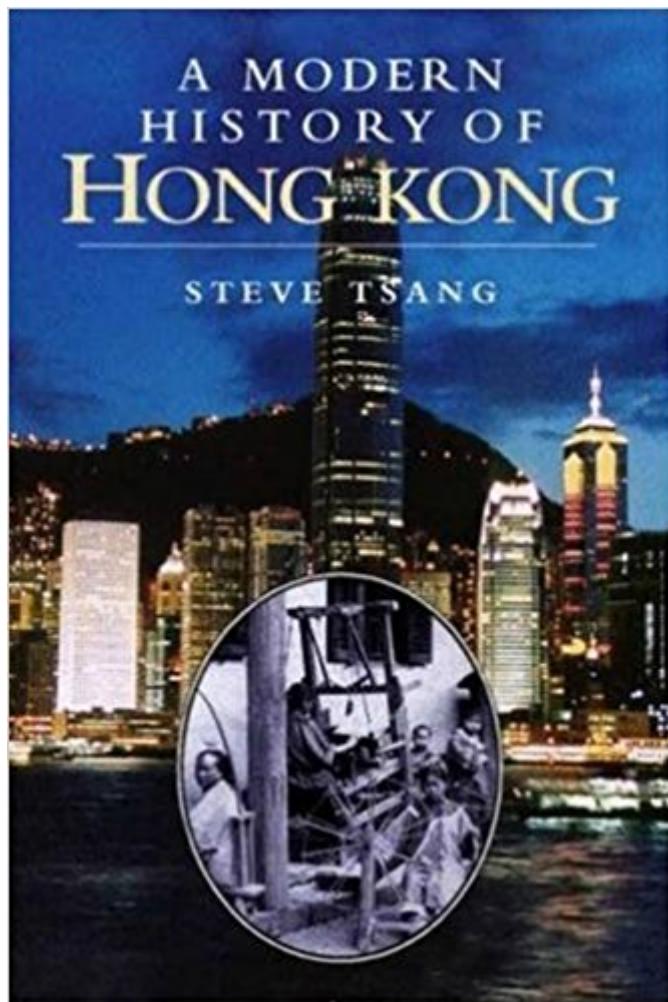


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A Modern History Of Hong Kong



Synopsis

From a little-known fishing community at the periphery of China, Hong Kong developed into one of the world's most spectacular and cosmopolitan metropoles after a century and a half of British imperial rule. This history of Hong Kong -- from its occupation by the British in 1841 to its return to Chinese sovereignty in 1997 -- includes the foundation of modern Hong Kong; its developments as an imperial outpost, its transformation into the ""pearl"" of the British Empire and of the Orient and the events leading to the end of British rule. Based on extensive research in British and Chinese sources, both official and private, the book addresses the changing relations between the local Chinese and the expatriate communities in 156 years of British rule, and the emergence of a local identity. It ends with a critical but dispassionate examination of Hong Kong's transition from a British Crown Colony to a Chinese Special Administrative Region.

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Customer Reviews

""Tsang's history is authoritative and well-researched...From rock to great metropolis, the story storms along, full of heroes and villains, eccentrics and visionaries, bounders and buccaneers." -- Chris Patten, New Statesman""Clearly written, logically organized and sustains a tone of persuasive authority." --Wm Roger Louis, University of Texas at Austin""Having spent half his life in Hong Kong and half in the West, Mr Tsang is uniquely placed to write this book. He has produced what must be the definitive history of Hong Kong." -- Contemporary Review""This is a well constructed, thorough yet succinct history of Hong Kong. It should be on the shelf of everyone interested in the city. for the general reader, this will stimulate further interest. For the experts, enjoy Tsang's fine style." --

Christine Loh, Civic Exchange""A respected Oxford scholar brought up in Hong Kong, [Steve Tsang] has drawn on a vast array of sources, Chinese as well as British, to produce a thorough and well-crafted study which should appeal to the general reader as well as the specialist. For those who want to understand the importance of the territory's British legacy in its continuing success, Dr Tsang's study is likely to remain the best guide for some time to come." -- Sir Robin McLaren, China Review

Steve Tsang is Louis Cha Fellow and University Reader in Politics at St Antony's College, Oxford University. He served as Director of the Asian Studies Centre at Oxford from 1997 to 2003 and is author of *Hong Kong: An Appointment with China*, also published by I.B. Tauris.

