

## Book review

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### *The Changing Face of Management in China*

Edited by C. Rowley and F.L. Cooke

Routledge: London and New York, N.Y., 2010  
hardback, £95.00/US\$170.00, paperback, £29.99/US\$49.99, 256 pp.

The 'ying' and 'yang' of the Chinese economy equally continue to fascinate Western observers. The former term may be taken to exemplify the down-side of these twin phenomena, such as the over-valued *yuan*, deficient labour standards, poor product safety and so on. The latter may in turn emphasize the up-side, namely the remarkably high economic growth rates, accumulated trade surpluses, sustained export record and the rest!

In light of the above, how are China's business enterprises run? What part does Chinese management play? What are the specific roles of its managers in different kinds of firms? Professors *Chris Rowley* (of the Cass Business School, City University, London) and *Fang Lee Cooke* (formerly of the Manchester Business School, now at RMIT University in Melbourne) in their *The Changing Face of Management in China*, have edited a useful collection of contributions on Chinese management that looks at both sides of the coin, plus or minus. The book is, however, clearly highly informative, very timely and for the most part, up-to-date, with most statistical illustrations going up to the time of writing.

As part of the successful *Routledge 'Working in Asia'* series, this edited book includes many relevant 'case studies', each reflecting 'the voices of local managers' in Chinese firms. As shaded box-insets in the text in each chapter, these are first-class and based on empirical material collected by the authors. They are probably the parts most likely to appeal to practitioners and MBA students. The work covers a relatively wide range of the Chinese economy, its enterprises and its managers, notwithstanding the Hong Kong SAR (here, Drs *Sek Hong Ng* and *Olivia Ip* survey its firms very well in chapter 9). Accounting, HRM, Marketing, M&As, SOEs and SMEs and other issues are all amply included in their respective chapters, ten in all, which are all writ-

ten by specialists in their fields. There is perhaps rather more on practice than on theory but that is in the nature of the remit. Again, there are too few comparisons with other Asian management systems. That being said, the contributions are surely both interesting and instructive!

The Editors do in fact recognize the limitations of this collection of essays and conclude that: '*Future studies can look into how Chinese businesses have been affected by the global economic downturn and the subsequent action plans launched by many national governments, including China's. They can also examine how these actions may have induced new changes in business management in China in order for firms to survive and thrive. Just as Chinese firms have benefited from learning from Western MNCs in the last thirty years of economic reform of the country, so too may the Chinese experience provides important lessons for other economies.*' [p. 242].

To sum up, the book has both excellent description and analysis, as well as extensive enterprise-level illustrations, good bibliographic coverage and a competent index – which will all assist interested students, lecturers and practitioners vis-a-vis the most recent research and sources of information in the field, although one must concede that the statistics might have been updated to closer to the present. Again, the hardback edition is admittedly rather pricey and a library-purchase but the paperback edition is probably more affordable. All said, the book can be recommended to anyone seeking in-depth knowledge on Chinese management.

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