

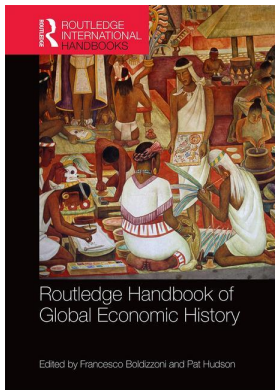
This article was downloaded by: 10.2.97.136

On: 27 Mar 2023

Access details: *subscription number*

Publisher: *Routledge*

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: 5 Howick Place, London SW1P 1WG, UK



Routledge Handbook of Global Economic History

Francesco Boldizzoni, Pat Hudson

Economic History in China

Publication details

<https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315734736-18>

Li Bozhong

Published online on: 14 Dec 2015

How to cite :- Li Bozhong. 14 Dec 2015, *Economic History in*

China from: Routledge Handbook of Global Economic History Routledge

Accessed on: 27 Mar 2023

<https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315734736-18>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR DOCUMENT

Full terms and conditions of use: <https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/legal-notices/terms>

This Document PDF may be used for research, teaching and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproductions, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The publisher shall not be liable for an loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

ECONOMIC HISTORY IN CHINA

Tradition, divergence and potential

*Li Bozhong*¹

Economic history as a modern academic discipline arose in China in the early twentieth century, but as a field of study had a long indigenous tradition prior to 1900. Since then, the discipline has gone through periods of formation (1904–50), transformation (1950–78) and prosperity (1978–99), and now at the beginning of the twenty-first century, ironically, it faces unprecedented new challenges.

The *Shi-Huo* scholarship: the antecedents of economic history in China

Unlike many countries where economic history is a new academic discipline introduced by Western academe, Chinese economic history has its own local origins which can be traced back over two millennia. During the process of unification and centralization under imperial authority, political economy had already become a central topic of China's foundational schools of thought. The Spring and Autumn Period (770 BC–476 BC) and the Warring States Period (476 BC–221 BC) were characterized by “the contention of the hundred schools of thought” as statesmen and scholars debated how to rule over society and economy. There were animated and lively discussions not just of agriculture, handicrafts, commerce, “international” trade within the Chinese world of the time, tax and corvée systems, market management, consumption, profit, labor, but also of what wealth consisted, how market and money worked, what role price played in economic life, etc. The discussions were deep, comprehensive and far-reaching and produced systematic and complete classics and doctrines. From these classics and doctrines the basic concepts, principles and discourses of what Michel Cartier has called “Chinese classical political economy” were established (Qian Li and Da Tong 1994).

It is one of the major features of Chinese civilization that people seek for knowledge and wisdom, and for solutions to contemporary problems, not from God, but from the accumulated experiences of their predecessors, or history. This emphasis on past experience made economic history crucial to Chinese classical statesmanship. When China entered its early imperial period (221 BC–AD 589), economic history developed into a branch of historiography. In the Western Han Dynasty, Sima Qian (ca.145–ca.86 BC), the founding father of Chinese historiography, completed his writing of the first general history of China called *Shiji* (Historical Records of the Grand Historian) in 91 BC. In this voluminous masterpiece, he

paid special attention to economic events and activities and included two special treatises, the *Pingzhun Shu* (Treatise of Equalizing Agronomical Matters) and the *Huozhi Liezhuan* (Collective Biography of Great Merchants), to describe these events and activities. The first one focuses on issues of national wealth and the state's policies on agriculture, handicrafts, commerce, currency and public finance, while the second one describes in detail commerce, trade and merchants of previous and contemporary times with a very insightful discussion of market mechanisms and the role of the market in national economic activities. These works laid the foundations for Chinese scholarship in economic history.

A century later, another great historian of the Eastern Han Dynasty, Ban Gu (AD 32–92), following Sima Qian's example, created the *Shi-Huo Zhi* (Treatise on Food and Money) in his great work, the *Han Shu* (History of the Western Han Dynasty). Since the words *shi* and *huo* in the *Han Shu* refer to the performances of agriculture and commerce, which constituted almost the entire Chinese economy at that time, the history of “food and money” is a general history of the economy of China from ancient times to the end of the Western Han Dynasty. Following the precedent of *Han Shu*, most *Zheng Shi* “Official Dynastic Histories” of China written by subsequent dynasties included their own *Shi-Huo Zhi*. The major sources for these *Shi-Huo Zhi* were government documents and archives.² Besides the *Shi-Huo Zhi*, similar “histories of food and money” also existed in other official compilations. In mid-imperial times, more and more scholars became interested in *Shi-Huo* scholarship. Three representative scholars were Du You (AD 735–812) of the Tang dynasty, Zheng Qiao (1108–66), of the Southern Song dynasty, and Ma Duanlin (1254–1323) of the Yuan dynasty. All three were first-class historians, each of whom compiled an encyclopedic documentary history of Chinese institutions from the earliest times to the present: the *Tongdian* (Comprehensive institutions) by Du, the *Tongzhi* (General Treatises) by Zheng and the *Wenxian tongkao* (General Study of the Literary Remains) by Ma. All three works were entitled *Tong* (general) and were collectively called the *Three Tongs*. Each is an enormous and original work covering such topics as military affairs, culture, religion, philology, phonetics, the development of families and descent groups, etc. but a good part of their works dealt with economic history. Quite different from the officially compiled *Shi-Huo Zhi*, these private histories are distinguished by strong personal observations and are richer in content and more informative. Moreover, the authors did not just collect huge amounts of original materials and classify the useful information from these materials carefully by subjects, but also did their research on many important issues of economic history from a long-term (trans- and multi-dynasty) perspective.

The continued compilation of similar works by later imperial dynasties, the *Shi-Tong* series (The Ten General Series), including the *Three Tongs*, contain over 2700 volumes, totaling more than 30,000,000 Chinese characters. Each work in the *Shi-Tong* series has volumes of *Shi-Huo*, which are much bigger than those in the “Official Dynastic Histories.” The volumes contain more materials on economic history and the materials are better categorized, which is particularly important in systematically recording the systems, regulations and policies of state finance, taxation, disaster relief and other major fiscal institutions, and their changes. Other kinds of systematically organized collections of economic documents and records include the *Huidian* (Collected institutes and precedents) and *Huiyao* (Collected Statutes), which were compiled by the central government of each dynasty. Detailed records on economic practices of the government, at the central and provincial levels, were kept in *Zeli* (Regulations and precedents).³ Local economic activities and events were recorded in gazetteers (or local histories) under the categories of “Local products,” “Customs,” “Water control activities,” “Taxation,” “Population registration,” “Philanthropy,” “Disaster relief” and so on.⁴

