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Global Shanghai’s Futuristic Side

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I’m writing this in 2008, but when you read it, the calendar will tell you it is 2009. That wouldn’t ordinarily be particularly noteworthy, since many blogs, including this one, alternate between running things just as they are written and scheduling them to appear a few days hence. It just seemed relevant to mention because two pieces I’ve recently had go up online that are linked to and provide teasers for *Global Shanghai, 1850-2010* deal with time and forward-looking issues. One is the concluding segment of a Danwei.org two-parter on Shanghai and visions of the future. This installment focuses on sci-fi writings with ties to that city, with passing nods to a couple of films, a fantasy poster that imagines Shanghai hosting a World’s Fair in the 25th century, and the actual World’s Fair set to take place there in 2010. It has something to offer fans of *Neal Stephenson* and other cyberpunk authors. But it also, perhaps less expectedly for at least some but not all readers of this blog, spends some time talking about a story written by the late Qing and Republican era intellectual heavyweight Liang Qichao, which has been analyzed insightfully by John Fitzgerald in a fascinating *Thesis 11* article.

My other recent online *Global Shanghai*-related publication with a futuristic dimension was one I did for the wonderfully varied *History News Network* site. Befitting an essay aimed more at historians and those interested in the past than China-focused readers per se, it explores the question of why someone belonging to the presumably backward-looking academic guild of which I am a member would include a date set in the future, 2010, in the title of a book.

There’s a bit of other *Global Shanghai* news to report since my last SPS post, including two reviews I am very pleased with that can be accessed here and here. I’ve also got two other book teasers of a sort up on the web, each on sites I like a great deal. One appeared on the *Campaign for the American Reader* website, as part of their “Page 99 Test” feature. Their invitation to focus on that page gave me the challenge of reflecting anew about the chapter in the book dealing with the year 1975, which was in many ways the most difficult one for me to write. The other was written for *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*. I won’t say anything more about that here, however, as China Beat will be running a post tomorrow (the tomorrow of this piece’s publication, not the tomorrow of my writing these words) devoted exclusively to emphasizing how much interesting China-related material that venue, which originally concentrated more tightly on Japan, has been carrying.

Tags: Shanghai Expo 2010