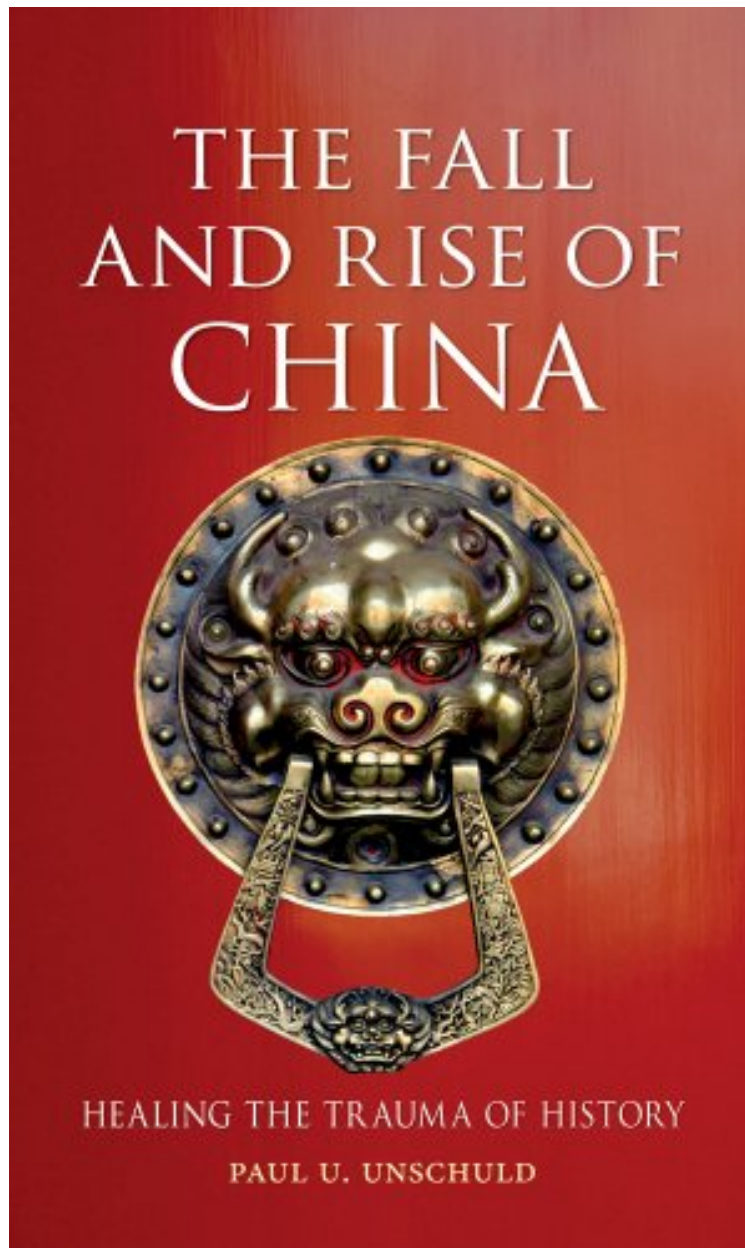


[FREE] The Fall and Rise of China: Healing the Trauma of History

The Fall and Rise of China: Healing the Trauma of History

Von Paul U. Unschuld

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Von Paul U. Unschuld : The Fall and Rise of China: Healing the Trauma of History before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Fall and Rise of China: Healing the Trauma of History:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen6 von 6 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Paul D. BuellVon Paul D. BuellPaul Unschuld's new book sets out to answer the question as to why China acts the way it does today and this he seeks to do by looking at past history, in particular China's traumas suffered during the age of imperialism, and at basic cultural values. He shows that while China's traumas, such things as the humiliation of the Opium Wars, particularly China's dreadful experience with Japan, are still important for the Chinese and drivers of Chinese nationalism, the ways in which the Chinese have responded to past national humiliations is different that what one might expect, the way Americans would react, for example. That is, instead of blaming others, the Chinese have in essence blamed themselves for not better taking control of their own fates. Thus China's recent resurgence is itself a part of the experience of national humiliation but instead of being depressed the Chinese have sought to rebuild, restructure and, most important, find out a way to be better and come out on top, to be the best. As a result, China's current prosperity and upswing in technology (teleportation, genetics, etc.) and other areas is the upside of past bad experiences and the current China might be different but for what has happened in the recent past. To support his discussion, Unschuld not only provides a capsule history, but looks at such things as Chinese medicine and literature as expressing deeply-held Chinese values. He also uses material not normally seen in books of this type, the experiences of Germans in China, for example, something which English-speaking readers might not be familiar with. In conclusion, the book is highly useful and provides much new insight. It will not replace but clearly supplement the existing general histories and needs to be read alongside of them.2 von 2 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Exciting like a ThrillerVon Dr. Kai LamottkeIn 1991 I visited China for the first time. Ten years later I joined a team of entrepreneurs to found the first Sino-European biotechnology company. Another twelve years later I was looking for a book, which describes, in a straightforward argumentation and clear language, the background of historically grown patterns of Chinese behavior, and I saw on .com Paul Unschuld's new book on "The Fall and Rise of China. Healing the Trauma of History". Having read with pleasure a book by the same author on Traditional Chinese Medicine some time ago, I bought his new book even though I was puzzled, for a moment by A. Matteuci's review on .com. Especially so because "The Fall and Rise" was recommended to me by a colleague as "exciting like a thriller". Now, that I have read it, I am even more puzzled by A. Matteuci's review. This book is a most welcome key to an understanding of motivational factors behind much of the behavior of individuals and society in general witnessed in China. I would have wished that this book had been available at the start of my business activities in China it would have fed me with a lot of