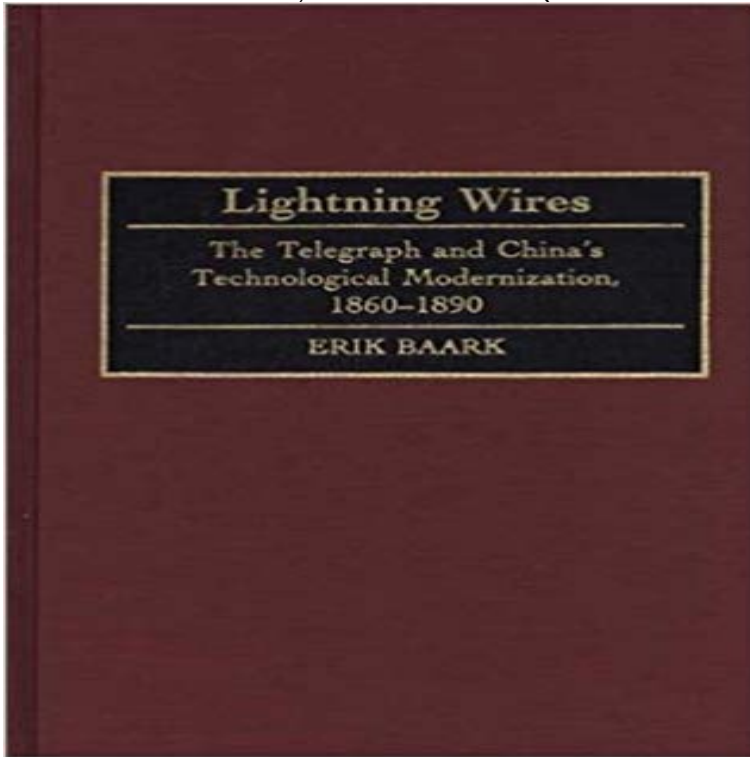


Lightning Wires: The Telegraph and Chinas Technological Modernization, 1860-1890 (Contributions in Asian Studies)



Baark examines the transfer of telegraph technology to China in the late nineteenth century. He shows how the initial Chinese rejection of the telegraph as an inconvenient technology contributed to violent conflicts between foreigners and the Chinese, but that this resistance gradually gave way to an assimilation of the telegraph into Chinese society. The transfer and assimilation of advanced technology has been an important challenge for China's modernization for more than a century. Baark examines some of the dilemmas faced by Chinese modernizers of the yangwu (Western affairs) movement from the 1860s to the 1890s. Telegraph technology emerged in the West on the basis of scientific discoveries in electricity in the early nineteenth century, and was greeted with enthusiasm by governments and the public alike. The Chinese attitudes to the telegraph, however, were informed by entirely different political and cultural priorities. Baark examines the tensions which existed between the Chinese and the foreign companies seeking to extend telegraph technology to East Asian cities, and he shows how the domestic network was shaped by indigenous social and cultural forces. This book will be of considerable interest to historians of modern China, technology, and economic development.

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