China Dawn. The Story of A Technology and Business Revolution

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China Dawn. The Story of A Technology and Business Revolution

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I may not be the proper audience for this book. I have lived and worked in China, including Taiwan, for more than six years. My eldest son, Lewis, worked in the Internet industry in Hong Kong, in Taipei, and in both Beijing and Shanghai and has shared many details of his life in “Greater China” (meaning the extended Chinese world, including Hong Kong and Taiwan) with me.

It was with considerable anticipation that I opened China Dawn as it promised to bring together my two major interests, the Internet and China. Perhaps because of my own relative sophistication in these two areas I found myself somewhat disappointed.

But a more general audience than myself might well find this book extremely interesting. It is essentially a first-person account of the activities of several of the major players in the Chinese Information Technology Industry, told by an American journalist. It gives great insight into Chinese daily life among certain circles of intellectuals and entrepreneurs.

As an American with no prior China experience, the author, David Sheff, sometimes comes off as a bit naive about China and the Chinese. This lack of cultural sophistication and experience leads him perhaps to over-estimate the importance of the events which he observed, and the individuals whom he came to know. The development of the Chinese I.T. industry is proceeding on a number of fronts, including in Hong Kong and Taiwan, and to generalize from the experiences of but a few players is to dangerously narrow the analysis.
However, for those with a primary interest in the development of technology in foreign cultures, and in China in particular, this book will serve as an introduction to the game as it is played in some circles in China. Sheff’s thesis is that to the degree that China fails to control the Internet, to that degree it will democratize, driven by the activities of Chinese entrepreneurs like those whose lives he briefly shared.

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Do you have any video of that? I’d care to find out more details.