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Book Reviews

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As a student of Hong Kong history, I have an intuition that there is a wide range of scholarly interests in Hong Kong studies. When I read this volume, my presumption was confirmed, for according to this volume, there are at least 2,395 doctoral dissertations from 415 universities that focus either directly or indirectly on Hong Kong. With such a wide and solid base, Hong Kong studies have every good reason to continue to develop in both quality and quantity. For this reason, the volume is of significant value for its comprehensive coverage of dissertations being completed in this expanding area.

This volume is indispensable because it provides information that before had not been carefully collected in a systematic manner. For example, only 47% of dissertations included in the volume have been cited in Dissertation Abstracts International. More importantly, the volume has been meticulously compiled with four commendable features. First of all, under each entry, the compilers provide basic information, namely author, title, degree, subject, table of contents, an abstract; and under some entries, they include publications subsequent to the dissertations. For purposes of clarity, authors, dissertation titles, and tables of contents of Chinese and Japanese dissertations are listed in Appendix Three.


To be able to identify a relevant dissertation is important, but even more important is to get a copy and read it. The compilers do not forget this basic question and they provide some useful
guidelines as to how to acquire or borrow dissertations from many different universities and institutions in Asia, Australia, Europe, and North America. This is the third commendable feature.

Fourthly, the compilers prepare nine statistical tables, showing some salient characteristics of the dissertations completed between 1900 and 1997. They are gold mines for those who are interested in acquiring an overview of the development of Hong Kong studies, and of comparative research concerning Hong Kong.

Admirably accomplished and extensive as the information compiled in this volume is, the compilers nonetheless rightly remind readers that there will be some missing dissertations that were completed in China, India, Japan, Soviet Union/Russia, and Taiwan. (p. 583) It should be pointed out that the locations of these dissertations are varied, and so are the institutional requirements under which these dissertations are being produced. As far as I know, the compilers miss one dissertation that they would have wanted to include. For the benefit of the users of the volume, I place all the relevant information of that particular piece as the appendix of this review. By preparing the bibliographic entry for this single dissertation, I can imagine how enormously difficult a task it would be multiplied by 2, 395 times.

Having been widely recognized as knowledgeable and competent bibliographers in Asian Studies, Frank Joseph Shulman and Anna Leon Shulman again present us a very useful volume, which is indeed a result of extensive research and committed scholarship. This volume is a must for every research library whose sponsoring institution has a direct and indirect concern on any question about Hong Kong.

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THE APPENDIX

Youth sexuality is a complex and intricate issue that warrants serious consideration by policymakers in Hong Kong. Indications point to a brewing social problem in this area in the near future. Viewed in cultural perspective, sexuality is a complex issue because of its relation to other institutions, culture and the value system of the society. In this respect, Hong Kong society is a unique one in comparison with its culturally and physically close neighbors. Hong Kong, unlike mainland China, and somewhat unlike Singapore, does not undertake sexuality and family planning for the purpose or needs of a fertility management policy as such. Hong Kong is unique because of its cultural mix and as an area of cultural fusion. Western and Eastern cultures have come together as the result of immigration, colonial political and educational structures, and the persistence of the indigenous Chinese heritage. The indigenous cultural facets are transmitted mainly through family and kinship. But as notions of individual autonomy and independence are beamed by the international media and popular culture into Hong Kong, they impress youth, sow the seeds of cleavage between generations and stretch morality codes to farthest point of their elasticity. From the results of a field study conducted in Hong Kong, it is evident that these issues are posing real dilemmas for policymakers. As the topic of sexuality balances on the private and the public spheres, policymakers interviewed appear torn between legislative action to control sexual practices on the one hand and reluctance to tamper with moral issues on the other. The question therefore arises of how to maintain the practice of social laissez-faire in Hong Kong and yet have preventive measures in place to forestall social crisis. Hong Kong is a city state that has successfully combined cultures of colonial, and modern industrialized societies with its own Chinese heritage. As it embarks on the twenty-first century, it should do so with its family values and cultural heritage modified but their fundamentals saved and left intact. The way forward is to construct a comprehensive family policy for Hong Kong.