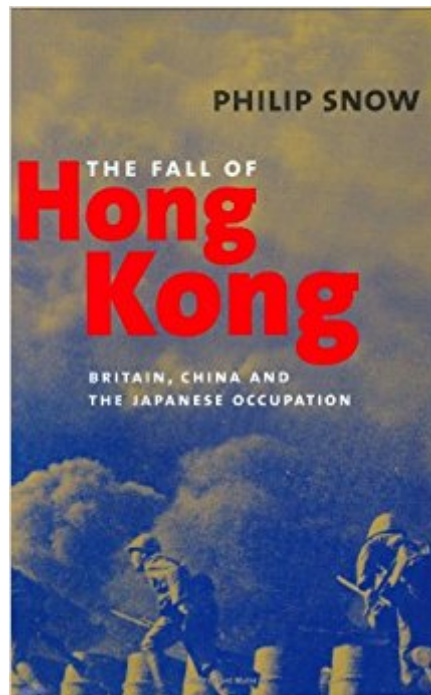




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The Fall Of Hong Kong: Britain, China, And The Japanese Occupation



Synopsis

An account of the wartime history of Hong Kong. On Christmas Day 1941 the Japanese captured Hong Kong, and Britain lost control of its Chinese colony for almost four years. The Japanese occupation was a turning point in the slow historical process by which the British were to be expelled from the colony and from four centuries of influence in East Asia. In this narrative, Philip Snow unravels the dramatic story of the occupation from the viewpoint of all the key players - the Hong Kong Chinese, the British, the Japanese, and the mainland Chinese - and reinterprets the subsequent evolution of Hong Kong in the light of this half-buried episode. Drawing on a range of sources across continents and across languages, Snow reveals what really happened: the widespread desertion of the British by Chinese personnel during the invasion; the acquiescence of the Asian upper class in the Japanese takeover; the vicious cruelty of the Japanese conquerors to the Chinese masses; and the post-war British decision to draw a veil over the occupation's murkier aspects. Now, with Hong Kong returned to the Chinese and its future closely tied to the commercial influence of Japan, the colony's wartime nemesis may hold the key to its survival in the 21st century.

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Customer Reviews

The definitive account of the wartime history of Hong Kong

"[The Fall of Hong Kong] is very different, and very good. . . . Where [Snow] comes into its own is in his use of Japanese and Chinese as well as British sources, which offer a much more nuanced

picture than has appeared before in English of life among Hong Kong's different communities before and during the Japanese occupation."•Economist --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

As a professional writer I can be especially critical on an author who does not do his homeworks or leaves imagination at home. This historically detailed book is a must for any reader who is interested in the history, prewar culture and military blunders of WWII Hong Kong. It is a must read.

It's a clean copy arriving on time

"At 7pm, Shaftain received information that the Triads on The Island had laid plans for an uprising timed to take place at 3am on 13 December. The uprising was to entail nothing less than the massacre of the entire European population." The British reached out to a KMT-connected Shanghainese triad leader to negotiate terms with these creeps who agreed to not cause trouble in exchange for ... MONEY - which eventually the Shanghainese leader agreed to cover from his own deep pockets if the British promised to reimburse him after the war. I can't imagine him calling in this "debt" at the end of Three Days and Eight Months. That's your Chinese life that is being defended as well by white devils. I am familiar from a distance of that ill-reputed Chinese selfishness and shortsightedness. I'm not sure if it's real or really that unswayable. But it holds dire consequences for all the Chinese if this really happened and I don't see any softening of regard as justifiable. If you were willing to kill the people defending the Island and their families because of their foreignness, because of the Unequal Treaties four years after the uncommon conduct of The Rape of Nanjing, then that's it. No leniency at all for you. May everyone who falls into that category of endangering law and order be ruled with an iron hand. There's no point being hippies about this. Forget about their rights. Forget about soft spokenness. It's not their due. I think it was in an episode of the Sopranos when organized crime seemed to not notice that they were dealing with terrorists. Very different from the long circulated story that Italian American mobsters helped the Allies with connections in Southern Italy. Let's hope that only the good story is true in times of war with an enemy whose zero sum perspective is established. How the colonial defenders were treated by the Japanese and how the Chinese and Indians were okay with it ... it's very Cultural Revolution. Just because the Japanese order the British to pull rickshaws for Indian and Chinese passengers or turn a blind eye to British locals being overcharged does not mean that as a Chinese or Indian, you have to play along when the Japanese are not in the vicinity. So was Churchill right to demand that the

British defend Hong Kong despite guaranteed defeat? In those Three Years and Eight Months, the Colonizers and the Colonized got to know each other as never before. Both Chinese and Indians offered support to British POWs and others in the form of food and medical care as well as guerilla fighters. What became clearer was how nice the nice ones were on the other side of the table and how absolutely unforgivable the bad ones were. ALL THANKS TO THE JAPANESE TRESPASSERS.***** And it calls into question the intended target of the waxworks remark made by Prince Charles regarding the lamented 1997 Handover as well as the dire predictions made about the Chinese changing street signs and taking over positions of authority - that never happened with the handover but it DID happen when the Japanese invaded and took over the governance. Colonizers and Colonized are all in it together THANKS TO THE JAPANESE.

Like the other reviewer, I thought the cover photo did the book a slight injustice, as did the sub-title. When I bought the book a couple years ago, I, too, thought it was a military history of Hong Kong during WWII and the Japanese occupation. But as I got into the book, I realized it included a whole lot more. I don't normally read military histories, but have been reading about Hong Kong for 20 years and picked up the book because it dealt with the territory. I loved Snow's ability to tell the story of 20th century Hong Kong from the perspective of all the players: the Cantonese, Japanese, British, Indians, Eurasians, and Nationalist and Communist mainland Chinese. He shows the good and bad of all these groups and adds colorful characteristics of some of the more eccentric players, like the one-legged General Chan Chuk of the Nationalist army. Before I read this book, I had no idea that Britain's return to HK after WWII was basically a stroke of luck. If there hadn't been a brewing civil war on the mainland, or if Roosevelt had not died before the end of WWII, HK would have been returned to the mainland upon the Japanese surrender. I also learned that for a time just after the war, the British wanted to completely change HK society, doing away with the apartheid state that existed before the war. With the appointment of Grantham as governor (who ironically has a secondary school in HK named after him), most of those reforms were pulled back and not re-introduced until years later. I would have liked to know more about the Indians after 1952, when they were kicked out of the police force. I know that most of the security guards in banks and gold shops in present day HK are Sikh, but always thought that they had retired from the police before the handover. From "The Fall of Hong Kong", it would seem unlikely that these guards were ever in the force. I also would have liked to learn about the other European communities in Hong Kong before and after the fall, like the Jews and Russians, but Snow hardly mentions them. Nonetheless, I found "The Fall of Hong Kong" to be the most comprehensive history of modern Hong Kong.

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