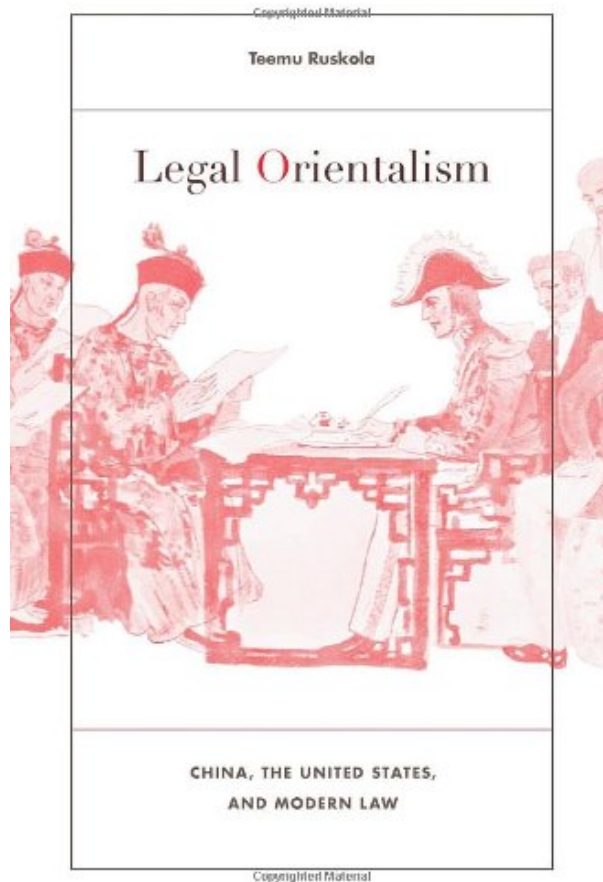


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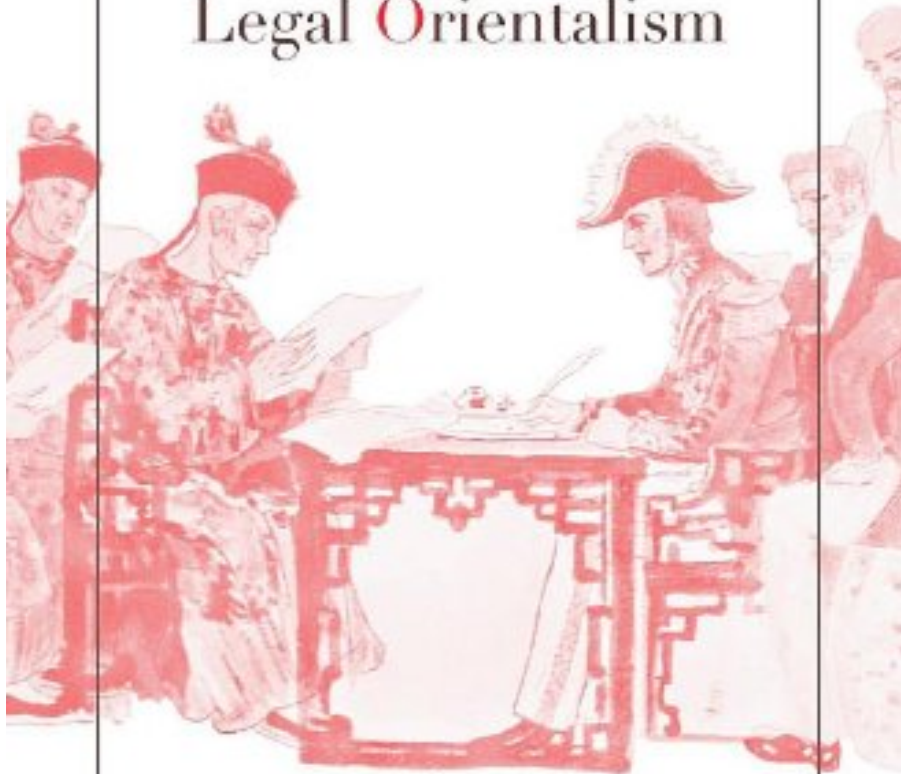
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Review

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Teemu Ruskola has written a provocative book on legal orientalism, a subject that he conceptualizes and explores with originality and sophistication. His book makes an important contribution to multiple fields. On the one hand, it is a historical analysis that illuminates important aspects of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century world history. On the other, this book is urgently contemporary, speaking to interest in legal studies and the social sciences about the place of law and legal reform in present-day China. (Mae Ngai, Lung Family Professor of Asian American Studies and Professor of History, Columbia University)

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Rich and ambitious... The scale of *Legal Orientalism* is unprecedented. (Carol Tan, *Harvard Law Review*)

... will stand out as one of the most significant contributions to the comparative study of laws in China and the U.S. It is recommended reading for anyone who is interested in the role and extent of the impact of Western legal notions and practices in China. (Qian Fang, *American Historical Review*)

Ruskola engages both legal discourse in China and the United States and a wealth of primary and secondary sources on Sino-Western relations since the eighteenth century... [This] provocative book challenges not simply the conventional narratives of sinology, but the global legal order produced by Euro-American imperial expansion in the nineteenth century. (James Hevia, *Journal of Asian Studies*)

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Since the Cold War ended, China has become a global symbol of disregard for human rights, while the United States has positioned itself as the world's chief exporter of the rule of law. How did lawlessness become an axiom about Chineseness rather than a fact needing to be verified empirically, and how did the United States assume the mantle of law's universal appeal? In a series of wide-ranging inquiries, Teemu Ruskola investigates the history of "legal Orientalism": a set of globally circulating narratives about what law is and who has it. For example, why is China said not to have a history of corporate law, as a way of explaining its "failure" to develop capitalism on its own? Ruskola shows how a European tradition of philosophical prejudices about Chinese law developed into a distinctively American ideology of empire, influential to this day.

The first Sino-U.S. treaty in 1844 authorized the extraterritorial application of American law in a putatively lawless China. A kind of legal imperialism, this practice long predated U.S. territorial colonialism after the Spanish-American War in 1898, and found its fullest expression in an American district court's jurisdiction over the "District of China." With urgent contemporary implications, legal Orientalism lives on in the enduring damage wrought on the U.S. Constitution by late nineteenth-century anti-Chinese immigration laws, and in the self-Orientalizing reforms of Chinese law today. In the global politics of trade and human rights, legal Orientalism continues to shape modern subjectivities, institutions, and geopolitics in powerful and unacknowledged ways.

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