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Preface

China's integration into the international community of states has played a crucial role in its recent history. However, the story of China's transition from empire to nation has to date never been documented in book form. For this reason, the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of Vienna together with the Historical Society for 20th Century China and the Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Austria invited more than 100 scholars from all over the world to a conference on China's changing position in the international community called "As China Meets the World" in May 2004. The aim of this conference was to explore a wide range of aspects related to China's integration into and contact with the world so as to gain a deeper understanding of how external factors helped shaping China's internal development during the 20th century. The outcome of this exploration is that there is no internal development in China that could be understood without taking external factors into consideration. The long cherished "challenge and response" paradigm, however, is not sophisticated enough to explain the myriad of possibilities which emerge from looking at fields such as the history of ideas, of media, of science and technology just as thoroughly as a diplomatic, political and economic history. The "challenge and response" paradigm lacks the perspective of dialogue between China and the outside world, it does not motivate scholars to ask how China's inner development has contributed to reshaping the world and how active Chinese scholars and politicians have been in using the outside world in changing China from within. Today, the outside world is not only a challenge to China's internal transformation, China is a challenge to the world.

Instead of selecting papers from all the 13 different panels that took place during the conference the editors decided to focus on one aspect which has recently gained in importance but has long been neglected by China scholars. We found the papers related to China's relationship with and entry into international organizations and into the regime of international law most interesting and therefore asked those scholars who had written original papers for the conference on this question for their contributions. Although we cannot, of course, claim to have covered the whole field, we have succeeded in bringing together a number of articles that open a fresh and new perspective on this aspect of "China meeting the world".

With the conference having taken place in Vienna, our volume starts out with an analysis on the recent development of Sino-Europeans relations as reflected in recent documents both sides published in order to make their expectations known to the respective other side as well as to the public. The outcome of this analysis lays the foundation for the next two articles of the volume as it shows that the PRC government is departing from its earlier stand claiming that the Taiwan and Tibet questions were of mere internal importance allowing for no international involvement whatsoever. Both A. Tom Grunfeld and Judith Hufnagel present an analysis of these two issues which focus on the international perspective with A. Tom Grunfeld looking at the internationalization of the Tibet question resulting from world wide attention to the problem and Judith Hufnagel analyzing the relationship between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait from an international law perspective.

China's transition from empire to nation in its early phase is highlighted by two contributions to this volume. Cixi's funeral, the first ever in Chinese history to allow for representatives from other countries to participate, is described by Margareta Grieszler as a most significant signal of the Qing court's changing self perception and a starting point for a re-arrangement of rituals that is still in flux as of today. Xu Xiaoqun relates to the same process by discussing the late Qing's attempts at reforming the dynastic system in order to prevent it from collapsing. His article shows as much as any other in this volume how China's integration into the world shaped the logic of its internal transformation with internal possibilities of adaptation presiding over the selection of external elements.

China joining the world also implies China cooperating with and becoming a member of international organizations. The League of Nations has lately gained some attention, and it is in this context that Donald Jordan gives us an interesting report on the League of Nation's involvement in China's first major modernization effort of the Nanjing Decade. John K. T. Chao presents to us a meticulous account of how China first joined the United Nations as the Republic of China and member of the Anti-Axis forces and how the Republic of China later lost its seat in the General Assembly as well as the Security Council of the UN as a result of the People's Republic of China making many years of diplomatic efforts.

Finally, two articles look at different aspects of the rule of law in relation to China. Wang Dong writes on China's early attempts to cope with the regime of international law at a time when the Great Powers still looked at China as an unqualified member of the international community. Agnes Schick-Chen leads us back to the present by giving an introduction to how the discussion on the development of legal culture in China can be understood through the discourse on the rule of law versus the rule by law. In both cases, the rule of law stands out as an import from the West very difficult to integrate into Chinese culture and society.

In both cases, the imposition of Western norms turns out to be impossible. Instead, what was once regarded as an imposition has by now turned into an instrument that is used to help China gain a top position among the nations of the world.

While most contributors to this volume participated in the Vienna conference, we would like to thank others, especially Professor John K. T. Chao and Judith Hufnagel, for supplying us with a special contribution to make the collection of articles more encompassing. Dr. Wolfgang Zeidl and Dr. Sascha Klotzbücher were kind enough to translate and edit Professor Chao's article for which we would certainly like to express our thanks. We hope that our selection of articles will not only encourage more colleagues from the China field to consider focusing on diplomatic history and the history of China's foreign relations as a possible field of research. We would also appreciate if the wider public got more interested into understanding how China has during the course of the 20th century emerged as one of the world powers of tomorrow.