Though the state took over the compilation of economic documents and records, individual scholars did not stop their work of compilation of materials of economic history as well as of research of issues in society and economy from historical perspectives. A new intellectual movement of *Jingshi* (Statecraft), which aimed at “learning of practical use to society” (*jingshi zhiyong*), rose in China in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries and grew into a movement in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries when China faced serious challenges. In the nineteenth century, when China was in crisis again, the school of statecraft was reactivated after a dormancy of more than a century. The emergence of revived interest led to the formation of the influential *Jingshi* School. The *Jingshi* scholars spent huge energy in collecting, compiling and analyzing historical materials, to try to find the solutions to the crisis. Their efforts resulted in the compilation and publication of the *Jingshi wenbian* (Collected Essays on Statecraft under the Reigning Dynasty) series which contain most important statecraft documents of the Ming and Qing dynasties, the majority of which are on social and economic issues. The *Jingshi* scholars also made their analysis of these issues from historical perspectives. The re-emergence of the statecraft school in the nineteenth century also benefited greatly from another important development of Chinese learning – the formation and growth of the *Qian-Jia* School. This school originated in the mid-seventeenth century, with two great scholars and enlightenment thinkers, Gu Yanwu and Huang Zongxi, being the representatives, both of whom strongly emphasized the importance of textual research, argumentation and composition, insisting that arguments should be based on reliable evidence.

In the first half of the Qing period, Chinese intellectual life was muted by the harsh cultural despotism of the Qing state. Scholars had to shift their interests from contemporary issues to “pure” academic issues, mainly the study of history. They inherited and developed the textual methods of interpreting classics and languages, and of proper presentation, which Gu and Huang applied to studying languages, textual criticism and philology. At first, they focused on interpreting the meanings of classical works. Later, they began to observe and study history, geography, astronomy, calendar, temperament (music), laws and regulations. As a result, bibliographical and textual criticism including the transmission of texts became a major focus of Qing scholarship. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries under the reigns of Emperors Qianlong and Jiaqing, the work of the *Qian-Jia* School reached its peak. Methodologically, this school shares many common principles with the Rankian Historical School which appeared in Europe in the late nineteenth century. According to Yu Yingshi (Yu Ying-shih), one of the leading historians in our times, it is no wonder that Rankianism was so easily accepted by the majority of Chinese historians when it was introduced into China in the early twentieth century (Yu Yingshi 1976: 248–51).

Thus by the twentieth century China had had a two millennia-long tradition of systematic and continual recording and describing of economic activities, events and institutions, as well as of analyzing and interpreting economic changes and performance. Chinese historians had also developed a methodology for dealing with historical documents which is quite similar to the Rankian one. But the *Shi-Huo* Studies are not economic history in the modern sense. The basic difference lies in the fact that they mainly focus on recording and describing economic activities, events and institutions. While some great scholars made original observations, analyses and interpretations of past economic phenomena and processes and had a few valuable insights in their studies some of which are very vital and striking even to us modern economic historians, they lacked a complete set of thematic and theoretical concerns, analytical methodologies and language which Chinese classical political economy could not provide.

The formation, 1904–50

In spite of the long Chinese antecedents of *Shi-Huo* Studies, the modern discipline of Chinese economic history is not indigenous; instead, it was introduced from the modern West. In the mid-nineteenth century, China was facing new and unprecedented challenges. Foreign invasions and internal rebellions shook the country. The most significant response by the Qing was the Self-Strengthening Movement which marks the beginning of China's modernization. The basic principles of the movement are "Chinese learning for the foundation, and Western learning for application." John Fairbank called this formulation a "halfway Westernization, in tools but not in values, which was apparent to a majority of the Chinese officials, who felt the necessity of learning from the foreigners but opposed all things Western" (Fairbank and Goldman 2006: 217). Western academic works were introduced to China on a large scale. The introduction of new ideas including, for example, those from Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (translated by Yan Fu, a famous reformer), was extremely welcomed by the reform-minded Chinese. Partly because of the Chinese tradition of *Jingshi* thought, which shared some common features with early modern Western political economy, the *Wealth of Nations* immediately became a focus of the Chinese intelligentsia, after the translation was published in 1901.

While the end of the Qing dynasty, and the two thousand year-long imperial system, brought hope of creating a new and modern China to all the Chinese people, the Republican government was inept and could not control society as effectively as in imperial times. Partly for this reason, this period became one full of passions and excitements which had never been seen before in Chinese history. A feeling of freedom – free thinking, free speaking, free writing – spread over many Chinese cities, especially among educated young people. During the 1920s and 1930s, China saw an outpouring of Western thoughts. Many educated Chinese were eager to study every kind of political and social theory, examine the nature of their own social fabric, debate the values of new methods of social sciences, and explore the possibilities for progress that seemed to lie at the heart of Western learning. A core strategy of Chinese modernization was the self-conscious transformation and modernization of traditional Chinese scholarship. In the minds of many leading scholars, modernization, Westernization and scientification were virtually synonymous. Accordingly, the modernization of Chinese scholarship meant the creation of Western-style scholarship in China. One of the major tasks was to take Western academic research as the new standard and paradigm of disciplinary knowledge, and research methodologies for modern Chinese scholarship.

Economic history was one of the major products of this new intellectual movement. Since it is a Chinese tradition to study contemporary problems in a historical perspective, it was necessary to understand what was wrong with traditional Chinese society and economy and their failure to make China a "modern nation." It was clear that traditional Chinese scholarship could not complete this task, new scholarship was needed. The new scholarship could be available from the West (usually via Japan in the early stage). In his famous 1902 article titled "Xin Shixue" (New History), Liang Qichao (1873–1929), one of the founders of modern Chinese historiography, already called for a "revolution of history writing" and creating a "New History."⁵ One of the major characteristic features of this "New History," according to Liang Qichao (1902), was to adopt "principles and laws of other disciplines," and use them in the study of history. The first achievement of the *New History* movement was Liang's *History of Chinese National Debt*, published in 1904, which marked the appearance of the discipline of Chinese economic history.

Liang's call for a New History began an inexorable trend. In the 1920s, Hu Shi and Fu Sinian, two leading historians as well as the leaders of the nationwide "New Culture"

movement which was a development of the May Fourth movement, were at the vanguard of the push to study Western learning. Even those comparatively “conservative” historians who insisted that Chinese traditional scholarship should not be replaced by Western scholarship, were also indirectly influenced by the movement. The *New History* movement developed in different directions and evolved into two major schools of history in the 1920s and 1930s: the Historical Materialism School and the Textual Criticism School. The former focused on assembling a grand unified theory of historical evolution, while the latter emphasized the importance of dealing with the historical materials using more “scientific” methods. Both were highly influenced by late nineteenth century German scholarship which was overwhelmingly popular in Japan and China in this period. The Historical Materialism School derived basic ideas from Hegelian and Marxian philosophies of history, which argued that the historical development of human history follows a set of successive stages. Later, the school diverged further into two sub-schools: Marxist and non-Marxist schools. Both of the sub-schools put social and economic history at the core of their study of Chinese history.

