

Southeast Asia. Nevertheless, since some Southeast Asian Chinese capital has also been invested in Hong Kong, it is quite difficult to know for sure the proportion of Southeast Asian Chinese investment in China. However, from available information, most scholars are of the view that the bulk of ethnic Chinese capital is still in the region rather than in the mainland". Wang Gungwu lends his authority as a renown scholar on the Overseas Chinese and as the then Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hong Kong, by assuring the reader that the investments by ethnic Chinese in China have been mainly motivated by profit rather than by cultural sentiment and ethnic ties.

The chapters in the two volumes are of uneven quality and analytical depth. This is to be expected of any book that is a compilation of conference papers. A project such as this dealing with the social, political and economic entanglements of the ethnic Chinese with China is an important one. With the "rise of Asia" and the "romance of Chinese capitalism" made popular by Gordon Redding, the position of the some 20 million ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia deserves critical re-examination in the context of regionalization and globalization. Yet such a project can only begin to help our understanding of the complex processes of "continuity and change" — not always in contiguous duality — if it confronts the fissure brought about by the new reconfiguration of the post-Cold War era. Above all, to heed the warning of Edward Said, it needs a sophisticated "hermeneutic suspicion" of the concepts and discourses which have previously shaped our understanding of a community now inevitably and rapidly changing. The two volumes tease our wish to catch a glimpse of a remarkable people at the "end of history", but never quite delivers.

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Eastern Asia: An Introductory History. Edited by Colin Mackerras.
Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1992. 639 pp.

This book is an ambitious attempt to provide a one-volume history of eastern Asia. It would be difficult for any such work to be comprehensive, especially when the term "eastern" is used to encompass Southeast Asia as well as the more usual Japan, China and Korea. The main emphasis in

this book is on those three countries plus Vietnam, Thailand and Indonesia. Despite the shortcomings that are almost inevitable in such an undertaking, the book is a useful introduction to the modern history of the area.

The editor has adopted a thematic approach within a broad chronological framework. The book begins with a discussion of the region's physical and ethnic geography, followed by brief but illuminating introductions to traditional social and family systems, religious traditions and political patterns in pre-colonial eastern Asia. This is followed by an account of "Asian responses to the Western challenges" from the sixteenth century to about 1950. The major section (some 300 pages) of the book deals with the region since the mid-twentieth century. As is appropriate in a text designed for first-year Australian university students, the last four chapters address the Australian connection since the beginning of the Vietnam War. Each of the forty-three chapters has a "Guide to Further Reading".

The opening chapters lead the reader to expect that the book will provide an introduction to the cultural history of eastern Asia, something which is much needed. Few of the subsequent chapters, however, refer to cultural change or to the impact of colonialism on the social structures of Asian societies. Part three is disappointing. The section's title, "Asian responses to the Western challenge, sixteenth to mid-twentieth centuries", is misleading. Instead of dealing with Asian responses, the overwhelming weight of the chapters is given to the activities of Europeans in Asia. In the first place, the reader gets the impression that the Europeans arrived in force and all of a sudden. One example will explain. The assertion that the licensed piracy of the Portuguese, operating from Ternate, Melaka and Goa, "made an appreciable impact on the volume of trade passing through Asian ports and changed, if only slightly, the balance of economic power in the region" (p. 125) is unsubstantiated and misleading. Portuguese naval power was not as powerful as is suggested. As Sanjay Subrahmanyam, addressing the same question in his 1993 book on *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500-1700*, shows, most of the Portuguese maritime resources were concentrated not in eastern Asian waters but in the western Indian Ocean. In 1525, there was one galleon and one round-ship at Melaka, while ten galleons were at Hormuz and Calicut. Despite the Portuguese control of Hormuz, spices from the Indies, carried in Asian vessels, passed through that part for the Iranian, Turkish and North African markets. Nor were great numbers of Portuguese on the ground. East of Melaka they had one fort, in the Moluccas, which served to combat Spanish ambitions more than anything else. If space permitted, similar remarks could be made about the book's treatment of the various activities of the East India Company in eastern Asia. The Eurocentric emphasis can be illustrated by a sentence in Chapter 9: "Perhaps the most significant consequence of European

penetration of Asia. . . was its contribution to the Industrial Revolution in Europe and especially in Britain". (The male, virile West penetrating the submissive female East?) Likewise, the act of resistance takes on Western rather than indigenous forms. Twentieth century independence movements and revolutions are seen as spurred by Western ideologies. The general picture is of the imposition of colonial rule on static societies and only passing attention is given to cultural retention, adaptation and assimilation as forms of resistance to imperialism.

