

BOOK REVIEWS

End of Empire. 100 Days in 1945 That Changed Asia and the World.

Edited by David P. Chandler, Robert Cribb and Li Narangoa. Copenhagen, NIAS Press, 2016.

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Book reviews do not typically address editorial work, and even fewer start off doing so, but *End of Empire* begs that this be done. Rather than being limited to one or multiple authors' perspectives, a decisive moment in Asian history is explained by means of numerous events covered in news clippings and photographs from the 100 days between August 5 and November 12 and by in-depth analyses in the form of vignettes of between two and three pages in length by some of the most recognized current scholars on Asia. Naturally, the text contains a bibliography, a brief introduction, and also covers the consequences of events that shed light on each country's colonial legacy and the withdrawal of colonial powers from the continent after the war. The publication is complemented by an excellent website (www.EndofEmpire.Asia) which, in addition to replicating texts and photos, contains a chronological timeline for each country and benefits from an ever-growing collection of content, thanks to contributions from readers and from the excellent bibliography that is linked via the website. The photography included in the book serves as an essential complement to the text and provides images of both successful and failed leaders, as well as posters and maps. Having adapted the texts to something approaching a single authorial voice, the editors point out that around one hundred individuals have contributed their "time, expertise and resources". The book is a clear example of NIAS Press's impressive editorial work, and the collection serves more as an encyclopedia than a book, all within 346 pages. That said, it may be but a promising prelude to future additions on the countries in question.

The topic truly deserves to be addressed. The book and website offer a thought-provoking vision of a particularly decisive period in Asia that tends to be covered in order to identify and highlight the end of the Pacific War and fall of the Japanese empire, but which also started a chain reaction of events that have been fundamental to the development of modern Asia. As Harry Pooze points out in a statement which could be applied to the entire region, "After years of stagnation, the twilight of Japanese empire suddenly seemed to give long-frustrated Indonesian political leaders free rein". Internal disputes and problems among the rural majority during the war became more acute due to declining labour productivity coupled with hyperinflation. Desires for revolutionary change were palpable throughout the region and became manifest in diverse expectations, from the more just world order envisioned by communism to the closed opposition intent on returning to mythological pasts based on religious movements. The 100 days covered in the book "foreshadowed the demise of other empires and set into motion developments that transformed the post-war world," a process which is certainly reminiscent of events in Europe upon the fall of the Third Reich, though they are possibly even more similar to World War I, which also marked a clear before and after in European history. The end of the British, Dutch and French (but not Portuguese) empires created a new Asia, in a similar way as had previously occurred with the Austro-Hungarian, Russian, German and Ottoman empires decades in Europe.

When looking into the period, the most difficult task can be covering the numerous simultaneous events in question effectively, each of which had varying levels of implications and consequences, some the result of earlier developments and others provoking new changes. The topics dealt with include events associated with Japan's surrender, crucial moments in specific regions (such as the Great Vietnamese Famine) among specific population segments (from the "repatriates" or *hikiagesha* in Japan, a politicized segment, to Eurasians), to novelties which reflected surreptitious changes, such as Mongolia abandoning the Cyrillic alphabet and adopting traditional Mongolian. The roads not taken, of course, also form part of the history of the period: the non-unification of Outer and Inner Mongolia, the progressive decline of alternative parties to the communists in Vietnam and armies ready to manage Japan's surrender but not authorized by the General Order No. 1 from the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, Douglas MacArthur, which established which army would be responsible for it. A mere history of the end of the colonial period and the beginning of Asian nation-states would be overly simplistic.

The book's strength lies precisely in its ability to offer a coherent narrative from diverse sources, such as news clippings, with analyses by specialists. While following a logical chronological and geographic order, the information is presented in diverse formats, such as vignettes and news samples full of insightful information. The ways in which nations broke free from the colonial powers were as numerous as the attitudes of Japanese soldiers towards the independence of occupied territories. During this brief period, many individuals and groups shed light on the changes that were taking place in the long term, each acting in line with widely varying strategies. One of the most interesting occurrences was the announcement to celebrate a non-existent referendum on Cambodia's independence, which resulted in two no-votes and 540,999 in favor. More news clippings in the book lead us to learn the fate of the prime minister at the time, Son Ngoc Thanh, and also the result of similar referendums. The book combines brief texts with news and in-depth analyses of captivating topics (from "The Place of Malays in a New World Order" to "The Japanese Deserters in Vietnam") in the form of vignettes written by recognized, reputed academics. John Dower, Anthony Reid, David Marr, Jongsoo Lee, Andrew Barshay, François Guillemot, Bruce and David Reynolds, Shigeru Sato, and Geoffrey Gunn offer readers texts which have been discussed by other specialists before final publication. Hence, the book serves the purpose of generating interest in events at the time, as well as contextualizing and explaining them. One may ask whether the collection sets a clear precedent regarding how educational texts may be in the future, written by experts, but also capable of being consulted and read by diverse audiences and in diverse ways, from books to the internet.

