



A Passion for Facts: Social Surveys and the Construction of the Chinese Nation-State, 1900-1949 (Asia Pacific Modern)

Tong Lam

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In this path-breaking book, Tong Lam examines the emergence of the "culture of fact" in modern China, showing how elites and intellectuals sought to transform the dynastic empire into a nation-state, thereby ensuring its survival. Lam argues that an epistemological break away from traditional modes of understanding the observable world began around the turn of the twentieth century. Tracing the Neo-Confucian school of evidentiary research and the modern departure from it, Lam shows how, through the rise of the social survey, "the fact" became a basic conceptual medium and source of truth. In focusing on China's social survey movement, *A Passion for Facts* analyzes how information generated by a range of research practices—census, sociological investigation, and ethnography—was mobilized by competing political factions to imagine, manage, and remake the nation.

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