

balancing against concerns about fear of possible hardship under Chinese rule. In the fifth chapter Menski and Göbel deal with the situation of the South Asian minority communities of Hong Kong after the transfer. Many of those residents will become stateless, albeit with a right of residence in Hong Kong.

In the concluding chapter the editor identifies "British fixation on the perceived threat of non-white mass immigration as the central damaging element in the chains of arguments which have irrevocably marginalized Britain in the eyes of the people of Hong Kong" (p. 188). His attempts to explain British attitudes culminate in the following statement which should be quoted in full: "What Britain appears to be acting out is a notorious form of Western, eurocentric hubris, an entirely misplaced claim that Western laws, the modern Western way of life, in short, the Western system and standards as a whole, are so superior to anything a country like China might be able to offer, that a responsible government must stick up for such values and forms to the bitter end" (p. 188). In fact, however, Hong Kong has already, as Menski further points out, "learnt to live with its (Chinese) future and shows all the signs of making an immense success of it".

Shortly before landing at Hong Kong airport this gentleman next to me pointed to the book on my knees on "Zhongguo xingzhengfa jiben lilun" (Basic Theory of Chinese Administrative Law), asking why I was interested in this. I told him that I was going to teach comparative administrative law in Beijing. "This", he replied very seriously "is the best way to ensure that Hong Kong's people's confidence in their future won't be frustrated."

Robert Heuser

MICHAEL YAHUDA, *Hong Kong: China's Challenge*. London and New York: Routledge, 1996. XII, 171 pp, £ 11.99 (pb.), ISBN 0-415-14071-4, £ 37.50 (hb.), ISBN 0-415-14070-6

The return of Hong Kong to Chinese rule will be achieved more or less without a hitch, judging by the recent statements made by London and Beijing. Both sides intend to execute the handover as smoothly as possible given that the eyes of international public opinion will be fixed on the tiny colony. The only sad thing, if one can call it sad, was the death of the last paramount leader, Deng Xiaoping. Deng, who died in February, had made

it known that one of his last wishes was to see the transfer of Hong Kong back to Chinese sovereignty. While the handover will be smooth administratively, the crucial issues such as the difference in political and economic culture between the island and the mainland remain largely unresolved. Many in Hong Kong are still sceptical of Beijing's promises to retain the island's "special characteristics".

The volume under review addresses these and other issues in a brief, succinct and convincing way. The study explores the challenges facing both Beijing and Hong Kong policy makers up to the handover. The six chapters are divided into various themes. The first chapter deals with the significance of Hong Kong in relation to China and the world. The second describes the key differences between the Hong Kong and Chinese systems, while the third focuses on the negotiations and the often acrimonious debates going on behind closed doors. Chapter four identifies the problems leading to the last phase of the transition. The fifth is devoted to the actual handover and beyond. The sixth and concluding chapter brings together points made earlier. The conclusions are straightforward: China has much more to gain if it adopts a *laissez-faire* approach towards Hong Kong.

The only weakness, no fault of the author's, is the rapid change that has taken place since the postscript was written in February 1996. The new chief executive, Tung Chee-ha, was chosen in a carefully stage-managed event just across the border from Hong Kong. Of course the death of Deng will also have an impact, although it is unclear what it may be, on the immediate future of the island. The changes are not likely to fundamentally alter the key findings of the present volume.

One area largely unexplored is the persistent rumour that the Thatcher government gave a secret undertaking to the Chinese government that it would not introduce any changes to Hong Kong's political structure before the Basic Law in 1990. If this is true, we can only conclude that the British, like all other nations nowadays, see trade with the Middle Kingdom as the cardinal issue at stake. Alas, only lip service is paid to democracy for the people of Hong Kong. The volume also does not answer the question whether the electoral changes made by Christopher Patten had more to do with his impending return to active Conservative politics in Britain or to his sense of guilt over the people of Hong Kong. One can perhaps guess that it was a combination of both. This volume is timely and will serve as a useful background to those who wish to understand the manoeuvring leading up to the handover. It is also a reminder of how shabbily Hong Kong was treated throughout this affair. The lesson learnt from the

Hong Kong negotiations is how cynical the British are about democracy – trade and national interests are all that matter now.

James Chin

THERESE DIEDRICH, *Frauen in Politik und Wirtschaft Taiwans. Karriere versus Tradition?* (Berliner China-Studien, Bd. 29). Münster: Lit Verlag, 1995. 140 pages, DM 34,80. ISBN 3-8258-2510-8

Since the 1970's keen interest in women's participation in economic processes and the consequences hereof has arisen in sociology. The results of research obtained mainly in Western societies are applied by Therese Diedrich to the situation of modern working women in Taiwan. Based on the US sociologist Fowlkes' thesis of countersocialisation – that economic and political success of women is only achieved through a socialisation different to the normal – the author maintains that only a small fraction of the female working population has profited from economic and political change in modern Taiwan, whereas most of the women still suffer from low social status.

In order to determine the situation of working women, Diedrich describes internal and external conditions for women wanting to gain access to leading positions. To this end she analyses two collections of interviews from 1981 and 1988 as well as interviews with 19 women in leading positions made by her between September and November 1991. At first glance the Taiwanese situation seems better than in any other non-socialist Third World country, since more and more women became part of the economic process, taking advantage of institutional regulations like the Working-Standard-Law and the Reserved-Seats-System which have granted women ten percent of the seats in legislative bodies since 1953.

The author shows that in reality the labour market for women in Taiwan is horizontally and vertically divided: more and more female workers are to be found in light industry and agriculture, the so-called secondary sector of the labour market, which is characterized by low wages and almost no possibilities of further vocational training or promotion – female marginalization. On the other hand women seldom gain access to the eligible pool for feeder hierarchies and therefore suffer from vertical segregation. Only a small elite of women has been countersocialized and is likely to advance to higher positions, this being determined by: (1) social background (most of the women are descendants of mainland Chinese), (2)