

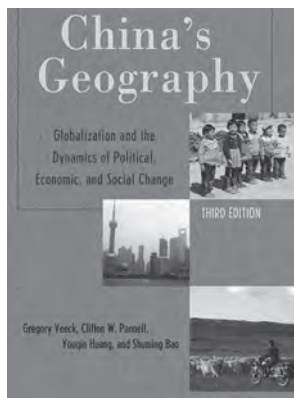
# China's Geography

## *Globalization and the Dynamics of Political, Economic, and Social Change, Third Edition*

BY GREGORY VEECK, CLIFTON W. PANSELL, YOUQIN HUANG, AND SHUMING BAO

LANHAM, MARYLAND: ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD, 2016  
422 PAGES, ISBN: 978-1442252561, PAPERBACK

Reviewed by Craig R. Laing



I must disclose at the outset of this review that I have a special attachment to this text. As an undergraduate student majoring in geography in the 1980s, the textbook for my Geography of Asia class was a 1983 book titled *China: The Geography of Development and Modernization* by Clifton W. Pannell and Lawrence J. C. Ma. This book, and how it presented China, initiated a lifelong interest for me in the physical and human geography of the country. In 2007, twenty-four years after the publication of this text, Pannell, Gregory Veck, and a new group of Chinese scholars updated

it, albeit under a new title and new publisher. The third edition of this text retains elements of the 1983 Pannell and Ma text; however, the dramatic changes wrought in China in those intervening years yields a much different, and current, text. When the first edition of this text was published in 2007, there was no doubt that it would be one of the required textbooks for my course on the geography of Asia.

Attempting a comprehensive geography of a land so vast in area and population as China and addressing current issues is a herculean task, but this is exactly what this group of four scholars has attempted to do, and done so quite well. While the book's title suggests a greater emphasis on contemporary changes in China, do not be mistaken—it provides one of the most comprehensive geographies of the country written in English. The text achieves a balance between exploring the remarkable changes and challenges confronting China and covering the variety of physical and human geography topics typically surveyed in a traditional regional geography text. The third edition comprises fourteen chapters, at an average length of twenty-eight pages per chapter, that cover a comprehensive array of topics on the geographies of China. After an introductory chapter, the rest of the book looks at these topics from a spatial perspective: the natural environment, history, politics, cities, population, inequality, economy, agriculture, industry, trade and transportation, environmental issues, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau. The text is not an exhaustive coverage of each of these topics, but retains a focus on the spatiality of these topics. It is a geography book, after all. For example, the chapter on history focuses on the salient spatial characteristics of dynasties, such as the section on the Song Dynasty that emphasizes this dynasty's southern maritime orientation. China's political geography is well-covered in a chapter that includes, among other topics, a discussion of the country's geopolitical view, its growing international influence and power, and a geographic explanation of China's complex array of political administrative units. Most notable about this chapter is the

lengthy discussion of China's national minorities and the areas they inhabit, including Xinjiang Uygur, Tibet, and the southwest. Veck's research interest in Chinese agriculture enriches the chapter on this strategic economic sector. Starting with a discussion of historical farming practices, the chapter moves on to cover the shift from the commune to the responsibility system, agricultural modernization (particularly the Comprehensive Agricultural Development program), challenges to the agricultural sector, contemporary food production, forestry, and aquaculture.

The chapters on inequality and environmental issues cover topics that are not typically found in regional geography texts, but represent two of the most significant issues facing China today. After establishing the rising income inequality in China, the authors elaborate on how inequality is manifest in Chinese society along several dimensions, including the urban-rural divide, employment categories, housing, gender, education, and political status. The chapter concludes with discussions of how to explain inequality in China and perceptions of and policy responses to inequality. The text's chapter on environmental issues is particularly relevant, given the gravity of the issue in China, and focuses on documenting the spatial dimensions of the pollution crisis and the response by the government to it. More particularly, the chapter begins with a discussion of the growth of China's environmental movement and how pollution and land degradation issues are impacted by spatial variations in population. The chapter then proceeds to elaborate on such issues as air and water pollution, environmental issues in agriculture such as pollution and land degradation, and a discussion of government efforts at reforestation. The spatial dimension of the environmental crisis is well-documented in the chapter, with quality maps displaying per capita water resources by province, CO<sub>2</sub> emission in large cities, the number of smog days per year, rainfall acidity, and levels of antibiotics in major river basins.

