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SOCIAL LIFE AND DEVELOPMENT IN HONG KONG. *Edited by Ambrose Y. C. King and Rance P. L. Lee.* Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1981. Pp. xxv + 366, \$25.00.

This collection of 15 articles by social scientists associated with the Social Research Center of the Chinese University of Hong Kong is an important addition to the small analytical literature on the socioeconomic transformation of Hong Kong in the last 30 years. Although much has been written about the economic miracle of Hong Kong, few studies have succeeded in articulating the nuts and bolts of this multifarious developmental process with perspective and coherence. There is an easy tendency among many to generalize from a few obvious or convenient facts about Hong Kong to fit preconceptions about how society develops or should develop. Their views may not be wrong; they only fail to confront theory with fact. It is for this reason that the studies assembled in this volume are exciting to read; they may at times raise more questions than they answer, but always there is an effort made to address the issues in such a manner that some insight can be gained.

The papers examine a variety of topics and are organized around two central themes. The changing landscape of metropolitan growth as a creative, but tension-ridden, process is discussed in the first six papers. The decline of village life and the rise of high-density urban living is scrutinized by Lee in two separate papers. Other aspects of the process that are studied include: public housing (Myers and Kan), small factories (Mok), and new towns (Chan). I find Lee's paper on the fading earthbound compulsion in the village of Taipo Tau most interesting; a complex and conflicting process is elegantly reduced to its bare essentials and is studied. Mok's paper on small factories illuminates the problems traditional enterprises face in a rapidly changing economic environment. I would like to have seen the analysis related to the changing family structure and its functions, since traditional enterprises were largely family-run businesses; this would complement the analysis advanced by Lau, which appears later in the volume, on "utilitarianistic familialism" as a basis of political stability.

The rest of the papers deal with the change in institutional characteristics during the process of development and treat political (King, Kuan, and Lau), religious (Myers), family (Wong and Ng), cultural (Bond and P. W. H. Lee), and medical (Lee) institutions. The most engaging studies are the four papers on the dynamics of a colonial polity in a traditional society under flux. King analyzes the elite-mass gap as a fundamental reality of the political culture. Lau provides an answer to the paradox of stability maintained through the pervasive influence of the family as a bulwark of society. The government's response to political challenge through administrative absorption of elites is studied by King; its alternate method, manipulation of rural elites, is analyzed by Kuan and Lau. Nevertheless, all writers seem to imply that forces that have maintained political stability are less permanent features than the basic alienation of the residents from political power, an observation that may have important implications for both the present and the future.

Most social scientists would agree that the family is one of the more permanent institutions in history, hence, any analysis of socioeconomic transformation that does not give prominence to the family as a research theme is clearly inadequate. Although there is much reference to the family, its treatment is probably less than adequate in terms of coverage. This may be the major shortcoming of a volume that calls itself *Social Life and Development in Hong Kong*.

The two appendices in the volume are a bonus. The 42-page bibliography is excellent and will be useful to anyone who wishes to work in the area. The paper on methodological problems in data collection and questionnaire construction in Hong Kong is well written and contains much information that is relevant to those who wish to enter the field. Finally, the introduction by Yang of the University of Pittsburg is not only a summary of the collected articles, it is an interpretative essay in its own right. The critical reader will find much that is exciting in this volume. It clearly is a major first effort at systematic analysis of three phenomenal decades in the development of a metropolis.

YUE-CHIM WONG  
*Chinese University of Hong Kong*