background information, which I was forced to accumulate myself often quite painfully. I never understood the underlying historical stimuli in detail. Paul Unschuld's book was the eye opener that I would have loved to benefit from much earlier. To me it shows once again that to understand modern China you have to know (for sure) its past history. Such an expertise, focused on the collective reaction to personal existential crisis, i.e., illness, is the foundation of Unschuld's new book. It is neither confusing, nor confused. On the contrary, in "The Fall and Rise of China" he transfers his insights from the history of Chinese life science to the political history of modern China. Apparently, humiliated by Western imperialist powers and, worst of all, by Japan in the 19th and 20th century, China has chosen reason over emotion to free itself from an extremely dangerous situation. When its traditional science, medicine, technology, logic were proved to be a questionable legacy in a direct confrontation with Western science, medicine, technology, logic, China acted on the basis of a collective mentality that applied an approach to national crisis identical with the treatment of disease in Chinese medicine: A patient must seek the causes of his illness first of all within himself. In "The Fall and Rise of China" Unschuld describes how China has undergone a relentless self-diagnosis for the past 100 years. In a very painful process its leaders have urged their fellow countrymen to identify China's weaknesses not only in military technology but in virtually all realms of its culture. China has not resorted to collective hatred and terrorism in its response to Western superiority. Rather it has chosen a path to learn from the West what it needs to know to come up possibly on top of the West in future. For this the best and useful of Western civilization needs to be amalgamated with the best and useful of historical Chinese culture. Paul Unschuld's well-structured discourse shows in its first half the "nine traumata" inflicted upon China, and it offers in its second half an indeed plausible analysis of the way out of crisis China has moved along for the past century. This is the first book I have read, concise as it is, that permits insights into the wounded Chinese psyche, and it convincingly explains Chinese internal and external politics that have been pursued as a result. For any political decision makers or person in a leading role in business, with or without connection to China, it should be required reading in the future. Most importantly, it also asks the West to begin with a similarly relentless self-diagnosis, rather than blame China's regained strength as causing Western economic problems. I can highly recommend this book.0 von 7 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Confusing or confusedVon Sceptique500This book's US distributor, the respected University of Chicago Press, advertised the work in the online version of the hallowed Foreign Affairs. To readers busy studying international relations, and China in particular, here is my advice: do not waste time on a book combining cookie-cutter views of societies and political theories with a quirky and at best narrow understanding of Chinese civilization. There is the icing on this undigested and indigestible cake: the translation is pedestrian to a German fault. One wonders what "cogs with various mast sizes" (Pg. 37) are. Those addicted to EU jargon will find relief with the term "preventative" (Pg. 35) - according to my dictionary, one finds this term only in EU documents.