The text does have a curious lack of coverage, or even reference, to tourism in China. Given this industry's phenomenal growth and the spatial impacts it has engendered, tourism is an important topic that should be covered in a text claiming to address China's contemporary changes and challenges. China's remarkable rise from practically no international tourists in the late 1970s to today, when it receives 57 million international tourists a year (only surpassed by France, the United States, and Spain), as well as the unprecedented number of domestic tourists traveling within the country, requires a text on the geography of China to pay attention to the tourist industry.

Another notable absence in the text is a discussion of regional differences along cultural dimensions. Chapter 2's coverage of China's physical geography does include a discussion of the diverse physical landscapes of the country, including eastern China, southwest China, northeast China, and western China. But the discussion of China's national minorities in the chapter on politics would be strengthened with some recognition of the differing cultural landscapes that are created by these minorities and how they compare to Han cultural landscapes.

This edition's visual presentation is better than previous editions, with much better cartographic unity, as maps show a greater visual consistency across chapters. Figures and maps are crisp and clean, and will provide instructors with many visuals for possible classroom use. While this edition does have more photographs than previous editions, there are still not enough photographs to adequately present China's geography. There are numerous chapters that have no photographs, but the chapter on cities includes about a dozen photographs and provides a good visualization of China's contemporary urban landscapes.

In the book's last two chapters, Veck and Pannell cover the physical and human geography of Taiwan in one chapter and Hong Kong and

Macau in the final chapter. Additional material in each chapter deals with place-specific issues such as a discussion of Taiwan's political relationship with China and the dramatic growth of the gaming industry in Macau since the 1999 handover.

While this text is most appropriate for a college-level course on the geography of China or Asia, it provides an excellent source of information for high school or middle school teachers whose curricula includes Asia. Teachers should greatly benefit from purchasing the text, as it will become an often-referenced and easily accessible source of information on China. Of particular note are the references at the end of each chapter, which include a robust list of academic journal articles, recent news stories, and classic sources. For example, the chapter on environmental issues lists forty-four references, with many of them dated within the last five years. The text has a companion website with digital versions of the visuals used in the text and additional materials not in the text. This text fills a significant gap in English-written geography books about China and should be on the shelf of anyone interested in a comprehensive geographic survey of the lands of China. ■

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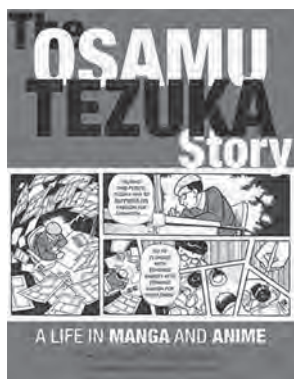
CRAIG R. LAING is an Associate Professor of Geography in the Department of Social, Cultural, and Justice Studies at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. He has spent a month and a half in China on two separate visits. One of these trips was a field seminar to Yunnan Province to study the province's ethnic minorities, sponsored by the Asian Studies Development Program of the University of Hawai'i East-West Center. He regularly teaches a course on the geography of East Asia.