The Textual Criticism School, also known as the “Scientific History,” “Positivist History” or “New Textology” school, was influenced by the Rankian approach which focused on the empirical mode and positivist sciences, with great emphasis on facts. The leader of the Textual Criticism School, Fu Sinian (1896–1950), was labeled the “Chinese Ranke.” According to Fu, the task of the historian exclusively consists of the verification and organization of historical material, allowing the bare facts contained in the sources to speak for themselves. Accordingly, they opposed the use of any kind of theory or view of history and fiercely condemned any involvement of the historian in politics. As Hu Shi (1891–1962), a leader of the school and of the modern Chinese intellectual movement, advocated, Chinese scholars should engage in “more study of problems, less talk of -isms.” Deeply convinced of the feasibility of the experimentalist approach, with its reliance on coolness and reflective deliberation, Hu counseled the individual solution of individual problems with “bold hypothesis, but careful verification.” Many of the scholars of this school used their skills in the study of social and economic history. The reorientation of historical studies on the basis of a combination of the methods and concepts developed by Western historical and social science and the Chinese *Qian-Jia* tradition is exemplified in the person of Zhang Yinlin (1905–42), who graduated from Stanford University.

In this intellectual climate, it is no wonder that economic history became the vanguard and the core of modern Chinese historical scholarship and experienced rapid growth.⁶ According to an authoritative survey, 524 works on Chinese economic history were published in the first half of the twentieth century, mostly during the five years 1932–37 (Zeng Yeying 2000: 82–3). Moreover, a great improvement was achieved in the academic quality of the works. In the early 1930s two professional journals of economic history were published by two prestigious academic institutions. The first – *Zhongguo jindai jingjishi yanjiu jikan* (Journal of Modern Chinese Economic History), which was later renamed as *Zhongguo shehui jingjishi yanjiu jikan* (Journal of Chinese Socio-Economic History) – was published in 1932. The second, *Shi-Huo Bimonthly*, was published in 1934 with Tao Xisheng (T’ao Hsi-sheng) being the chief editor.⁷ Both journals created a completely new approach, and laid a foundation in this field. Though the year of the creation of *Zhongguo shehui jingjishi yanjiu jikan* is seen as a watershed in the formation of the discipline, *Shi-Huo Bimonthly* may have been more influential and was considered the most famous journal of socio-economic history in China or even in East Asia with a circulation of 10,000.⁸ The primary reason for the journals’ success is that they initiated first-hand historical data gathering. They stressed that historians should

find the issues and digest theories through data arrangement. Contributing to the new research atmosphere, they (in particular the *Shi-Huo Bimonthly*) introduced the theory and method of social science coming from Europe and America, and urged China's historical science to integrate into global trends. The two journals made great contributions to the development of fledgling Chinese economic history. Other journals such as *Yinhang Zhoubao* (Bank Weekly), *Zhonghang yuekan* (Bank of China Monthly) and *Nonghang yuekan* (Agricultural Bank Monthly) also published economic history subjects and became important to the discipline.

Professional academic societies of economic history appeared in this period. Behind *Zhongguo shehui jingjishi yanjiu jikan* was the Society of Historical Studies, while the Society of Shi-Huo took the *Shi-Huo Bimonthly* as the hub of their activities. Similar societies were established in other major Chinese universities, among which the best known may be the Society of Chinese Economic History of Sun Yat-sen University. As early as 1931 Peking University organized classes in Chinese Social History (in fact, it was Socio-Economic History) and Historical Materialism. Two years later the teaching and research section of Chinese economic history was founded in the Law School of the same university and a series of works on Chinese economic history was published. Outside campus, Marxist historians were quite active. Led by Guo Moruo (1892–1978), Fan Wenlan (1893–1969), Lu Zhenyu (1901–80), Li Jiannong (1880–1963) and Hou Wailu (1903–87), Marxist scholars translated major Marxist works into Chinese (including Karl Marx's massive *Das Kapital*, his *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* and others). Using Marxist discourses and frameworks of analysis, they produced a number of important works on Chinese social and economic history, which won increasing influence among the scholars of the younger generations, though some of them were criticized for being too dogmatic in their adherence to the Marxist model.⁹

All the changes listed above show that the discipline of economic history had grown rapidly and held an important position in modern Chinese history by the Japanese invasion in 1937. In spite of these achievements, major problems can be found in this period. First, though a few leading scholars emphasized the necessity of borrowing methods from social sciences and applying them in the study of Chinese economic history, only limited efforts were made. Second, though some historians began to focus on the characteristic features of Chinese economic history, Eurocentrism held the main position in the study. Third, many scholars believed that scholarship should serve to find the solutions of major contemporary Chinese problems. This is reflected in the continuous emphasis on presentist problems that marked the development of the discipline.¹⁰ This “path dependency” had a mixed impact. On the one hand, it stimulated the interest of scholars in China's past social and economic conditions and thereby advanced historical knowledge; on the other hand, it made scholarship and politics intertwine which would harm academic developments.

The vigorous growth of Chinese economic history was interrupted by the Japanese invasion in 1937. During the extremely hard time of the war (1937–45) and the civil war (1946–49), however, Chinese scholars did not stop working and achieved considerable advancements. The most important one was the training of social and economic historians of the younger generations. Chinese elite universities (in particular the National Southwestern Associated University which was formed by a merger of three top universities – Peking University, Tsinghua University and Nankai University in 1937) did not stop their teaching of the subject. Almost all the best Chinese economic and social historians working in the second half of the twentieth century, whether in mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong or the USA, were trained in these universities during this period. It is these scholars who played a key role in the next phase of this story.

The transformation, 1950–78

In the West, after 1945 a sense of dissatisfaction with pre-war formulations gradually became apparent and from about 1955 the study of history entered a period of rapid change and reassessment (Barraclough 1978: 227, 229, 257). Such change also took place in China in the early 1950s, but followed a totally different path. For the majority of Chinese economic historians, the German influence remained strong throughout the interwar years. It was gradually superseded, from the 1920s onwards, by the influence of historical materialism, and a great controversy ensued which, in the case of China, was only resolved by the communist victory of 1949, though Marxism had been steadily gaining ground long before. The foundation of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949 began a new era in the discipline of economic history. At first Soviet Marxist historiography was dominant, but beginning with the 1958 "Revolution of History," a new style of Marxist history writing – Maoist historiography – developed which by the 1960s and 1970s overwhelmed all other approaches.