"Case", rather than the canonical "chest" is used to measure "importations" of opium (Pg. 39). The book's central thesis is "quirky:" it's a long time since deep culture was used to explain 200 years of contingent history. It is "narrow" because it ties everything to medical beliefs. Just for amusement, at the end I have developed an alternative, equally plausible explanation. My conjecture is in fact better: with it I can explain the Great Leap Forward, and the Cultural Revolution. Why was the book written? The last sentence gives it away: "As Wen reminded the Europeans `the key to overcoming the debt crisis must be Europe's own effort.'" This book is not about China at all. This book harks back to the end of the XVIIth century, when political scientists held up China to the European despots as the perfect example. Here is the blurb: "In this absorbing account of how China refashioned itself, Paul U. Unschuld traces the course of the country's development in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Faced with evidence of the superiority of Western science and technology, Unschuld shows, China delivered an unsparing self-diagnosis, identifying those aspects of Western civilization it had to adopt in order to remove the cultural impediments to its own renaissance. He reveals that China did not just express its many aversions to the West as collective hatred for its aggressors; rather, the country chose the path of reason and fundamental renewal, prescribing for itself a therapy that followed the same principles as Chinese medicine: the cause of an illness lies first and foremost within oneself. In curing its wounds by first admitting its own deficiencies and mistakes, China has been able to develop itself as a modern country and a leading competitor in science, technology, and education." This is an allegory of the complex political process of renewal of China. The author reifies China: China is "humiliated" and "traumatized"; China stands up to the challenge, however, "refashioning", "delivering an unsparing self-diagnosis," "prescribing itself a therapy." The author even speaks of China being an "organism." (Pg. 158) Hereupon, the author construes an analogy with traditional Chinese medicine. China self-medicates itself to health. Presumably, and following Ge Hong's teachings, China will now brew an elixir and extend its life indefinitely. Allegories make for compelling wall paintings in the Hall of the People; are they good analytical tools? According to the author, in Chinese traditional society: "people lived believing that they were completely controlled by the deeds and misdeeds of their ancestors. Nine generations of the deceased were always being called to account for the crimes committed during their lives on earth. Each charge and the punishment likely to follow affected the well-being of the living. The living did not stand a chance." (Pg. 102). I'm an ignoramus in matters Chinese, but in the 50 years that I have read both Chinese literature and history, I never came across such a notion. I would have preferred, therefore, something more than bald assertion. Parenthetically: the author contrasts this, in the same chapter, with Europe's "fundamentally positive, optimistic, and trusting attitude towards life." (Pg. 104). One wonders what happened to original sin, Paulus, Augustine, Luther, and Calvin. China underwent a Copernican revolution of sorts: "the new medicine that emerged in the centuries preceding and during the first millennium CE focused on demonstrating to people the possibilities of leading their lives autonomously." (Pg. 112) The author then continues: "we must keep this facet of Chinese culture - the individual responsibility for happiness and sorrow, health and illness - in the back of our minds together with the still predominant principle of mistrust." (Pg. 113) This mistrust remains unchanged: "A pervasive mistrust of all people not bound by family, a teacher-pupil relationship, together with a traditional winner-take-all attitude toward losers, are all obstacles that cannot be removed from one day to the next or even in the foreseeable future." (Pg. 179). Two souls in one body: China is both autonomous and mistrusting. This vaguely recalls Ayn Rand to me, but I'm just an European "leftist" (Pg. 119) "apportioning the blame for the peoples' sufferings to those who are better off" (Pg. 147) rather than taking my fate in my own hands. (Pg. 182) The author praises China for not "venting its many individual aversions to the West as collective hatred of the aggressors" (Pg. 8) but rather avoiding "terrorist attacks and counterstrikes" in the clash of cultures. For details see (Pg. 100) One hears here strong echoes of Huntington and Bernard Lewis. I only have one problem with the heroic view of China: India was colonized, hence humiliated even more than China, in many ways. India emerged from decolonization with a blend of indigenous and imported cultures, and this after using non-violence as its best tool. China's experience is far from unique. "Cultural" explanations can be used to explain just about anything and the opposite. Here a contrary example, which is just as plausible, but points in the opposite direction than the thesis of the book. When the pure, orthodox and incorruptible Judge Bao, who lived under Emperor Renzong (Song dynasty), is named to the prefecture of Kaifeng, he needs to find eight "guarantors," whom he chooses among the top imperial administrators (e.g. Chancellor Black Wang) (see Judge Bao and the Rule of Law: Eight Ballad-Stories from the Period 1250-1450) (pg. xxxi). Guarantors are personally liable for the behavior of their charge. If he is demoted, they pay the price as well. Guarantors have a collective responsibility, and they secure harmony by overseeing the actions of their charge: "Above and below, the Suwen repeats, the same rules apply everywhere." (pg. 113) Collective responsibility and harmony are synonymous. We find this "collective responsibility" model in villages, where ten households are similarly bonded together and made responsible for the behavior of any of its members. An equivalent principle underpinned the army's structure. This model probably was at least as pervasive as the one of personal responsibility the author describes (and favors). One might argue that traditional Chinese medicine is imbued in this principle of "harmony" as "collective responsibility" - the author points to it when he points out that health of the whole is obtained through "inner balance" of the parts of the body. Surgery never developed in traditional China because "taking out" diseased parts would destroy the very basis for restoring inner harmony. "Collective

