

Unfolding History, Evolving Identity: The Chinese in New Zealand. Edited by Manying Ip. Auckland University Press, Auckland, 2003. 304 pp. NZ price: \$44.99. ISBN 1-86940-289-8.

THIS BOOK is an important addition to the growing, but still limited, list of books on the Chinese in New Zealand. Arranged in 12 substantive chapters under four headings, each with a brief explanatory guide, it also features a very useful appendix on archival and library resources which doubles as an annotated bibliography of books and theses up to September 2001. Supporting the text are many intriguing photographs, one printed twice in error (pp.36 & 37), and a number of statistical tables and graphs, mostly clearly printed and labelled, but sometimes hard to read (p.192), inaccurately added (p.147, even allowing for rounding) or with labelling errors (p.195, where the sample size should read 12,378). The main weight of the text is on history, with identity given a more implicit role.

Unfolding History, Evolving Identity 'aims to contribute to three important academic areas: overseas Chinese studies, migration studies and the study of New Zealand's race relations and national identity' (p.xvi). Its success in the first is undoubted and in the second considerable, whilst its achievement in the third is more limited. The preface also notes three themes linking the past and the present; chain migration, the preference for self-employment and transnationalism. The first of these is defined as a pioneer migrant being followed by his family and friends (p.xiv). This definition clearly does not work for the first two chapters because Chinese women and children did not come here in the nineteenth-century wave of migration, even if the term may be true at a family level for recent arrivals from the People's Republic of China. On the other hand the contemporary term, transnationalism, is convincingly shown to be applicable to the attitudes and practices of the nineteenth-century migrants.

The first three chapters, encapsulated as 'First Encounters 1860s–1920s', in fact cover the period up to about 1960. James Ng and Neville Ritchie tackle the nineteenth-century gold-mining experience, but from different source material. Ng draws upon written sources, richer, he argues, than those for any other countries receiving Chinese goldminers (p.6), though virtually all are written by non-Chinese observers of the migrant community. His opening paragraph is unfortunate with three obvious errors of fact about general Chinese history, but thereafter the writing is careful. The pattern of life in the goldfields in Otago and the West Coast emerges. Anti-Chinese sentiment is discussed, including the imposition of the poll tax in 1881. There is no explanation here or elsewhere as to why the legislation also included a link between cargo weight and migrant numbers, a link related to contemporary fears of overcrowded coolie ships bringing cheap labour out of China.

Ritchie's inspiration is archaeology and here his enthusiasm shows, ranging through the details of mining techniques, building styles and material culture remains. His unsupported claim of 15,000 Chinese miner migrants (p.32) seems unduly high, given Ng's careful calculations, and Ritchie's comment that Chinese miners 'were encouraged to establish their own camp on the outskirts' of Lawrence in 1866 begs the question of who did the encouraging (p.33). At 580 (p.41), the number of potential Chinese sites for investigation is quite staggering but the ones already worked have provided extensive evidence of Chinese practices, including the considerable extent to which the Chinese communities depended upon imports from China (p.45), whilst also adapting to European. Ritchie notes the innovative skills of the Chinese, in particular the invention of the New Zealand gold dredge in the late 1880s, and reveals that Chinese mining lasted until 1943 (p.42). His page of theorizing (p.44) sits uncomfortably with the rest of the chapter, but his final conclusion seems confirmed, that the Chinese 'maintained their "Chineseness" where it mattered most to them' (p.46).

Nigel Murphey's chapter draws in the archives of the Labour and Customs Departments,

but its title, 'Joe Lum v. Attorney General' is misleading. Lum's case of 1919, which ruled that local-born Chinese children were British subjects with the same rights as other native-born New Zealanders, occupies only four of its 20 pages, nor is any attempt made to investigate whether the 1920 Immigration Restriction Amendment Act arose at least in part because of the Lum verdict. Murphey's opening discussion of White New Zealand (pp.48–50) must surely raise Maori eyebrows, despite a later footnote about Maori, but his distinction between 'race alien', an administrative, census category of 1916, and 'alien', a legislative category of 1917, is an important one. Murphey's checklist of the legislative and administrative restrictions upon the Chinese is useful, with particular significance in the rules for women, who were specifically excluded in 1925, allowed a yearly quota of ten, as wives, in 1935, and then admitted under special refugee arrangements in 1939 (p.53). Amidst so much negative practice, the reader is referred, belatedly and very much as an aside, to the 1888 Chinese Immigration Amendment Act, which Murphey notes positively as seeking to preserve the rights of naturalized Chinese (p.65).

The second section, 'Home is where the Heart is, 1920s–1980s', features chapters on Haining Street in Wellington, Maori–Chinese 'constructions', and the history of the Chun family. Each is deeply imbued with personal feelings, either as a committed oral historian (Lynette Shum) or as a reporter on their own and their family's experience, revealing both anger over what has happened and bemusement at the misapprehensions of the Pakeha majority. The most interesting chapter of the three is Jenny Bol Jun Lee's, which concludes that there are 4088 New Zealanders of Maori–Chinese descent (p.109) whose story needs to be better known. One unresolved issue raised by two authors is the status of European women married to Chinese men (pp.78, 100), with the unsupported comment that this would deprive the woman of British citizenship, while the reference to Chinese coming as indentured labourers (p.96) contradicts the earlier chapters. Kirsten Wong's chapter opens with a completely inappropriate statistic from the wrong table of the census, but goes on to explore an issue on which the whole book is undecided, the vigor or otherwise of Chinese political activity. Was/is there a preference for collective invisibility on public issues?