In the early 1950s, Soviet Marxist historiography was imposed throughout China. As part of political indoctrination, all historians had to study the classics of Marxism and Soviet political education textbooks.¹¹ The Soviet version of Marxist theory of history was regarded as the supreme guide in the study of Chinese history. A good number of works of Russian and Soviet economic history were also introduced. The Stalinist theory of history was accepted as the official doctrine in the field and most Chinese historians aligned themselves with it. Because Marxism emphasizes the determinant of the "economic base," economic history held the central position in the new history. In the 1950s there were five nationwide debates which are called "five golden flowers of New China's history": the formation of the Han nation, the nature of landholding in feudal China, the interpretation of peasant uprisings, the transition from feudalism to capitalism and the origins of capitalism in China, and the periodization of modern Chinese history (1840–1949) with special reference to the impact and consequences of Western imperialism. Of the five debates, four belonged to, or were related to, social and economic history.¹² In these debates, a number of important works on Chinese economic history were produced. The establishment of Marxism as the "guiding theory" transformed the discipline. In contrast to the prejudice of pre-1949 mainstream scholarship which cherished the belief in "history is historical materials," the new scholarship raised a battle cry "the study of history must be guided with (Marxist) theory." Such high stress on the role of theories had never been seen before. Marxism provided a theoretic framework of analysis of economic history, which was missing in previous mainstream scholarship. The new scholarship also highlighted the activities of ordinary people and their roles in history, which were ignored in the earlier scholarship. All these changes were significant in the development of economic history.

During the 1950s and early 1960s some significant theoretical innovations were made by Chinese economic historians. Of them the theories of "Chinese capitalist sprouts" (or "Chinese capitalist embryo," "Chinese indigenous capitalism") and of "Chinese Feudal Society" are the most important. In the century before 1950, the view of "Unchanging China" or "stagnant China" had dominated the study of Chinese history. This view originated with Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, who thought that China was outside modern development. His view had a profound influence on Western thinkers for generations, including Karl Marx. Marx placed China in his category of "Asiatic societies" which, he claimed, could not follow the Western way of evolution. He saw China as a mummy carefully preserved in a hermetically sealed coffin, which would dissolve whenever it was brought into contact with open air. According to this view, late imperial Chinese society and economy were hopelessly stagnant.¹³ In contrast to this conventional wisdom, the theory of "Chinese Capitalist Spouts" held that

late imperial Chinese society and economy were not stagnant but ever changing, and major changes that happened in China resembled the changes that happened in early modern Western Europe. The driving forces behind the changes of society and economy in both China and Western Europe were the same – capitalism, which was indigenous. However, many scholars found that the differences between imperial Chinese society and economy and the West European ones are so obvious that the concept of “feudal society” from the Marxist classics can hardly be applied intact to Chinese history. Compared with West European feudal society, Chinese “feudal society” seems both “precocious” as well as “immature.”¹⁴ Accordingly, it was argued that Chinese historians should find the characteristics of Chinese “feudal society,” rather than forcing the Chinese reality into the West European model. Though these theories arose within the Marxist framework of analysis and discourse, they were important breakthroughs from the doctrines of Soviet historiography.

In the period 1955–65, the government organized and sponsored the work of collecting and cataloging economic historical materials. By 1966, several important collections and compilations of data had been published, which served as a basic source not only in this period, but also later.¹⁵ However, serious problems were manifest in the subject at this time, of which the following two are most important. First, economic history became more and more politicized, and the mainstream of all pre-1950 Chinese scholarship was condemned as “bourgeois” and disregarded. In the 1950s Soviet scholarship was taken as the guide, while in the 1960s and 1970s with the Sino-Soviet rift the Chinese state imposed a sort of self-closure on the Chinese academe. Western scholarship was rejected totally. As a result, the study of Chinese economic history was isolated from the development of international scholarship. Second, dogmatism was prevailing and intensified. The pattern of evolution of West European history was seen as universal and Chinese reality had to conform to this universal pattern. In particular, Chinese historical development had to follow a “five modes of production” formula, going through the successive stages of primitive, slavery, feudal, capitalist and socialist modes of production. As the conclusion is predetermined, the approach was oversimplified.

Within this political climate, the room left to Chinese economic historians was very limited. Their major task was to justify the theory of class struggle and to interpret Chinese history via this theory. One of the main aims of the new historiography, in Jian Bozan’s words, was to “reveal the laws of historical development and then respond and adjust to the laws,” “not only interpret history, but change history” (Jian Bozan 1950). This led to concentration on a small number of key topics such as Chinese “feudalistic” economic systems (ownership, rent, taxation systems, etc.), the hardship of peasant life, the fragility and backwardness of peasant family economy, the cruelty and ruthlessness of the state, as well as the necessity and reasonableness of peasant uprisings.¹⁶ During the Cultural Revolution (1966–76), the theory of “class struggle” was developed into an absurd theory of “line struggle,” that is, the struggles between Confucianism and Legalism, or between the “anti-reactionary” and the “reactionary” lines in the ruling classes in Chinese history which was considered to be the dynamics behind all social and economic change. The politicization led to the political persecution of historians, Marxist and non-Marxist. Almost all economic historians were condemned as “bourgeois,” some of whom, including such leading Marxist historians as Wu Han (1909–69) and Jian Bozan (1898–1968), were persecuted to death. Many famous non-Marxist historians such as Chen Yinke (1890–1969) and Liang Fanzhong (1908–70) also died in this atmosphere of terror. In this decade, the discipline of Chinese economic history was completely ruined. Courses of economic history were cancelled, professional journals were stopped, and libraries and archives were closed. No works of economic history were published and no foreign works of economic history were introduced during this decade.

The development of Chinese historiography between 1949 and the 1960s received a great deal of attention in the Soviet Union, where it has largely been assessed in ideological and political terms. No one is likely to deny that there are strong political overtones both in the choice of subject matter and in its handling; but we are concerned here with the positive results, and even unsympathetic critics are impressed with both the quantity of new work and its positive achievements. In economic history, in particular, many new research avenues were opened and the foundation laid for writing the economic history of modern China at a higher level of theoretical sophistication and with a more comprehensive control of the empirical data than was the case in the past. There is general agreement that much valuable new documentary material was made available, but it is recognized also that there were significant advances in methodology and that a real effort was made to create a new view of the Chinese past to replace the discarded Confucian version.

The prosperity, 1978–late 1990s

In December 1978, the CCP summoned the third plenum of the eleventh Central Committee. In this plenum, the political line of “taking class struggle as the key link” upheld in Mao’s era was formally abandoned and replaced with a pragmatic line of modernization which is well known as “reform and opening up.” This is a major landmark in modern Chinese history and inaugurated a new era of China’s economic historiography.

With the passing of the fear generated by the Cultural Revolution, Chinese economic historians began to leave behind the conceptual straitjacket imposed for two decades by the theory of class struggle. In the 1980s, almost all economic historians who had been persecuted in political movements in the previous three decades were rehabilitated and given teaching or research jobs at academic institutions. Those who had received their professional training in the pre-1949 period became the backbone in the academic renaissance of Chinese economic history. They took this rare opportunity for disciplinary development and began anew their academic work. They concentrated on summarizing their work of the past decades and developing their research. This led to a massive resurgence of publication activities rarely seen ever in the history of the discipline. At the same time, these historians were eager to train a new generation of economic historians, deeply worried that the discipline would disappear since no scholars had been trained for more than a decade. Courses of economic history were offered and postgraduate training programs in social and economic history were created in many universities which were open to bright young people who passed highly competitive admission exams. The academic contingent of economic history expanded in size and improved significantly in professionalism. In sum, the discipline witnessed an unprecedented prosperity in the 1980s and 1990s.

