Families in Asia: Home and kin
By STELLA R. QUAH
Abingdon: Routledge, 2009. Pp. xiii, 212. Bibliography, Index.
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Families in Asia: Home and kin indicates Stella Quah's undivided passion in answering some questions concerning 'typical' Asian families. She has made an attempt in adding to the current literature which deals with the sociology of families in Asia. So far, however, little attention has been paid to this field and, due to the limitation of studies related to Asian families, Quah's work on families in Asia appears to have come at the right time and place. As she mentions on pp. 8–9, in 39 years since 1950 to 1989 only 310 studies, which examine family systems, have been done in the English language and published in 10 Asian countries. Four are East Asian countries (China, Hong Kong, Japan and South Korea), and the other six are Southeast Asian countries (Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines, Vietnam and Indonesia). These publications are then divided into three categories: description, concepts and theoretical assumptions.

This book is organised into seven chapters and proposes several themes: the concept and research trends, forming family, parenthood, grandparenthood, gender roles, the impact of socio-economic development, and marriage breakdown. Through the adoption of the demographic and survey data gathered by international organisations and government bodies, together with her own interviews and analysis of other case studies, she enlightens us all with the presentation alongside the discussion in both macro- and micro-level analyses.

Quah's work has shown the changing trend in family life as it occurred between 1950 and 2006 in 10 Asian countries due to socio-economic development and changes in values and attitudes. However, family formation in Asia seems to be distinct as compared with that in Western countries. In forming Asian families, Quah elucidated two main factors: this being the historical and cultural backgrounds. Historically, Asian countries experienced wars, invasions and colonisation. Besides, Asian countries consist of various ethnic groups, religions and belief systems. These two main factors are significant in analysing family formation among people in this region. I find it worth highlighting that the aspects surrounding the process of forming a family unit in all Asian countries, especially in the spouse selection, motive of marriage, wedding celebrations and marriage trends, have demonstrated changes and they are assimilating into the current trends more than ever before. However, their different cultures and different backgrounds of families have moulded the formation of their respective families, and marriage remains to be an important sanctity in this part of the world.

Another interesting point highlighted by Quah in her answer as to why Asian family formation is different as compared with that of western families is the roles of senior generations within the family. The author reveals how grandparents across the 10 Asian countries are actively engaged in family responsibilities, and the importance of their role in the socialisation of their children and grandchildren. This relationship benefits both parties: grandparenting builds a bridge for the senior generation to become actively engaged in the present and at the same time to project

themselves into the future. The other benefit is the bond formed across generations in enhancing the value transmission. 'This portrayal of active engagement of seniors in sustaining family life in their multi-generational households is by no means unique to Asian societies' (p. 95).

Returning to the question posed at the beginning of this study, 'What constitutes typical Asian families?', it is now possible to state that Asian families are diverse in terms of ethnicity, religion, economic status and political background. The influence of these diversities is evident in all Asian countries, that it transpires in the formation of Asian families and that it would a sheer waste if it were not given proper attention.

This edition will be of substantial interest to university students who study the sociology of family, and it is highly recommended as one of the textbooks usable for anyone interested in this subject matter. Also for those who are involved as policy makers or simply interested in knowing more about the way the system of family is organised in Asia, this is an informative book to read.

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China, Cambodia, and the five principles of peaceful coexistence
By SOPHIE RICHARDSON
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Sophie Richardson argues that China's foreign policy derives from 'Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence', developed in the 1940s and espoused by Mao Zedong. By emphasising 'mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, non-aggression, non-interference in others' internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful co-existence', (p. 5) these principles 'offer an alternative to a world of bipolarity, military alliances and dependent development' (p. 9) that characterise Western foreign policy practices, which derive from the theory of political realism.

It is not surprising that China, like other revolutionary powers, attempted to change international relations. But Richardson's portrait of a Chinese foreign policy that respected sovereignty and practised a generally consistent policy of non-interference contrasts with others (such as Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War* [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001]) who see an ideological, interventionist foreign policy supporting revolutionary movements abroad. Only under Deng Xiaoping's leadership in the late 1970s did China abandon this approach, Chen argues (p. 278).

Richardson examines China's policy toward Cambodia as a case study. Based on extensive research in Chinese sources, including interviews with former and current officials, this is the first lengthy study of China's approach to Cambodia. China's principled foreign policy was first evident at the Geneva Conference of 1954 where, with