Part Four is the strongest section of the book. Five of the nineteen chapters on "Asia since the mid-twentieth century" deal with social and cultural factors. The remaining fourteen summarize the domestic and external politics and economics of the countries concerned. All are informative, some are very good indeed. A couple of examples can be raised to make the general point. One of the most difficult tasks must have been that of writing a twenty-page summary on revolution and reform in China since 1949 (Chapter 24). Not surprisingly, the piece is sketchy but, surprisingly, it is passionless and quite well-balanced. The complex threads of the Great Leap Forward, the Cultural Revolution and since, are disentangled nicely but the terrors which were a part of them are given only passing mention. Likewise, the author's determination to be even-handed in his treatment of the 1989 student movement and the Tiananmen massacre has resulted in a restrained account which is, perhaps, overly-sympathetic to Deng Xiaoping and Li Peng. As an objective but thought-provoking essay, this is excellent. Another piece which will raise questions and stimulate the reader to move on to more detailed scholarly accounts is the essay on "The Japanese model of economic growth" (Chapter 27). It gives a clear, broad outline and skilfully weaves the social, political, and narrowly economic factors which combined to create the "Japanese miracle", as well as discusses the effects which rapid economic growth has had on the living standards and life-styles of the Japanese people. Starting with a brief discussion of scholarly views on Japan's economic transformation, the author shows how the origins of post-war recovery can be attributed to many factors, including the survival of the pre-war bureaucracy and business expertise and the reforms introduced during the Allied Occupation from 1945 to 1952. Growth has made most people better off but, despite developments in environmental and welfare policy, working hours are still longer in Japan than in most other industrialized countries and there is a popular feeling that a disproportionate share of the benefits go to the large corporations rather than to the ordinary people. The essay concludes with the prediction that as memories of the war fade, the new generation will be less willing than in the past to make economic sacrifices and will expect more of the fruits of economic power. With other chapters on topics

as varied and as controversial as the role of religions in contemporary eastern Asian societies, Japanese politics, and population growth and mobility, this section contains much of interest and intellectual substance.

Although the general level of scholarship and writing is high, it is only to be expected that in a work by twenty-four authors themes should become blurred and that the forty-three chapters should vary in readability. For example, Chapter 3, on "Basic social structures and family systems", is muddled by the use of terms like "virilocal", "uxorilocal" and "neolocal" residences, and Malay and Japanese words, not usually expected to be part of the vocabulary of a first-year university student. On the other hand, the same author's brief examination of "Family change in post-war Japan and China" (Chapter 32) is jargon-free and lucid. The succinct introduction to "Religious traditions in Asia" (Chapter 4), is a model of clarity, as are many of the other chapters.

In summary, with over half the book concerned with the period since World War II, there is considerable emphasis on the ideological, political and economic influence of the West. The reader gets little feeling for the long Asian tradition of assimilation and adaptation of outside cultures, religions and political and economic systems to Asian needs. The book as a whole conveys the impression that the last fifty years are much more important in Asian development than were all the previous centuries of the region's existence.

That said, this book is probably as good as any single volume treatment of such a vast and complex subject could hope to be. The essays are intellectually stimulating. It will spur the discerning undergraduate, at whom the work is aimed, to raise many questions and search for answers. The book might also provide a painless introduction to the region for general readers, Western businessmen, or travellers.

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***Taiwan in the Asia-Pacific in the 1990s.* Edited by Gary Klintworth.
Canberra: Allen and Unwin, 1994. 291 pp.**

Emerging impressively in the international community through tremendous efforts at managing successful economic development and industrial restructuring, and effecting courageous political democratization in the