The institutions of economic history that had been destroyed in the “Cultural Revolution” were resumed and new ones were created. Two major journals – the *Journal of Chinese Social and Economic History* published by Xiamen University and *Investigations in Chinese Economic History* published by the Institute of Economics of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences – were started in 1982 and 1985 respectively. They play a very important role similar to what the *Journal of Chinese Socio-Economic History* and *Shi-Huo Bimonthly* did in the 1930s. A professional Internet portal was established in 2000 which provides a new forum for economic historians. Associations of economic historians were founded in most provinces and major cities in the early 1980s. Building upon them, the Chinese Economic History Society (CEHS) was inaugurated in 1986. Nearly 20,000 works on Chinese economic history were published in the decade 1986–95 alone, which outnumbered the total publications in the 83 years since 1904 when Liang Qichao published his *History of Chinese National Debt*.¹⁷

More important than the quantitative progress was the qualitative improvement which had taken place in the discipline. The field has been enlarged greatly; new issues have been brought under study and advances have been made in the fields related to economic history such as historical demography, ecology, environment, geography, natural disasters, technology, water control, transportation and so on. These advances were very helpful to economic historians. In the 1980s, the overriding problem for Chinese historians was still to relate the historical development of China to the categories of the Marxists periodization of history, without doing violence to the unique features and special qualities of China's past. In 1978, a conference on "The Periodization of Chinese History" was held in Changchun which ushered in an unprecedented era of scholarly achievement. In the early 1980s four nationwide conferences were held on "Chinese capitalist sprouts," as well as other nationwide conferences on the "Economic Structure of Chinese Feudal Society" (1982, Guangzhou), the "Chinese Feudal Landlord Class" (1984, Kunming) and the like, which can be seen as the last glory of Chinese economic history as an academic discipline, arresting the nation's attention.

After three decades of self-isolation, with opening to the outside world, the decades after 1978 saw an upsurge of foreign scholarship. More works of economic history as well as of economics, sociology and other social sciences have been translated into Chinese. New theories and methods rushed into China at an unprecedented speed and scale and the old simplified approaches have given place to the new multi-analysis approaches. At the same time, many pre-1950 works of economic history were re-published, as well as a few important not-yet-published works which had been written in the 1950s and early 1960s.¹⁸ Through these works the previous academic achievements made by Chinese economic historians became available to younger scholars. In particular, the empirical approach which dominated in the first half of the twentieth century but was disgraced in the three decades before 1980, was rehabilitated and once again became the foundational methodology of economic history.

Significant advances were achieved in the 1980s and 1990s. First, inspired by Deng Xiaoping's call to "Seek truth from facts" and to "Emancipate the mind," Chinese economic historians gradually broke through the shackles of dogmatism. Marxism was still the guiding theory of economic history, but there was a gradual relaxation of Marxist interpretation. With the abandonment of the ironclad rule to "take class struggle as the key link," the highly politicized and ideologized study of peasant uprisings which had dominated Chinese economic history in Mao's era gradually stepped down from the center stage. The Chinese Society of Peasant Wars which was founded in 1978 and became overwhelmingly influential, languished in the late 1990s and became almost completely defunct by the end of 1990s. With the shift of official ideological emphasis from "relations of production" to the "forces of production" (i.e. technology, resource use, productivity and the like) in the 1980s, the central concern of Chinese economic historians focused on a vital historical question: what were the economic origins of China's modernization? The new focus tends to be on specifics of civilization in traditional China, and the general paradigm of how China has responded to the dual challenges of interactions with the outside world and modernization in the post-1700 era. A new generation of scholars turned to address directly the question of economic development. Although the issue related chiefly to new policy, nonetheless the new studies were more and more depoliticized.

Second, a new focus spotlighted the developmental effects of the market. There were major efforts in the 1980s and 1990s to bring the concerns and methods of microeconomics to bear on Chinese history. Earlier studies had been mainly macroeconomic; the later approaches laudably turned the spotlight from gross national output to the neglected subjects of markets, prices, enterprise/household choice, etc. Third, in the previous period, the

pattern of evolution of society and economy derived from West European experience was venerated as the universal law that Chinese history had to follow. This deeply seated Eurocentric paradigm is concerned mainly with counterfactuals and tends to ignore China's past reality. Although this sort of Eurocentrism has received increasing criticism in the West in the past decades, it remained the basic workhorse for most Chinese historians until the mid-1990s. Since then however, the universality of the pattern has been challenged. The theory of "Chinese Capitalist Sprouts" has been questioned, and then abandoned by many scholars.¹⁹ The same is the case with the theory of the "Chinese Feudal Society."²⁰ Meanwhile, new theories and models have been proposed, aiming at finding better explanations for the evolution of early modern Chinese society and economy.²¹ This change shows that to study Chinese history on the basis of Chinese facts has become the shared belief of a new generation of scholars and China's economic history must be looked at from a new perspective.

Fourth, a significant divergence has taken place in the discipline. Based on their different approaches, three major schools have emerged. They are (1) the School of Socio-Economic History, which has been the mainstream of China's economic historiography in most of the post-1950 period, but has changed greatly since 1978; (2) the School of Economic History led by Wu Chengming, which pays more attention to economic performance and to the use of theories and methods from economics; and (3) the School of Social History represented by Fu Yiling, which concentrates more on social changes from the perspective of sociology and anthropology. The emergence of these three schools changed the landscape of the discipline and ushered in a new period of "a hundred flowers blooming, and a hundred schools of thought contending."

Challenges and responses in the new century

China has witnessed a rapid and large-scale transformation in the past decades which has rarely been seen in world history. It is impossible to understand China's current economic miracle and predict its future if one does not know China's long-term social and economic experience. This gives China's historians an opportunity to look afresh at the past and evaluate its significance and that is why more and more first-class scholars in other fields are shifting to Chinese social and economic history.²² By the way, as early as the late 1980s, some people warned that an intellectual crisis was coming.²³ And, by the late 1990s, everyone working in this field experienced the specter of impending crisis, whether "theoretical," "methodological," or "paradigmatic." Some scholars have pointed out that the "crisis" was not unique to China. Rather, it was a reflection of the global theoretical crisis of history (Huang 1991). After three decades of opening to the outside world, Chinese economic history was becoming part of international scholarship and hence could not avoid the global crisis in history. Moreover, for decades Chinese economic historians had been working within the analytical framework of Marxism, but now the dominant position of Marxism in the discipline was challenged leading to a generation gap in Chinese academe. Further challenges came from the postmodernist attacks, the need for new skills in big data processing and so on. All these brought serious problems to many scholars and made them feel at the end of their resources. It is understandable that they felt that the discipline was in dire straits.

