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Gordon H. Chang addresses a contemporary fascination with China in his work, *Fateful Ties: A History of America's Preoccupation with China*, through the prism of "Manifest Destiny" in American history. To Chang, the relationship between these two major powers is by no means recent or a coincidence. For almost two centuries, the two have been bound by commerce, religion, and sentiments. From the very founding of the Republic, prominent Americans have looked to China as part of the manifestation of the United States as a great nation. China, it may be said, has often regarded the United States as a unique power, more willing than others to provide protection and assistance. These are, however, points of view as much as points of policy. For the United States, China was as much an idea as a reality, and the hopes for good relations were as much a reflection of Americans' views of themselves as they were views of China. To the Chinese, America was enigmatic, sometimes seemingly friendly, sometimes frightening. Whatever the point of view, there is much to be said for this work as an illustration that today's U.S.–China relations are not a product only of China's rise as an economic superpower but are rooted in two centuries of association.

To explain the growth of U.S.–China relations, Gordon Chang discusses a history of conceptions and speculations on the part of American thinkers, academics, and entrepreneurs from the birth of the United States forward. The first chapter is a discussion of the early contact between colonists and China, with particular emphasis on the voyage of the "Empress of China" and the old China trade for luxuries and tea. This period illustrated how, while the actual volume of trade with Asia was moderate compared to that between New England and the old country, prominent merchants, such as Robert Morris, wealthiest man in America in that period, nonetheless, saw tremendous potential and profits. In "Physical and Spiritual Connections," Chang reviews a second period of U.S.–China relations. As a result of the two Opium Wars¹ and the massive Taiping Rebellion,² American views of China shifted in the direction of profits and souls. Perhaps more than other nations, the United States viewed China as a place to assert a cultural influence. America, for Robert Morrison, Peter Parker, and Henrietta Hall Shuck, had a God-given mission to "civilize" the Chinese and bring them the benefits of nineteenth-century American progress. The political relationship between the United States and China took longer to unfold. In the chapter entitled "Grand Politics and High Culture," Chang relates the evolution of diplomatic interactions from the end of the first Opium War to the early 1920s. American diplomats, such as Paul Reinsch, suggested that despite the early spurts and obstacles, China and the United States were permanently linked in economic, political, and social progress. The twentieth century, covered in the chapter "Revolutions and War," reveals the underside of this "special relationship." This period includes the era of Mao Zedong, a former editor of the Yale in China review, and Chiang Kaishek, whose wife, Soong Mayling, made an enormously positive impression when visiting Congress as defender of China's cause against Japan in World War II. Participation in the war and the civil war that followed,³ shaped American perceptions of China, as established in the chapter "Allies and Enemies." While China gained sympathy and support in the broader American public through popular fiction and film, the thought of communism spreading through Asia took precedence in the aftermath of the creation of the People's Republic. Mao's China lacked recognition by the United States until the 1970s, but American

¹ ... Just as Britain did, the United States provided opium to the Chinese market...

² This conflict occurred in the wake of the Opium Wars and involved a rebellion to overthrow the Qing Dynasty.

³ Following the end of World War II, the Communist and Nationalist forces fought for control of China.

writers and intellectuals, even the African American writer, W. E. B. DuBois, regarded China's struggle as a struggle of formerly downtrodden people worldwide. In "Old/New Visions," the pattern of U.S.–China relations emerges as a result of the two centuries of development. The two great powers are now interdependent in ways seen before only dimly. The economic success of China has been reinforced with the support of presidential administrations since that of Nixon, during which two came to share closer ties.

Chang's analysis is based on an assumption of the role of individuals and visionaries in the shaping of a foreign policy and relations between nations. His is a cultural as well as a diplomatic look at the evolution of the U.S. and China's ties. Artists, thinkers, and writers in his view had as much influence on the impression of China in the United States as did businessmen, tycoons, and politicians. For this analysis, Chang makes great use of much previous scholarship but adds to the mix personal memoirs, novels, films, and editorials. Especially interesting, given his background as a member of a Chinese immigrant family, is the use of San Francisco and the statue of Christopher Columbus atop Telegraph Hill, a reminder of the journey to China. Chang's personal journey has no doubt influenced his subject and his writing, for his childhood included visits by a number of major Chinese intellectuals, such as Hu Shi, and Chang, himself, traveled to China during and after the Cultural Revolution.

The notion of "destiny" is central to Chang's thesis, and it is a difficult term to fully elucidate. Chang argues that it is a shifting definition, beginning with an almost quasi-religious duty to the fate of two countries bound by history. Focus on the element of "fate" gives the reader an impression that the United States' connection to China was paramount in American foreign policy. While there is no question of American interest in China, whether for profit or conversion, there were always more pressing matters to Americans. For the bulk of its history, the connection to the former mother country, and the great volume of trade and immigration coming from both Eastern and Western Europe placed Europe at the forefront of American policy makers concerns. In addition, the book might have included a more detailed assessment of the other side of the relationship. Certainly, how China regarded the United States is also critical to understanding the evolution of their contacts and concerns. For China, from the outset, the United States was little known and little distinguished from all Western nations. Only with coming of the First World War and the period of Japanese aggression against China did the United States appear as a possible savior.

That aside, Chang has undertaken a worthwhile project. Others have written on the U.S.–China relationship, most notably Michael Hunt in *The Making of a Special Relationship*, but not only does Chang provide a careful survey of previous approaches to this relationship, he steps beyond the narrowness of diplomatic and political connections to relate an overarching view of China and the United States based on their ever-evolving regard. Today, the relationship has reached something of a "pivot" in the direction of Asia, a shift that has been a long time coming. Perhaps for the Chinese, the United States was a little-known power until the middle of the twentieth century: nonetheless, the enormous economic rise of China and its ever-growing presence in international organizations indicates that the relationship between the two powers did not work itself out overnight but had a foundation established as far back, perhaps, as Columbus' discovery of the New World.

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