

## Book Reviews

***China Goes Global: The Partial Power.* New York: Oxford University Press. David Shambaugh. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013, xvi + 409 xvi + 409 pp. ISBN 978-0-19-986014-2**

As soon as the world stepped into the 21st century, the rise of China has become one of the most eye-catching matters not only for pundits or elite policymakers, but also media and laypeople. The People's Republic of China (PRC) started to write its name into the world coursebook in many aspects. China's economy has been consistently soaring at a drastic speed. In 2010, it replaced Japan to become the world's second-biggest economy and is currently projected to get on par with the United States within a decade or two. The leaders in Beijing began to play a more active role in global and regional politics. Chinese people are moving to many corners across continents. Chinese language is widely taught in educational institutions worldwide. In a nutshell, knowledge about China is no longer optional, but compulsory.

In the academic field of Sinology, however, one of the most fundamental concerns is that more and more intellectuals are either increasingly obsessed with social theories and methodologies or striving for other professional paths, thereby causing stagnation in scholarship. Addressing this challenge, David Shambaugh had spent five years doing extensive research, travelling to numerous places and interviewing a vast amount of the intelligentsia before he completed the manuscript entitled *China Goes Global: The Partial Power*. As suggested by its title, a central theme defining the entire volume is about China's current standing in world affairs. The content revolves around two main strategic puzzles: *how* is China's newfound comprehensive power being manifested today, and *how* will it be evinced in the future? Through the compendious, 'big picture' analysis, Shambaugh aimed to soothe those who are worried about the threat of the China's rise as well as its possibility to ascend to be a world's hegemon, replacing the United

States. Considering six distinct dimensions of China's presence – namely identity, diplomacy, global governance, economy, culture and security – his main argument is clear and concise: China is a significant global actor, but only partial power.

There are three main points to be appreciated in this contribution. Firstly, Shambaugh's work is timely. Not only has the 'Rise of China' been at the centre of attention among government officials, academic pundits or general public around the world for recent decades, but a comprehensive understanding of China's global presence is also vital. This book is in sharp contrast to the then-widespread perspective that China will soon 'rule the world,' after Martin Jacques's (2012) popular book *When China Rules the World* hit the market. In Jacques's view, China is on its journey to give birth to new world order, and that will make an end to the Western dominance. One distinguishing element between these two books is on historical composition.

While Shambaugh touches softly on history imperatives such as Confucianism, Imperial cultures and Tribute System, and how they shape China's global agendas, these are key points in Jacques' explanation. Secondly, *China Goes Global* is well organised and is composed of a wide selection of issues, both specific and broad. Similar to the author's primary intention, this book provides a nuanced analysis of the topic and bridges the knowledge gap in China literacy. It has also done excellently in examining six dimensions of China's global presence to explain why it is still a partial power. Thirdly, a large amount of literature, ranging from established scholarly works, media reports and policy papers to quantitative data reviewed and compile within this work plus findings from a series of interview the author has conducted could clearly reflect the first-hand, practical insights of the subject and ignite thought-provoking questions that could be used for further studies.

In order to delve deeper into the topic, readers of *China Goes Global* should also observe the room for further understanding, as follows. Firstly, due to his primary focus on

whether China could integrate into an international community as a global power or not, Shambaugh does not take seriously into account detailed information on Chinese elites responsible for foreign policymaking. Martin Jacques, on the other hand, gives more details into this domestic politics consideration. *When China Rules the World* provides a comparative view of Chinese leaders and Western countries' leaders, indicating that China has a distinctive means in selecting a party member. Each party member needs to undergo a myriad of processes to cast a personality and understand the grassroots before they could gradually grow in their roles and responsibilities.

Second, Shambaugh does not touch upon much or even try to defend China's image of expanding power. He discusses Beijing's no-string-attached economic assistance to some of Africa's corrupt regime by virtue of hard infrastructure projects that comes together with the criticism of 'neo-colonialism'. However, he does not look into similar scenarios that occur outside of Africa, for example, Southeast Asia. David Shambaugh's *China Goes Global: The Partial Power* presents significant contributions for scholarly society and is equally important to students, policymakers or any non-specialist readers interested in China's path to be a major power.

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