But this is not the whole story. If we consider what has happened in the field of economic history in its entirety, we must say that, although the challenges are real, new and significant advances have been made in the first decade of the twenty-first century. In the twentieth century, Chinese economic historians were working in the theoretical system of classical political economy of Adam Smith, David Ricardo and Karl Marx. But in the last decades

many other economic theories became important in China, though classical political economy still occupies a key place in the tools used in Chinese economic history. China has seen a wholesale introduction of current Western social science scholarship. New approaches in international scholarship of economic history, such as neo-institutional economics, quantitative economics, social classification theory, environmental science, demography and so forth, have been accepted by many Chinese economic historians. New scholarship has brought new topics and approaches to economic history, and the excessive concentration of attention in previous studies on a limited range of topical problems has gone forever. Such major paradigms of Western Chinese studies (mainly in the USA), as “Impact and Response Paradigm,” “China-Centered Paradigm,” “Global Oriented Paradigm,” “Revolution Paradigm,” “Modernization Paradigm” and so on, are welcomed by many younger scholars and animate lively discussions about the fitness and applicability of these paradigms in Chinese economic history.

The openness toward and awareness of the new theories and paradigms are significant to Chinese economic historians. Many of them reshape their approaches and make a more precise and deliberate application of well-defined theories. As a result, a few previously received theories in Chinese history are questioned or, more often, ignored by the majority of scholars of younger generations. For example, in the second half of the twentieth century, the overriding problem for Chinese historians was to relate the historical development of China to the categories of the Marxist periodization of history, without doing violence to the unique features and special qualities of China’s past. All the main controversies among Chinese economic historians of the day centered round this basic question, and their preoccupation with periodization to a large extent determined the choice of topics upon which they were engaged. But most of the scholars have lost interest in such questions and accordingly no nationwide debates on such big topics have been held since the late 1990s. Philip Huang (1991) argued that “the theoretical impasse between the feudalism and incipient capitalism schools has bred pervasive skepticism among younger Chinese scholars, so much so that few bother even to address the operating analytical constructs of their seniors.” The fact is that many Chinese scholars are not sure to what extent either the so far dominant Marxist scholarship or the newly introduced Western categories, concepts and tools can deal with Chinese experience.

Unlike the mainstream scholarship in previous decades which looks more like “philosophy of history,” Chinese economic history in the new century is concerned more with the question “what did happen,” than with the question “what should happen.” Many economic historians now evade the grand narrative tradition and concern themselves more with the detailed analysis of specific issues. This situation has led to “a free-for-all” among Chinese economic historians, since few of them share common interests, so that some worry that the field today is “rudderless.” For example, the Yangzi Delta, the richest area of China economically and culturally in the past millennium, has been under the most intensive study in the past century. Thanks to the great efforts made by scholars of several generations, we now have much better knowledge of the economy of this area than of any other parts of China. Yet though we know much about agriculture, rural industry, commerce, trade, land tenancy, taxation, etc., it is little discussed how all these aspects were connected with each other and integrated into a single entity. As a result, we don’t really know what the economy looks like as a whole (Li 2013).

Although one of the results of the diversification of approaches in the past three decades is that the discipline is getting “atomized,” it is no bad thing in some senses, because it means that scholars have more freedom both in the choice of subject matter and in its handling and bigger space for their academic explorations. With the introduction of more approaches from abroad, Chinese scholars have been made aware of the major shortcomings of previous

scholarship and tried to overcome them. For example, the quantitative approach had been undervalued in Chinese economic history. The “quantitative revolution” which happened in the field of economic history in the West had little influence in China. But recently, realizing the strengths and weaknesses of the approach, younger scholars have paid more attention to it, though they also are very careful not to go too far.

Second, with the greater “internationalization” of the discipline, Chinese economic historians have got more deeply involved in international academic activities and Chinese economic history is studied in the perspective of comparative and global history. It is thus easy to understand why Chinese scholars are active in major international debates such as “Global Crisis of Economic History,” “Involuntary Growth,” “Great Divergence” and so on. The CEHS was affiliated to the International Economic History Association in 2002, which also confirms the eagerness of Chinese scholarship to take part in international conversation. Since the generation of scholars who have been educated in the post-1978 period, and who are open to Western scholarship, are playing a more important role in the discipline, this process has been less and less questioned.

Third, the importance of historical sources is now highly rated. The collection of primary materials has been carried out at an unprecedented scale and speed. The use of the “new” materials has led to more new explanations of the past and empirical studies which were despised in the 1950s to 1970s are now appreciated. Moreover, examination of the reliability of the materials is combining with new skills of data processing which make the information from the materials usable for the study. The empirical mode itself with its emphasis on facts is ascendant again, and historians, driven by the desire to use sources objectively and impartially, seek to appear neutral and unbiased. To overcome the weakness in data processing which is one of the major shortcomings of previous scholarship, new efforts have been made.²⁴

In the open and more tolerant climate of the past decades, new generations of economic historians has grown up. Compared with their predecessors, they have received better education and more complete professional training. Many of them have spent some time abroad and have better knowledge of Western scholarship. Some younger scholars seek to satisfy their desire for something new by adopting approaches from the West, and few of them bother even to address those operating analytical constructs of their seniors. It leads to some kind of “generation gap” between the comparatively more “conservative” seniors and more “liberal” juniors but the gap has never turned into a “generation war.”²⁵ Some scholars of older generations have questioned, or even opposed in some cases, the Western methodologies, but most of the best scholars of the generation who received their training before 1949 have no antipathy toward Western scholarship and this attitude has a profound effect on the scholars of younger generations, in particular the generations who were trained after 1978. For the even younger generations, they tend to accept Western scholarship as much as possible.²⁶

Internally, the key to the future development of the subject is to deal more rationally with the traditions of the discipline of Chinese economic history. As is seen above, there are three main traditions: (a) the empirical tradition, which was the mainstream of China’s scholarship of economic history in the 1930s and 1940s; (b) the Marxist tradition, which has been the mainstream since the 1950s; and (c) the comprehensive tradition, which has been rising since the mid-1990s. All of these are valuable elements of the discipline. Only based on these traditions together, is further development of the discipline likely. Though there are obvious differences in approach and orientation of research, these traditions share some basic essences. The traditions combined constitute the specifically Chinese character of the discipline which makes it not a simple copy of Western economic history. It is an “economic history with

Chinese characteristics.” It is my opinion that such characteristics are deeply rooted in tradition.

Traditional Chinese historiography is based on a comprehensive worldview – the “heaven–man” thought, including the unity and integration of Heaven (Nature) and Man (Mankind). Since mankind is one integral part of nature, all the human activities, political, economic, social and other, can be conducted only within a certain natural environment. It is inevitable for the activities to be influenced, or even determined, by Nature, while Nature is changed more or less by the activities. Moreover, the interactions between Nature and mankind are enduring and can be studied only in a long-term perspective. According to this view, Sima Qian believed that the highest pursuit of the historian should be “to examine into all that concerns Heaven and Man, to penetrate the changes of the past and present, and then advance his own explanation of history.”

