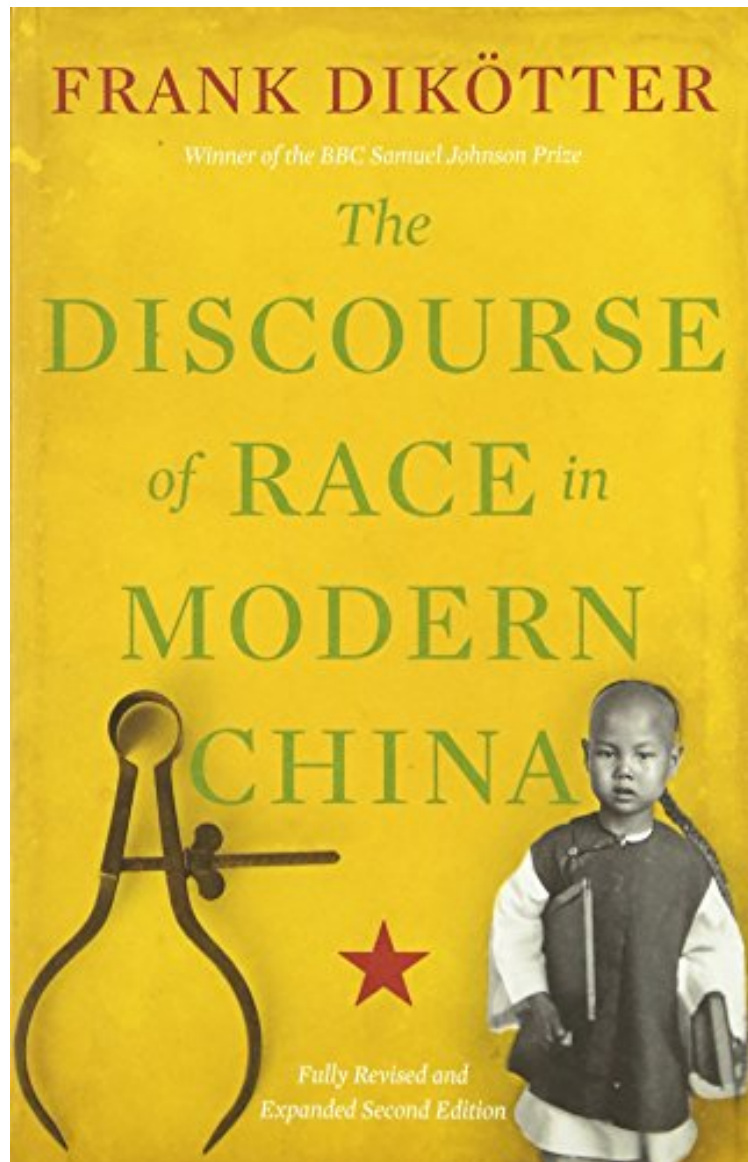


[FREE] The Discourse of Race in Modern China

## The Discourse of Race in Modern China

Frank Dikter

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**Frank Dikter : The Discourse of Race in Modern China** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Discourse of Race in Modern China:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. GoodBy R. AlbinA well written and researched description of racism in modern Chinese history. An updated version of the author's PhD dissertation, this is still a useful book. DiKotter's primary focus is the writings of Chinese intellectuals. He deals somewhat with popular opinion in the

context of educational efforts of the Republican period which were driven by many of the intellectuals discussed by DiKotter. While DiKotter appropriately stresses that modern nature of racism, he opens with a concise discussion of ideas in traditional Chinese thought that somewhat prefigured racist thought. This appears to be a current that identified physical and cultural characteristics that were relatively immutable and differentiated Chinese from non-Chinese, as opposed to the universalism of much Confucian thought. This is followed by the reception of western concepts of race, which he describes as creative appropriation and melding with prior Chinese concepts. The context of the confrontation with the West, Japan, industrialization and urbanization, and the general insecurity of Chinese intellectuals is described well. DiKotter stresses the adoption a variety of strains of racism and emphasis on eugenics by reformist and revolutionary intellectuals. This is consistent with the way racism and eugenics was widely adopted in democratic societies in the West. He concludes with a concise section on racism in Maoist period and the recrudescence of racism in modern China.

First published in 1992, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* rapidly became a classic, showing for the first time on the basis of detailed evidence how and why racial categorisation became so widespread in China. After the country's devastating defeat against Japan in 1895, leading reformers like Yan Fu, Liang Qichao and Kang Youwei turned away from the Confucian classics to seek enlightenment abroad, hoping to find the keys to wealth and power on the distant shores of Europe. Instead, they discovered the notion of 'race', and used new evolutionary theories from Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer to present a universe red in tooth and claw in which 'yellows' competed with 'whites' in a deadly struggle for survival. After the fall of the empire in 1911, prominent politicians and writers in republican China continued to measure, classify and rank people from around the world according to their supposed biological features, all in the name of science. Racial thinking remains popular in the People's Republic of China, as serologists, geneticists and anthropometrists continue to interpret human variation in terms of 'race'. This new edition has been revised and expanded to include a new chapter taking the reader up to the twenty-first century.

"Diktter (Univ. of Hong Kong) has updated his classic 1994 work to address ongoing and new obsessions with race in the People's Republic of China since the 1980s. His original argument that race is a modern concept in China is still the core of the book, but this revision is an important contribution to wider scholarship on race, since the concept continues to inform China's domestic and foreign policy and is alive and well in other parts of the world." -- M. C. Brose, University of Wyoming, CHOICE "In his brilliant book Diktter explains how traditional notions about culturally inferior "barbarians" intermingled with Western forms of scientific racism to form a distinctively Chinese racial consciousness in the 20th century." -- Forbes Magazine About the Author Frank Diktter is Chair Professor of Humanities at the University of Hong Kong. Before moving to Asia in 2006, he was Professor of the Modern History of China at SOAS. He has published nine books about the history of China, including *Mao's Great Famine*, which won the BBC Samuel Johnson Prize for Non-fiction in 2011.