This history is well balanced, thoroughly researched and very readable. It covers the period from the Opium Wars when the British obtained the rocky island referred to as "fragrant harbour" (Hong Kong) to the handover of one of the world's preeminent trading and financial centres to the PRC. The strength of the text is that it makes very clear that Hong Kong's existence was a function of the relative power of China and Britain. As China disintegrated in the 19th Century and European powers took little pieces for themselves, Britain was the leading European in the area, and (after serving itself) even sought to protect China against its European competitors. When the costs of World War II and the Japanese Empire broke the back of Europe's colonies in Asia, a new chapter began in Hong Kong as well. Prof. Tsang shows a Hong Kong that somewhat resembles the United States in that it is a refuge for immigrants from troubled foreign countries, although in the case of Hong Kong almost everyone came from China. Tsang does not shy away from depicting the racist and elitist practices of Victorian England towards the Chinese refugees who made up Hong Kong's population, but stresses that what the colonial masters had to offer (particularly the rule of law and civil service) was much better than what these people could expect from their Chinese homeland. This portrait of the people of Hong Kong is extremely sympathetic, even endearing. They appear as enterprising refugees who had no real power to defend themselves against either Imperial Britain or Communist China except making Hong Kong such a special (and wealthy) place that the power current overshadowing them would look favorably to giving them space to breathe. This is not only a captivating and informative history, but also an excellent study of colonies generally and culture: it shows how and the extent to which a Western economy and society can develop in a culture that remains completely Chinese.

This is an extremely thorough history of Hong Kong which can make the reading a bit tedious at times, but always informative. Not only is the book well researched, but I believe that the narrative is very well woven on top of the details. Tsang does a good job of explaining the rise of Hong Kong in the context of a weak China, especially in the run up to WWII without burdening the reader with an excessive amount of Chinese history (which, although fascinating, would dilute the story of Hong Kong).

As we travel, I like to read the history of a country or area before we go there. I find that it is difficult to find a factual history that is easy to read, let alone enjoyable. Tsang has a writing style that makes history interesting. He discusses the roles of Chinese government, the British government and the Chinese who immigrate to Hong Kong. He also has a very good understanding of the role of government and the economic forces at work. He is very objective and does not have an "agenda". I feel that this book has given me a very accurate description of the history of Hong Kong and will make our trip to Hong Kong, on which we leave in three days, much more enjoyable.

It provides a complete history of Hong Kong since the 19th century in just one volume. Very impartial on difficult issues. It provides a lot of information and very good analysis. I would like to find something more about the economics of Hong Kong and some tables or graphs but statistical data, but I understand quite well that the content of the chapters fulfills completely the expectations of the title.

As a Hongkonger, I have never imagined the history of my birth place is so rich and vibrant. This book gave me an insight to why I think, feel and act the way I do. It makes up for the omission of such vibrant history in my early education. A must read for Hongkonger.

Tsang weaves together a story of Hong Kong that is both easy to read and deeply informed by historical scholarship. A must for individuals hoping to understand the happenings in Hong Kong today.

Decent overview of Hong Kong history. If you don't know anything about Hong Kong, this would be a good book to start with. I was hoping for a lot more though--I would skip it if you're already familiar with the broad strokes. It never goes into any real detail.

This does have a odd timeline where it jumps from different times back and forth a bit. I would have preferred a more straight line. It was a good read and I learned a lot of interesting things. It is very much written in a textbook like style and has some other odd writing quirks. Overall it was very enjoyable to learn more about the city and its crazy history.

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