

Book Reviews

Chinese Just War Ethics: Origin, Development, and Dissent. Edited by Ping-cheung Lo and Sumner B. Twiss. London: Routledge, 2015. 280pp. \$160.00.

Professors Ping-cheung Lo, Director of Hong Kong Baptist University's Center for Applied Ethics, and Sumner Twiss, Distinguished Professor of Human Rights at Florida State University, have put together an edited volume that is broad in scope and rich in insight. This collection of eleven essays on Chinese just war ethics fills a large gap in the literature of comparative military ethics through an in-depth presentation and analysis of five separate schools within Chinese just war ethics. Covering over two thousand years of military thinking, this well-balanced collection of essays presents the Legalist, Confucian, Daoist, Mohist, and Military Strategy School approaches to just war thinking.

The volume's three stated aims are extremely ambitious: First, the authors attempt to situate just war thinking patterns within larger political and social environments showing how these arguments fit into strategic culture within Chinese history. Next, they seek to draw comparisons and build bridges between Chinese just war thinking and Western just war thinking. Finally, they attempt to show how historic thinking about just war—including the role of weapons, the warrior, the leader, and the grounds and conditions under which war may be declared and fought—has been translated into or affected contemporary Chinese strategic thinking today.

It is perhaps understandable that with such an ambitious agenda some of these stated aims are better fulfilled than others. The volume does an excellent job of leading the reader through specific just war arguments and then identifying where they share common ground with, or depart significantly from, Western arguments with which the writer might be familiar. For example, Lo's introductory essay highlights the ways in which the Confucian emphasis on virtue leads to an emphasis on the just soldier or the just army, rather than on identifying the precipitating environmental conditions under which a war could be considered just. Here, he also presents the Confucian emphasis on treating one's enemies justly as an early understanding of the importance of "soft power." In this same

Journal of Church and State vol. 58 no. 1, pages 148–185

© The Author 2015, 2016. Published by Oxford University Press on behalf of the J. M. Dawson Institute of Church-State Studies. All rights reserved. For permissions, please e-mail: journals.permissions@oup.com

essay, he considers the Daoist framework of “mournful skepticism,” showing that while it represents a pacifist take on just war ethics, it differs from other Western forms of pacifism in acknowledging that one could, in theory, “fight mournfully, without restraint and without hatred” (p. 13), rather than simply eschewing warfare altogether. In one of the most insightful essays, Sumner Twiss and Jonathan Chan’s “Classical Confucianism, Punitive Expeditions and Humanitarian Interventions,” the authors compare Confucian thinking about the grounds under which one should intervene in the affairs of one’s neighbors to contemporary ethical arguments regarding the right to protect and grounds for humanitarian intervention.

The volume does not, however, offer a convincing or systematic consideration of how these ethics have been incorporated into contemporary Chinese domestic or foreign military policy. In his essay, “The *Art of War* Corpus and Chinese Just War Ethics Past and Present,” Lo examines Chinese military textbooks to demonstrate that Chinese military planners are consciously seeking a non-Western framework for presenting military ethics arguments to soldiers and students. However, he does not address how these arguments might be translated into actual practices, nor does he engage with the argument that Twiss and Chan make in the same volume (in “The Classical Confucian Position on the Legitimate Use of Military Force”), that planners and leaders might sometimes use just war arguments as a “cover” for something a leader wishes to do anyway, such as engaging in territorial expansion or aggression. It is also striking that nowhere in the volume is there any acknowledgement of the ways in which Chinese thinking about military ethics (including that of Sun Tzu) has undergirded Chinese strategic thinking in the area of cyberwar in particular, though other analysts have dealt at length with this issue.

Nonetheless, this volume goes far beyond our usual takes on Chinese just war ethics, which have overwhelmingly focused on Sun Tzu in particular, and drawn common ground with Clausewitz. This volume provides a definitive introduction to Chinese just war ethics as well as providing a rich foundation for further study in this topic, as it raises many excellent queries for follow-up study.

Mary Manjikian
Regent University
Virginia Beach, Virginia

doi:10.1093/jcs/csv106

Advance Access publication December 29, 2015