The third section, 'New Faces, 1987–2003', treats aspects of the migration from China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, whose 103,520 approvals for permanent residence (PR) formed 22% of the total approvals granted between 1987 and 2001. Each chapter notes the treacherous nature of migration statistics, in particular the mismatch between PR approvals, border arrivals and long-term residency, and each will repay detailed study by students of migration. Anne Henderson focuses on the problems facing skilled migrants from the People's Republic and reveals the considerable underutilization of the skills and talents of the migrants. Elsie Ho explores Hong Kong migrants clearly showing the parallels with migration flows to Australia, Canada and the USA and using unpublished census data to argue in detail about the on-migration of Hong Kong arrivals (p.174). She also explores underutilization of skills and notes that many business migrants did not actively pursue business in New Zealand (p.177). Manying Ip chooses the Taiwanese community, 12,378 by 2001, a group who take a 'utilitarian view of citizenship' (p.207), but who have plunged into political activism in New Zealand and have taken over the Chinese media in Auckland.

The final section, 'Standing Up', contains the most fascinating, if the most speculative, chapter in the book. Here Beven Yee attempts to portray the 'coping strategies' (p.215) of the Chinese in the face of discrimination. Whether the 'Glaserian grounded-theory approach' (p.215) gives the author any special insights is unclear to me, his is a highly persuasive discussion of how minorities interact with the majority. Next, David Pang provides a careful case study of the Epsom Normal Primary School's 1995 'Residency Clause and English Test', seeking to distinguish between the 'immigration effect' and the 'racial effect' (p.244) and demonstrating the divisions within the Chinese community between new arrivals and older established residents.

This book closes with its weakest chapter, Gilbert Wong on the Poll-Tax apology of 2002. Points made earlier in the book are unnecessarily repeated, but more importantly there is no serious attempt to explain why the long-mooted suggestion of an apology suddenly moved rapidly ahead between September 2001 and early 2002. Once the acceleration began, the objections from Maori arenas of the government are able to be documented, as are the criticisms from the opposition through the sole Chinese member of Parliament, Pansy Wong, but the political or community motivations for the move to an apology at that time are not adequately revealed.

In sum, a book of value on an important topic serving various potential audiences. On the more negative side, treat some of its figures with care, have a magnifying glass on hand to read the notes and do not expect to find everything in the index.

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Keeping a Low Profile: An Oral History of German Immigration to New Zealand. By Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich. Victoria University Press, Wellington, 2002. 351 pp. NZ price: \$39.95. ISBN 0-86473-439-5.

THIS WELCOME ADDITION to research on German–New Zealand connections is based on 102 interviews conducted with German immigrants in New Zealand between 1996 and 1997. It was published first in a German version, which was translated into English by Nelson Wattie and subsequently revised. Apart from a brief introduction and historical sketch of Germans in New Zealand, the book is divided into two parts: ‘Arrivals’ and ‘Themes’. ‘Arrivals’ contains six chapters, concerned with German immigrants who arrived from 1936–1940, 1948–1952, 1956–1966, the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s respectively. ‘Themes’ covers such topics as what it means to be a foreigner, comparing Germany and New Zealand, what Germans miss in New Zealand, and gender issues.

The book’s strength lies in its analysis of recent German immigrants’ attitudes toward New Zealand. We learn for example that New Zealand’s nuclear-free status combined with the Chernobyl nuclear reactor accident brought a number of environmentally conscious Germans to New Zealand in the 1980s. German ‘alternative centres’ had been set up around the country in the 1970s in which Germans could live ‘an ecological existence’ (p.124f.). The German environmentalists tended to be critical of New Zealand, ‘which is not really so green at all’ (p.142). Those Germans who arrived before the major market reforms found that New Zealand reminded them more of Communist East Germany than West Germany (pp.123, 134). Ironically, many of those who came to New Zealand from East Germany once they were free to travel after reunification in the 1990s tended to become disillusioned with New Zealand’s dismantling of the social welfare state and did not stay (p.138). Other Germans returned for different reasons: they simply found themselves getting ‘bored’ once they had finally acquired their dream house at the seaside; they did not know ‘what to do with the life they once dreamed of’ (p.143). Bönisch-Brednich’s interviewees had one thing in common: all ‘underestimated how difficult it would be to switch languages’ (p.162). Linguistic gaffes made by Germans were many, such as requesting the butcher not to give them ‘so much of your bloody meat’ (p.164), and asking a shopkeeper for ‘a tit with a ring’ (p.166). The phrases ‘How are you?’, ‘See you later’ and ‘Bring a plate’ created particular difficulties for Germans who took them literally (p.178f.). In addition, New Zealanders seemed to speak ‘incredibly