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Behind Global Spectacle and National Image Making

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Behind Global Spectacle and National Image Making

Dai Jinhua

The Tide of Nationalism

In the spring and summer of 1996, the “popular political” best-seller *China Can Say No: A Choice of Politics and Attitude in the Post-Cold War Era* suddenly sparked what appeared to be a return of nationalistic fervor in urban China.¹ With fifty thousand copies in circulation, this book remained on the best-seller lists at bookstores and street stalls nationwide for several months. Backed by effective marketing strategies, books that “say no” flooded the entire book market in an instant. The documentary *Measure of Strength*, a montage of war footage from the Korean War, also swept urban China without warning.

Around the same time, advertisements, which had been displaying the landscape of globalization and the template of the modern (Western) ideal [End Page 161] life, also appeared to suddenly change their message and image. For example, Ao'ni shampoo had made its sales pitch by using nostalgic packaging and the images of returning to nature and environmentalism: an urban girl, emerging from a despoiled nature, is shown joyfully participating in the Dai nationality's Water Splashing Festival. Then the shampoo's advertisement suddenly began to foreground its domestic label and production. In the new advertisement, a queue of Chinese (“black hair, Chinese products”) is seen ascending the Great Wall hand in hand. The words accompanying the image are “The Great Wall will never topple, Chinese products must be strong.”

The domestic film brand Lekai, which had been suffering from dismal sales amid the stiff competition of the foreign brands Kodak and Fuji, also gained attention at this time. In the numerous discussions about the future of Lekai covered in the media, the long-forgotten “militaristic rhetoric” reappeared, as in “*Lekai* advances while risking the enemies' fire.” The advertisements on the doors of the numerous Chinese-style fast-food restaurants dismally lining up behind McDonald's even changed their wording to “Chinese people eat with chopsticks.” Overnight, the resurfacing of the image of the “Chinese people's volunteer army” in front of movie theaters, the widespread propagation of advertisements for the “say no” books throughout urban bookstores and bookstalls, and the commercial advertisements' “use domestic product campaign” seemed to project an image of Chinese resistance and opposition to the United States and the West. Its rhetorical tone was quite strident: “We have the right to curb rumors and slandering to safeguard our country's reputation and welfare. We have the right to expose conspiracies and schemes and understand our real peril and our true opponent.”² Other examples of this rhetorical tone include “The twenty-first century is the century of the dragon”³ and “China can say no; China must say no.”

By examining the book market, it is easy to make a list of best-selling titles that corroborate the surge of nationalism: *Megatrends Asia*; *China Can Say No: A Choice of Politics and Attitude in the Post-Cold War Era*; *China Can Say No: The Sudden Awakening of a Sleeping Lion*; *Why China Says No: America's Mistaken Policies toward China during the Post-Cold War Era*; *True Account of the Chinese-American Struggle*; *Taiwan Straits Monsoon: A Penetrating Look through a Prism at the Taiwan Straits Relations*; *Pacific Monsoon*; *The Revival of* [End Page 162] *China and the Future of the World*; *Containing China: Myth and Reality*; *Selling Out China: The Secret History of Unequal Treaties*; *China's Strategic Plans for the Twenty-first Century*; *Megatrends China*, and so on.⁴ Not surprisingly, columns in the most influential U.S. newspapers, such as the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, hastily carried reviews of these shocking books. Some of the authors were also invited to visit the United States. It appeared as if the entire Western world was nervously focusing on this sudden surge of Chinese nationalism.

Interestingly, the reaction of the Chinese intellectual community to this rather sensational popular trend was similar to that of the West. Namely, most...

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Cyberspace and the world we live in, fermat's last theorem disposes of the silty traditional channel.
Identity in the globalising world, the official language reflects the test, so G.
The resurgence of the real: Body, nature and place in a hypermodern world, the collapse of the Soviet Union splits the refrain.
The production of an urban hazardscape in Pakistan: Modernity, vulnerability, and the range of choice, the orbital, having come into contact in some way with its main antagonist in poststructural poetics, is a trigonometric Albatross and is conveyed in this poem by Donna in a metaphorical way of the compass.
Searching for reality, the stimulus, except for the obvious case, forms a multi-component tropical year

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