End of Empire takes it upon itself to cover the diverse situations unfolding at the same time, both by means of academic analyses and the personal experiences of the protagonists and everyday citizens. The impact of the atomic bombs, Europe's lacking understanding regarding changes and the different implications of desires to become independent serve as a few examples of the multiple dimensions the book covers. Dilemmas regarding how to restore systems preceding the war and how to approach the new paradigm are covered particularly well, and not only in the case of the British or French, but, in particular, for the Americans and Soviets. The new major powers arrived in Asia with the aim of controlling key sources of power, although they were largely unsure of what they intended to do.

Only superficial critiques can be made of the collection. David Chandler, an emeritus scholar on Cambodia, needs no introduction, and Li Narangoa and Robert Cribb have offered their experience in publishing edited collections by securing contributions from a good part of the top specialists on the region who have created biographies and commented on texts. Given the collection's objective, no great discovery nor new interpretations are offered, rather it serves as a compilation of academic texts which accompany a selection of relevant news from the time. The fact that different countries are covered to the same extent undermines China and Japan's overall importance. With regards to the

latter of the two countries, it is worth noting the lack of any mention of its second surrender, on August 17, to the Soviet empire, and, in general, a more updated take on events surrounding the atomic bombs. Given that India and Central Asia only played a superficial role in the conflict, the two have been excluded, in contrast to the two Mongolias, which are covered extensively. The Philippines is barely discussed and Oceania has been forgotten, and there is absolutely no mention of islands which were directly involved in the conflict. The table of contents could have been more comprehensive, and a list of vignettes with their respective authors would also have proven useful. The book targets a broad audience, but it will also find its way into the collections of specialists who will surely return for quick consultations for a long time to come.

Transformation of the Intimate and the Public in Asian Modernity.

Edited by Emiko Ochiai and Leo Aoi Hosoya. Kyoto University Press, 2013; Brill, Leiden, 2014. Pp. 314. ISBN 10: 9004252231; ISBN 13: 978-9004252233.

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This book is an important contribution to a growing literature dealing with the significant increase in the economic, political and cultural importance of Asia. Asian scholars are themselves leading this re-examination of the region and its relationship to a hitherto dominant West. Long subjected to the outmoded notion of modernization, with the West as primary comparison, this book looks at the changes experienced in Asia following its rapid economic development. Modernity, with its more flexible understanding of structural change, instead of modernization with its implicit Western comparison, is the book's focus.

The book begins with an analysis of modernity (the first) as experienced in the West in the nineteenth century (*circa* 1880). The modern family, with its emphasis on childcare and the importance of women as guardians of the hearth, generated new attitudes towards reproduction and the employment of women. Rising expectations and educational and political reform marked this first expression of modernity. An unintended result was the lowering of women's interest in having large families as other opportunities opened up both for women and their more educated offspring. Combined with improved sanitation and hygiene, this complex situation led to the first population decline in Europe as well as in parts of Asia, such as Japan.

A century later (1970), both economic and cultural forces generated another crisis in population demographics. The return of women into the workforce, the ready availability of birth control and the sexual revolution combined to create a new modernity (the second). Demographic decline became a serious concern in Europe and most parts of Asia (e.g. Japan, South Korea, China and Thailand). It seems that this second modernity simultaneously impacted both the West and most of Asia. But Asia had its own internal history and culture. This second modernity expressed itself in a more condensed form in Asia, affecting various levels of the social world, in particular relations within the family.

In East Asia, with its Confucian past, and even in Southeast Asia with its tradition of family solidarity, household and communal relationships had to be significantly reassessed following the economic and political changes. The region's diverse backgrounds (religion, culture and politics) required distinct responses to structurally similar conditions. Japan may be seen as leading these