These words can be understood in this way: by dialectically integrating “tradition” with “modernity” and exploring the laws of universe and human society, one can have a better understanding of the world. In some sense, this thought echoes the ideas of Comprehensive History (or “Total History”) which appeared in the mid- and late twentieth century. In the field of economic history, Joseph A. Schumpeter made an excellent summary of the importance of comprehensive history:

The social process is really one indivisible whole. Out of its great stream the classifying hand of the investigator artificially extracts economic facts. The designation of a fact as economic already involves an abstraction, the first of the many forced upon us by the technical conditions of mentally copying reality. A fact is never exclusively or purely economic; other – and often more important – aspects always exist. Nevertheless, we speak of economic facts in science just as in ordinary life, and with the same right; with the same right, too, with which we may write a history of literature even though the literature of a people is inseparably connected with all the other elements of its existence. [Therefore, economic history is] merely a part of universal history, only separated from the rest for purpose of exposition.

(Schumpeter 1934: 4, 58)

Schumpeter’s passage reminds one of Sima Qian’s and the resemblance is no coincidence at all because great minds think alike.

For Chinese scholars, the job of creating economic history with Chinese characteristics is linked closely with another job: taking full account of trends in global scholarship. It is pretty clear that in this age of globalization, none can succeed academically whilst operating behind closed doors. Chinese economic history has been strongly influenced by scholarship in the West. In this sense, the discipline was a result of globalization from the beginning and since the globalization of economic history is an irresistible trend, the best way forward for economic history in China is critical engagement with Western scholarship. When such scholarship is applied to other parts of the world, there is a strong implication that it is universally valid and this should be questioned. China must break free of the Anglo–American and Eurocentric straightjacket, but we should also avoid throwing out the baby with the bath water: in a small world the destiny of the Chinese discipline is inevitably entwined with those of other countries in the search for resources, the exchange of ideas and the expansion of knowledge. It is in particular worth noting that Chinese economic history has always had strong orientation toward socio-economic history, while Western economic history has shown a trend to return to “economic and social history” after the disillusionment with the

“revolution” of the “new economic history” (Hudson 2001). This common ground forms the basis for the integration of China’s scholarship into the mainstream of international scholarship. This will benefit not only Chinese scholarship, but also international scholarship, not least because China has the longest tradition of economic history and one of the largest teams of economic historians in the present-day world.

Notes

- 1 This work is part of Project 643001, for which I acknowledge support from the RGC of Hong Kong. The chapter is partly based on my previous work “Retrospect and Prospect: The Rise of Chinese Economic History” which was published in *The Chinese Historical Review* in 2008. I thank the editor of the journal for generously giving me permission to draw on it.
- 2 Literally *Shi* means “food” and *Huo* means “commodities.” But Nancy Lee Swan translated the *Shi-Huo Zhi* of *Han Shu* as *Food and Money in Ancient China* (Pan Ku 1972). Since Swan’s annotated translation is widely accepted, here I follow her and use “food and money,” not “food and commodities.” The name of Ban Gu is spelled as Pan Ku in Swan’s translation because she used the older Wade–Giles system to spell Chinese names, while I use the Pinyin system which has been adopted by the UN and other world agencies and is now widely used in scholarly works and newspapers alike.
- 3 The information includes the prices of major goods in official purchases, the standards of payment to hired labor in government services and the government-organized constructions, breakdowns of expenditure in state-run manufactures and so on.
- 4 According to an incomplete statistic, 8264 of pre-1949 gazetteers of different kinds have survived in mainland China, but the total is estimated to be much more than 10,000.
- 5 This article was written under the influence of the *General Introduction to History* of Ukita Kazutami (1860–1946), a well-known Japanese scholar and thinker.
- 6 Zhu Qianzhi (1899–1972), the founder of the *Journal of Modern Historiography* (est. in 1934), wrote: “The modern period is an age in which the economy is in the ascendancy. What we need is not political history or legal history, but economic history or social history, which describe the development of social phenomena, historical patterns of societies, and changes of these patterns. The new trend of modern historiography is definitely economic and social history” (Zhu Qianzhi 1936). For this reason, in 1935 the journal published a special issue on Chinese economic history. See also Chen Feng (2010).
- 7 Both of these journals predate the *Journal of Economic History* published by the American Economic History Association since 1942.
- 8 Circulation surpassed 10,000 copies on the eve of the Japanese invasion and there was a considerable number of Japanese subscribers.
- 9 Among these works, most important are Guo Moruo (1930) and Hou Wailu (1939 and 1947).
- 10 In the first two decades of the twentieth century, the central concern of Chinese economic historians, as well as of most Chinese intellectuals, was how to save China from exploitation under domestic “feudalism” and the aggression of foreign imperialism and transform it into a modern nation.
- 11 The two most important were (1) *The History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks): Short Course*, which was edited by a Commission of the Central Committee of Soviet Communist Party and authorized by the Committee in 1937. Section 4 of Chapter 4, “Dialectical materialism and historical materialism,” written by Joseph Stalin himself, was regarded as one of the Marxist classics in China; (2) *Political Economy: A Textbook*. This book was compiled by the Institute of Economics of the USSR Academy of Sciences under the supervision of Stalin and published in 1954.
- 12 These were: the periodization of Chinese history, the form of feudal landownership, the peasant war and the “capitalist sprouts.” The fifth debate concerned the formation of the Han people.
- 13 Later in the twentieth century, this view evolved into new theories such as the “Impact–Response” model (the impact of the West and China’s response to it), the “High-level Equilibrium Trap,” the “Involuntary Growth” hypothesis and others. In short, all these theories share a common core – without an “impact” from outside, Chinese society and economy would be outside the path of modern development.

