
***Communication and Cooperation in Early Imperial China: Publicizing the Qin Dynasty.* By Charles SANFT. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014. Pp. ix + 251.**

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Charles Sanft's book presents a fresh perspective in its examination of the history of the Qin 秦 dynasty. His emphasis on communication and cooperation as two means of governance introduces a new approach in exploring the achievements of the Qin empire. For an extensive empire like that of the Qin, coercion policies alone could not have enabled the establishment of an efficient government. Sanft argues that, while past consensus has held that the Qin empire was founded on a basis of coercion, the viability of this approach is questionable. He instead examines the opportunities and benefits that communication and cooperation policies must have brought to the governance of the Qin empire and focuses his analyses accordingly. Sanft's choice presents us with a starkly different and original image of the Qin.

After a general introduction, Chapter 2 provides a summary of the interdisciplinary study of communication and cooperation. Sanft attempts to define the theoretical framework for his later analysis of communication, cooperation, and their attendant benefits. Chapter 3 is a summary of the discussion of non-coercive governance in early Chinese thought. Chapter 4 is devoted to the discussion of mass communication and standardization. Sanft focuses on the history of the Qin government's unification of the measurement system and the standardization of weights and measures. He deems the edicts issued by Qin Shihuang 秦始皇 and Qin Ershi 秦二世 to be important texts designed for wide dissemination with the express purpose of announcing to Qin subjects the existence of both the government and empire. Sanft devotes the last three chapters, Chapters 5, 6, and 7, to an exploration of the close relationship between common knowledge, public image construction, mass communication, rituals, construction works, laws, and administration. These chapters delineate Qin Shihuang's five tours around the realm, new transportation projects, and administrative and legal systems, and the rationale

behind them. The Qin government, as Sanft argues, intelligently manipulated these means to create common knowledge and communicate with the populace to remind them of the presence of the empire.

Given such a new approach to dealing with the Qin history, there are many aspects raised in the book that provide opportunities for further rumination. The first issue concerns the historicity of textual records. Sanft at various points emphasizes that what the Qin government did was not very original. The Qin government's policies were creative, but they were founded in already existing precedents. This description is accurate, but one could further elaborate on why scholars have been left with the impression that the Qin government was so innovative, as the result of textual historians' construction of the image of the Qin empire.

Sanft's emphasis on the Qin government's active image building and communication project is valid. We should not, however, ignore the ways in which the textual historians constructed an image of the Qin and disseminated this information to their readers. The political agendas of the historians such as Sima Qian 司馬遷 (145–86 B.C.) and other Han dynasty historians that Sanft cites should be examined closely. How historians' accounts complement or distort the Qin government's communication project is another aspect of the discussion. We need to carefully attend to the many layers of information and many different parties that were involved in the creation of the common knowledge of the Qin dynasty. The excavated texts, inscriptions on metal containers and weights, stele inscriptions, and transmitted texts all bear various authorial agendas and convey different aspects of this common knowledge.

The second issue is whether we can determine how broadly information was disseminated at all. Sanft argues that the Qin government's edicts, decrees, and public texts reached a wide audience and as a result, the government succeeded in creating the public image it desired. His evidence includes the wide circulation of the weights and containers bearing the edicts of the unification of the measurement system. But, as Sanft also notes on pp. 72–73, the People's Republic of China and the United States today both allow the existence of two different measurement systems in their respective countries. Thus how do we know with certainty that the Qin government's orthodox system was, in fact, widely adopted by the populace and thus proof that the government successfully communicated with the populace? How do we know that there was only one system operational in Qin territory, as issued by the Qin government, and not two or more? To what degree did the measurement systems of the six opponent states truly become extinct? Could there have been even more than seven measurement systems surviving into the Qin, if all