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## The Osamu Tezuka Story A Life in Manga and Anime

BY TOSHIO BAN AND TEZUKA PRODUCTIONS  
TRANSLATED BY FREDERIK L. SCHODT  
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA: STONE BRIDGE PRESS, 2016  
928 PAGES, ISBN: 978-1611720259, PAPERBACK

Reviewed by William Tsutsui



Tezuka Osamu is hardly a household name in the United States, even in the fan communities that so eagerly consume the products of the Japanese pop culture industry that Tezuka was instrumental in building after World War II. In Japan, however, Tezuka is revered as a “god of *manga*,” a pioneer in the development of comics and animation, and, as one recent biographer described him, an almost-superhuman figure, “like Walt Disney, Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, Tim Burton, Arthur C. Clarke, and Carl Sagan

all rolled into one.”<sup>1</sup> A remarkably prolific artist, author, and entrepreneur, Tezuka created a staggering 150,000 manga pages, sixty animated films and series, and a host of iconic characters—from the Jungle Emperor, known to American audiences as Kimba the White Lion, to Tetsuwan Atom, the

endearing robot beloved internationally as Astro Boy. Ranging widely across styles and genres—he was just as comfortable penning sci-fi epics and lighthearted animal tales as hard-edge suspense stories and softcore pornography—Tezuka’s imagination, popular appeal, and sheer productivity drove the postwar boom in manga and anime that swept Japan and eventually spread around the world.

*The Osamu Tezuka Story* is a biography in manga form drawn by Ban Toshio, one of Tezuka’s closest associates, and the team of illustrators at Tezuka Productions, the comics and animation studio that Tezuka founded. It was originally serialized in Japan from 1989 to 1992, in the years immediately following Tezuka’s death. The English translation of what is a truly monumental volume (914 pages, including a short introduction and a comprehensive listing of Tezuka’s manga and anime works) was done by Frederik Schodt, a well-known authority on Japanese comics and a long-time friend and interpreter for Tezuka.

This book traces Tezuka’s life and career in deep chronological detail, setting his personal story against the dramatic historical backdrop of Japan during the Shōwa Period (1926–1989). Tezuka’s lifespan, in fact, overlapped almost exactly with the reign of the Shōwa Emperor. He was born two years after Hirohito ascended to the throne and died just one month after Hirohito’s passing. The eldest child of a privileged, progressive-minded family in the suburbs of Osaka, Tezuka was a bright and precocious youth with many interests, including reading, nature (especially insects), astronomy, movies, and music. Tezuka followed in the footsteps of his many ancestors who were distinguished physicians, training to be a medical doctor. But his true passion was always manga, and he compulsively drew cartoons and honed his skills as an artist and storyteller from the time he was in primary school. Ban’s graphic biography meticulously charts Tezuka’s rise from a young up-and-comer on the Osaka manga scene to Japan’s most popular comic artist to a pioneer in cinematic and television anime to a leading force in the internationalization of Japanese popular culture.

Readers already familiar with Tezuka’s work will find much in this volume of interest. The origins of many of the characteristic themes in Tezuka’s creations can, for example, be traced to formative personal experiences. His concern for the environment and fascination with metamorphosis grew from his childhood obsession with collecting beetles and moths, and his pacifist leanings and apocalyptic imagination grew from the trauma of surviving the wartime firebombing of Osaka. The influence of American comic books and Hollywood movies on Tezuka was also profound, and his fixation on Disney cartoons is well-documented here. He watched *Snow White* more than fifty times and *Bambi* more than eighty. Ban also explores Tezuka’s stylistic genius and the numerous innovations he brought to manga, from a bold cinematic style rich in visual effects (such as close-ups and cutbacks) to the groundbreaking development of long-format “story manga.” For readers without previous exposure to Tezuka’s work, however, this book may be more overwhelming than enlightening. Even a dedicated fan of Japanese pop culture could easily feel lost in the whirl of manga series and anime productions touched upon only fleetingly here and, even by the end of this long biography, be uncertain of what set Tezuka apart as an artist and pioneer beyond his incredibly prolific output over the postwar decades.

Some of this volume’s most fascinating insights are into the inner workings of Japan’s publishing industry and the emergence of anime as a major cultural force. Tezuka rose to prominence in a time of tremendous, seemingly insatiable demand for manga, as Japanese children, and increasingly adults as well, eagerly sought distractions after wartime deprivation and through the struggles of postwar recovery.

In this environment, competition—both among publishers and individual manga artists—was often cutthroat, and much of this book recounts