- 14 This is an expression by Fu Yilin (1911–88), a leading economic historian who fathered the theory of the “Chinese Feudal Society.”
- 15 The datasets include Yan Zhongping et al., eds., *Zhongguo jindai jingjishi tongji ziliao xuanji* (modern economy); Li Wenzhi et al., eds., *Zhongguo jindai nongyeshi ziliao* (agricultural history); Sun Yutang et al., eds., *Zhongguo jindai gongyeshi ziliao* (industrial history); Peng Zeyi, ed., *Zhongguo jindai shougongyeshi ziliao* (handicraft history) and others.
- 16 According to incomplete statistics, from 1949 to 1989 over 4000 articles and more than 300 academic monographs, material collections and other books were published in mainland China on the history of peasant wars in imperial Chinese history. See Wang Xuedian (2004).
- 17 Feng Yuejian et al. (1996–97). See also Yu Heping (1999).
- 18 Among them the most important was Liang Fangzhong (1982). Liang (1908–70) was a historian who had studied economics in China, the USA and the UK before 1949. His long-unpublished masterpiece was finished in 1962.
- 19 They include Wu Chengming (1917–2011), the chief architect of the theory, who abandoned it in the late 1990s. In 1996 I published an essay on this issue which triggered a debate on whether the Chinese “capitalist sprouts” were a reality or just a scholarly construct devised by those who wished to see Chinese modernization follow the Western European path (Li Bozhong 1996). This was accompanied by a debate on the meaning of “capitalism” itself.
- 20 Before he passed away in 1988 Fu Yilin abandoned this theory which he had constructed, and argued that late imperial China was not a feudal society at all.
- 21 For example, the theories of the Chinese “traditional market” proposed by Wu Chengming and of the “middle-peasantization” (*zhongnonghua*) of Chinese peasantry by Fang Xing, the “Jiangnan pattern of economic growth” by Li Bozhong, and so on.
- 22 In this sense, Maddison (1998) started an international trend.
- 23 Early examples are Huang Liuzhu (1987) and Lu Fu (1989). For later and more balanced reappraisals, see, e.g., Wang Xuedian (2004) and Zhou Zhaochen et al. (2001: 36–52).
- 24 Recently, summer university courses on data processing skills in social and economic history have been offered in Shanghai, Taiyuan and other cities, to train young Chinese scholars.
- 25 For example, in my (Li Bozhong 2010) book I used HSNA (Historical System of National Accounts) method in the study of GDP of an area of China in the 1820s. Some senior scholars criticized the method as “utterly incomprehensible.”
- 26 Philip Huang (1991) thought that “Most [of them] have sought to satisfy their desire for something new by adopting wholesale one or another fashionable approach from the West.”

References

- Chen, Feng (2010) “Cong shihuo zhixue dao shehui jingjishi” (From the *Shi-Huo* studies to social and economic history). *Journal of Nanjing University* (Philosophy, Humanities and Social Sciences), no. 3.
- Barracrough, Geoffrey (1978) “History.” In *Main trends of research in the social and human sciences*, Part II, vol. I, *Anthropological and historical sciences: Aesthetics and the sciences of art*, ed. by Jacques Havet. Paris, Mouton/UNESCO.
- Fairbank, John King and Merle Goldman (2006) *China: A new history*. 2nd edn. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press.
- Feng, Yuejian et al. (1996–97) “1986 nian -1995 nian zhongguo jingjishi lunzhu suyin” (An index of the works on Chinese economic history). *Zhongguo jingjishi yanjiu* (Beijing), Supplements.
- Guo, Moruo (1930) *Zhongguo gudai shehui yanjiu* (The study of ancient Chinese society). Shanghai: Shanghai lianhe shudian.
- Hou, Wailu (1939) “Shehuishi daolun” (An introduction to social history). *Zongshu wenhua* (Chongqing), 4.2.
- Hou, Wailu (1947) *Zhongguo gudian shehui shilun* (On Chinese ancient society). Shanghai: Xinzhi shudian.
- Huang Liuzhu (1987) “‘Shixue weiji’ chuyi” (A discussion of ‘Crisis in historiography’). *Zhongguoshi yanjiu dongtai* (Beijing), no. 4.
- Huang, Philip C.C. (1991) “The paradigmatic crisis in Chinese studies: paradoxes in social and economic history.” *Modern China* 17.3: 299–341.
- Hudson, Pat, ed. (2001) *Living economic and social history*. Glasgow: Economic History Society.

- Jian, Bozan (1950) “Zenyang yanjiu zhong lishi” (How to study Chinese history). *Xin Jianshe* (Beijing), vol. 3, no. 2 (Nov.).
- Li, Bozhong (1996) “Zibenzhuyi mengya qingjie” (On the complex of ‘Capitalist Sprouts’). *Dushu* (Beijing), no. 8.
- Li, Bozhong (2010) *Zhongguo de zaoqi jindai jingji – 1820 niandai Huating-Louxian diqu GDP yanjiu*. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju. (Summarized in “An early modern economy in China: a study of the GDP of the Huating-Lou area, 1823–1829.” In Billy K.L. So, ed., *The economy of lower Yangzi delta in late imperial China*. London: Routledge, 2013: 133–46.)
- Li, Bozhong (2013) “An early modern economy in China: a study of the GDP of Huating-Lou area, 1823–1829.” In Billy K.L. So, ed., *The economy of lower Yangzi delta in late imperial China*. London: Routledge.
- Liang, Fangzhong (1982) *Zhongguo lidai hukou, tudi, tianfu tongji* (Statistics of residence registration, cultivated land and taxes under several dynasties). Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe.
- Liang, Qichao (1902) “Xin shixue” (New history), originally published in *Xinmin Congbao*, vol. 19 (Yokohama, Japan); repr. in Liang Qichao, *Yinbingshi wenji*. Kunming: Yunnan renmin chubanshe, 2001: 1628–47.
- Liang, Qichao (1904) *Zhongguo guozhai shi* (History of China’s national debt). Shanghai: Guangzhi shuju.
- Lu, Fu (1989) “Zhongguo dangdai de shixue weiji yu chulu” (The crisis of historiography in contemporary China). *Shehui kexuejia* (Guilin), no. 5.
- Maddison, Angus (1998) *Chinese Economic Performance in the Long Run*. Paris: OECD.
- Qian Li and Da Tong (1994) “Saina he ban liang shijia – Michel Cartier he Pierre-Etienne Will dui zhongguo shehui jingjishi yanjiu de gongxian” (Michel Cartier and Pierre-Etienne Will and their contributions to the study of Chinese social and economic history). *Zhongguo jingjishi yanjiu* (Beijing), no. 2: 106–13.
- Pan, Ku (Ban Gu) (1972) *Food and money in Ancient China*. ed. Nancy L. Swann. New York: Hippocrene Books.
- Schumpeter, Joseph A. (1934) *The theory of economic development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wang, Xuedian (2004) “Jin wushinian de zhongguo lishixue” (The Chinese historiography in the past fifty years). *Lishi yanjiu* (Beijing), no. 1.
- Yu, Heping (1999) “50 nian lai de zhongguo jindai jingjishi yanjiu” (A review of the studies of Chinese modern economic history in the past 50 years). *Jindaishi yanjiu* (Beijing), no. 5.
- Yu, Yingshi (Yu Ying-shih) (1976) *Shijia, shixue yu shidai* (The historian, history and time). Taipei: Lienching Press.
- Zeng, Yeying (2000) *Wushinian lai de zhongguo jingdaishi yanjiu* (The study of modern Chinese history in the past 50 years). Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe.
- Zhou, Zhaochen, Jiang Mei and Deng Jingli (2001) *Xin shiqi zhongguo shixue sichao* (Trends of Chinese historiography in the New Period). Beijing: Dangdai zhongguo chubanshe.
- Zhu, Qianzhi (1936) “Chen Xiaojiang *Xihan shehui jingji yanjiu xu*” (Preface to Chen Xiaojiang’s *A study of society and economy under the Western Han Dynasty*). Shanghai: Xinshengming shuju.