

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

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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)

standard of education (most of the women have a B.A. or pursue advanced studies, often having stayed abroad) and (3) the socio-economic resources, fathers and partners of these women also having a higher standard of education as well as a higher economic status than the average Taiwanese.

The question of the pursuit of career or tradition raised in the subtitle of Diedrich's volume remains without a clear answer, since it contains but little critical discussion of women's traditional roles. Modern Chinese women in Taiwan tend to stick to a traditional way of life, and if they plan to work all their life, they are thus measured by two standards: only if they come up to the traditional expectations of society regarding household and family is professional success likely to be estimated.

Unfortunately the extensive citations in footnotes and bibliography do not include Chinese characters. It is not clear if the number of interviews justifies the conclusions drawn by the author. Although the application of (specifically) Western theories of sociology to Asian conditions remains questionable, Diedrich's study presents a useful investigation, providing illustrative data about women on their way to leading positions.

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ROBERT F. ASH AND Y.Y. KUEH (eds.), *The Chinese Economy under Deng Xiaoping*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996. 288 pp. £ 13.99. ISBN 0-19-828822-0

The origins of the book lie in a workshop, jointly sponsored by the Contemporary China Institute (School of Oriental and African Studies, London), The China Quarterly and Lingnan College, Hong Kong, in September 1991. For the purpose of the present volume the articles have been up-dated and revised. Although the nature, rationale and impact of China's post-1978 economic reforms are already the subject of a considerable literature, the book tries to offer an assessment of major aspects of those reforms and to examine their implications for China's economic development in the 1990s. Each contributor has sought to review the economic achievements of the 1980s and, from the perspective of the 1990s, to speculate on the challenges and opportunities that emerge for further growth in the foreseeable future.

China's economic development in the first half of the 1990s was dominated by the impact of Deng Xiaoping's tour of southern China at the beginning of 1992. In the wake of more than two years of economic re-