contemporary Chinese Thought* 31:1 [1999], pp. 58–60).

The reason these problems matter is that, at the very least, they mandate substantial revision to what can count as a Chinese concept of rights. Some will even see the diversity present throughout Chinese rights discourse as reason to reject the idea of a distinctively Chinese concept of rights altogether. I believe that this is an overreaction; more careful investigation than I have time for here will show that Chinese rights discourse has had persistent and distinctive concerns, and that these concerns must be taken seriously by those who would engage with Chinese over human rights—just as Weatherley argues.

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Alternate Civilities: Democracy and Culture in China and Taiwan. By ROBERT P. WELLER. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1999. xvi, 172 pp. $60.00 (cloth).

This book focuses on intermediate social ties between the family and the state to explain how Taiwan was able to suddenly democratize in the 1980s and to argue that China is developing the underpinnings of democracy. Woven in with this argument is an explanation of how Chinese social ties have influenced Chinese enterprises and Taiwan's economic development, a reinterpretation of the concept of civil society in the context of China, and a sophisticated theoretical analysis of the nature of culture. Intermediate social ties are most visible in voluntary associations, so the book uses case studies of three types of voluntary associations: business organizations, religious groups, and environmental movements. Threading through the book is the issue of gender; women are shown to play leading roles in all three cases and in the informal sector generally. Women contribute to civil organizations in ways different from men and add significantly to the reach and strength of intermediate institutions.

Chapter 1 on "Culture, Economy, and the Roots of Civil Change" lays out the theoretical problem, and chapter 2 on "Legacies" describes organizational life from below in the imperial period that affects voluntary associations today. Chapter 3, "The Limits to Authority," shows how twentieth-century authoritarianism and totalitarianism not only did not eliminate horizontal relations of trust but also made them more important in some cases. Chapter 4 looks at business organizations, from rotating credit clubs to chambers of commerce. The comparison between Taiwan and China highlights the powerful role of the state and the limited autonomous power of civil associations. Chapter 5 examines religion, illustrating a split in market cultures. On the one hand, religion is "happily commercializing, celebrating individuality, and encouraging profit, while on the other hand it is reacting against a perceived loss of values by offering moral alternatives" (p. 18). The result is religious organizations that have strong roots in earlier Chinese culture and do not simply reproduce Euro-American developments. Chapter 6 examines groups involved in environmental

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movements. Despite the major differences between postmartial law in Taiwan and China, both cases show a split between national-level associations (which are formalized and voluntary) and local movements that are informal and communal and often use local identity and culture and religion to mobilize their support. He also shows that while at the top levels many environmental organizations look Western, at the local level they have strong connections to Taiwanese religion, kinship, and gender relations. A concluding chapter, "Alternate Civilities and Political Change," argues that the bonds of local community, kinship, religion, and the informal sector, which many have dismissed as premodern or have failed to see in their search for "civil society," are the foundation for a civility that can be democratic. The author presents a gradualist argument for political change, noting that in Taiwan political openness came quickly "but the success of that transition depended on a social world that had grown up in the preceding decades" (p. 146). He notes that supporting NGOs in China, which is popular with foreign governments and organizations, perpetuates the pattern of joining state and society whereas local associations are not simply an extension of the state.

Most anthropologists have been silent in the "civil society" debate because they see the concept as excessively universalizing, abstract, and based on Western history. Robert Weller argues that it is not Chinese culture that is inadequate for the modern world, but the concept of "civil society" itself that is inadequate. He takes "a worm's-eye view of society, from the bottom up," and takes advantage of this to see "a whole range of cultural variation in both China and Taiwan, including the alternatives to authoritarianism that thrive in the free space it always leaves" (p. 7). "Keeping our analytic feet underground will clarify how shared market pressures need not lead to shared values, even within Chinese society" (p. 16). Once one understands the alternate forms of intermediate social organization in China, one can better understand the Taiwan case—which is also a challenge to the view that Chinese culture is authoritarian. "China may never have had a democratic political culture, but it did have the kinds of intermediate institutions outside politics that could evolve to support one" (p. 143). This book is an important contribution in ethnographic data and analysis to the literature on civil society and Chinese democracy.

The book is very well written and balanced, presenting the contradictions of ethnographic experience and of life. It is a major contribution to our understanding of Chinese culture, skillfully weaving together discussions on authoritarianism and democracy, as well as the causes of Taiwan's economic success. For readers who know Chinese and Taiwanese societies, the book resolves so many problems that it is a delight to read. Students will appreciate its succinct and clear prose and numerous brief examples.

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The Mouth That Begs: Hunger, Cannibalism, and the Politics of Eating in Modern China. By GANG YUE. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1999. 447 pp. $64.95 (cloth); $20.95 (paper).

This book is a new literary and cultural study of modern China covering 1918 to 1996, and uses food as a metaphor for desire and survival. Chapter 1 examines Lu Xun's irresistible desire to expose the dark side of the old Chinese feudal society that

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