responsibility" still informs Chinese society: the CCP is not "above the law" - as many pundits with little knowledge of the deeper sources of the Chinese worldview make it out to be - the CCP as a whole is a unit of "collective responsibility" providing harmony. Collective "struggle" against the culprit and eventual expulsion from the CCP is a pre-condition for normal justice to begin operating precisely because harmony has to be restored first. Only confession reestablishes harmony - hence forcing the culprit to do so, publicly and repeatedly. We in the West may be horrified at the idea of "collective responsibility" and consider it the epitome of injustice, but it has its logic in a "relational worldview". The "struggle sessions" in every village and town during the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution may be explained by using this "collective responsibility" lens. The "confessions" which were extorted may reflect this unconscious need to restore "harmony." I'm not arguing that this conjecture is right, I would not be such a fool, but it is just as plausible as the one favored by the author. Obviously, "collective responsibility and the author's "the individual responsibility for happiness and sorrow, health and illness" would have difficulty coexisting. Two more specific comments at the end. One wonders to what extent Daoist medicine of long life was more than an "elite thing". The authors quoted would not convince me that popular Chinese culture was imbued by them. Secondly, the author seems to ignore the strong social and medical policies of the Song (see: *The Age of Confucian Rule: The Song Transformation of China* (History of Imperial China)), which placed China at that time well ahead of Europe.

Kurzbeschreibung Over the last 150 years China was repeatedly humiliated, by Western imperial powers and by its smaller neighbour, Japan. For a time the Middle Kingdom seemed on the verge of becoming a pawn of foreign interests. Then, in a process unmatched in history, this great culture recovered vigorously from its seemingly hopeless plight so much so that today the state, its leaders and its burgeoning economic and military might are globally acknowledged and not infrequently feared. *The Fall and Rise of China: Healing the Trauma of History* traces the country's development in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries up to the present day and offers an explanation of the collective mentality that enabled China, confronted by the superiority of Western science and technology, to commit to the unsparing self-diagnosis that enabled its impressive rise and radical transformation. The country identified the aspects of Western civilization it must adopt in order to remove the obstacles to its own rebirth, taking a path of reason and renewal. Profoundly wounded, China prescribed for itself a therapy that followed the same principle used in Chinese medicine: the cause lies first and foremost within oneself. Prevention and treatment must therefore always begin with one's own deficiencies and mistakes. In this powerful polemic Paul U. Unschuld presents an entirely new understanding and analysis of China's past and offers fascinating insights into its possible future.

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ber den Autor und weitere Mitwirkende Paul U. Unschuld is professor at and director of the Horst-Goertz Endowment Institute for the Theory, History, and Ethics of Chinese Life Sciences at Charité-Medical University Berlin. He is the author of *Medicine in China: A History of Ideas*.