This edited volume is the result of an international conference discussing various aspects of China’s role in global history over the *longue durée*. The editors intend „to trigger an acknowledgement of the new perspectives about the role of China“ in international exchanges (p. 19). Apart from the introductory chapters exploring methodological issues and providing some ideas about China’s and global history in some selected countries and institutions, the volume investigates the following themes, from the ancient period to the twentieth century: organized water transport, cultural interactions, navigators, port cities, smuggling activities, customs service, foreign relations, migration, refugees, international law, and diasporas.

The book is divided into three parts (I Perspectives of the World; II China’s Maritime World: From Ancient to Modern Times; and III Migration and the Travel of Ideas). It contains contributions by HANEDA Masashi on „World/Global History and the Positionality of Historians”, a very brief survey by Valerie HANSEN on „The World in the Year 1000: The View from Beijing”, LEI Chinhau on „The Emergence of Organized Water Transport in Early China: Its Social and Geographical Contexts”, Kin Sum LI on „Cultural Interactions throughout the Ancient South China Sea”, HAN Xiaorong on „The Role of Vietnam in China’s Foreign Relations”, CHEN Kuo-tung on „Advantages of Chinese Navigators during the Fifteenth to Eighteenth Centuries”, Ronald C. PO on „The Pearl by the Bohai Sea: Qinhuangdao in the Early Modern Period”, Philip THAI on „Smuggling and Legal Pluralism on the China Coast: The Rise and Demise of the Joint Investigation Rules, 1864–1934”, Donna BRUNERO on „Beyond Tariffs and Duties: The Chinese Maritime Customs Service and its Representations of China’s Maritime World c. 1912–49 “, Glen PETERSON on „International Law and China’s Entry into the ‘Family of Nations’: The Question of Forced Migration and Refugees“, Catherine S. CHAN, „At the Edge of Two Worlds: Rethinking the Portuguese Diaspora in British Hong Kong“, and finally YUNG Ying-yue on „The Global Migration of a Chinese Family: Kwan Yuen-cheung and His Descendants“. Thus the themes investigated in this volume cover a very wide range of topics over the *longue durée* from antiquity to modern times: organized water transportation in ancient China, cultural interactions across Asia, navigators, port cities, smuggling activities, customs service, foreign relations, migration and indentured labour, and the development of diasporas.

Haneda Masashi, in some personal reflections, discusses, or one should better say, problematizes the development and general orientation of „global“ and „world histories“ in various countries (the overview is restricted to some institutions or scholars China, France, Germany, Japan and the United States), suggesting that global historians should in the future not only cooperate more closely but make more efforts to attempt to quit their national points of views, creating a what he calls (world history of residents of the Earth“ (p. 36). Valerie Hansen introduces archaeological sources to show how connected the world, especially China, actually was already in the year 1000, why she dates the beginning of globalization already to the year 1000. The contribution unfortunately rather resembles notes and the author really should have elaborated her topic a bit more. The chapter by Lei Chinhau shows how the development and widespread construction of inland water transportation, from the building of canals to naval forces, in southern China during the late Zhou Dynasty not only paved the way for the maritime activities of the states of Chu, Wu, and Yue, but enabled, for example, „Wu forces to challenge the hegemonic power in North China“ (p. 87). This is a very interesting approach that can attest to the importance of waterworks and water transportation. It also shows how different the focus of local governments in north and south China was particularly during times of division, like in the Warring States (475-221 BCE), the Three Kingdoms (220-
(ca. 280-589), and how the south could gradually surpass the north. The fourth chapter introduces a wide array of archaeological objects from pre-imperial to Han dynasty China, that were found in the larger South China Sea region. The evidence, so Kin Sum (Sammy) Li, demonstrates the active and frequent interaction across the South China Sea already during this early period. Han Xiaorong provides a very concise overview on China’s foreign relations with Vietnam, from antiquity to modernity. Chen Kuo-tung seeks to show that the Chinese actually possessed their own, quite developed techniques, skills, and arts in sailing prior to the advent of modern shipping introduced by the Europeans. Ronald C. Po draws the reader’s attention to a so-far still largely neglected aspect of China’s maritime history, namely Northeast Asia and the Bohai Sea. He introduces the city of Qinhuangdao as an important crossroads, connecting China with Manchuria and Korea. His review starts in antiquity and ends in the early nineteenth century when the city had developed as an important market filled with Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Manchurian and Russian traders. Philipp Thai, in Chapter 8, then moves further into modern times examining from a legal point of view the history of the so-called “Joint Investigation Rules”, from their forced introduction by Western imperialism to their abolition. Donna Brunero shows what kind of publications the Chinese Maritime Customs Service produced over time and how the maritime world was represented therein. Glen Peterson shows in which ways international law actually functioned to discriminate China and Chinese migrants (he speaks of “marginalization, e.g. p. 228). These laws affected many Chinese migrants and refugees throughout the late nineteenth and the twentieth century. Actually, the examples show that there is no supraordinate objective “law” but that what is law is decided by the most powerful actors. Catherine S. Chan ventures into the question of identity of Portuguese Creoles in the diaspora between Hong Kong and Macao, focusing especially on their “complex” situation in colonial British Hong Kong that was rigidly ruled by British rules. The last contribution takes us into a very personal case study investigating the history of one Chinese family and the migration of family members to various parts of the world. Yung Ying-yue calls it a “global family” and discusses the Chinese-ness of the family members concluding that while nationality “can be changed, and ethnicity can be diluted”, the “identity of one’s family appears to last the longest” (p. 261).

As a whole the various contributions lack coherence in their diversity – but probably this is a problem with most edited conference volumes. A more systematic introduction and perhaps conclusion could have better clarified the purpose of the editors. I would actually doubt that China’s role in global history is not properly acknowledged in modern academe; many projects world-wide (and actually many more than the authors refer to) investiagte China’s increasing integration into supra-regional and global networks, both historically and modern. But certainly, the editors’ claim that much more cooperation will be necessary, is true.

The volume contains some very interesting discussions and useful overviews and it will definitely be of interest to historians of China (and Asia) with a global approach. Although some contributions touch upon contemporary issues, the strength lies on historical topics and as such it can also be recommended to global and maritime historians in general.