

Empires. This was the case of cities ranging from Alexandria to Thessaloniki, Sarajevo and many more. Yet, for the most part these cities have known varied processes of 'ethnic cleansing' since the rise of nationalism. By contrast, it is precisely in the relatively homogenous West European cities that pluralism again emerges under a new form and changing conditions.

*Michel Romann*  
Tel-Aviv University

THE DRAGON'S HEAD: SHANGHAI, CHINA'S EMERGING MEGACITY edited by Harold D. Foster, David Chuenyan Lai, and Zhou Naisheng. Victoria, B.C.: Canadian Western Geographical Series, Vol. 34, Department of Geography, University of Victoria, 1998.

This volume represents a tangible result of an exchange program between the departments of Geography at the University of Victoria and at East China Normal University. Since 1982, each year two faculty members from East China Normal University have had the opportunity to study in Victoria, while two students from the University of Victoria have studied in Shanghai.

The book consists of a series of twenty-three chapters by the Chinese faculty who studied in Victoria. The materials are grouped around five main themes: Physical Milieu, Resources, Transportation, Urban Growth, Commercial and Industrial Development. The chapters are all short, averaging some 12 pages each. The time period covered in the essays focuses on the early to mid-1990s. Data sets covering similar topics, however, are not necessarily consistent in terms of either time or quantity. In general the methodological approach used in virtually all the essays is descriptive rather than analytical. Many chapters, such as the ones on vegetation and soils, contain long lists with little or any commentary or explication. In addition, there appears to be little attempt to explain what has been described. Only rarely, such as in the case of the relationship between rainfall and flooding, are attempts made to suggest what future research needs to be carried out in the Shanghai area.

In presenting the materials, the authors cite only recent works in Chinese, even when materials in English by Chinese authors are readily available. By limiting the background literature, the authors rob the reader of any sense of how the questions addressed in the book were dealt with over time. As such, there is little feeling for the process of evaluating materials and creating or deriving conclusions. Given the many changes in policy regarding how the economy of China should be developed, such omissions restrict our ability to fully understand the hopes that planners have for transforming Shanghai into a world financial center, a theme which is found in many of the chapters dealing with economic geography and planning. A final characteristic of how the diverse materials have been approached is the very uneven use of maps. The best and most frequent use of maps are to be found in the chapters on physical topics, such as those dealing with rain storms or the urban heat island, although even here longish lists of data sometimes do not match well with the graphics.

Where maps would have been most helpful, for example in the chapters on population decline and distribution, on the shifting location of commerce and industry, or regional planning, there are virtually no maps and no references to other maps in the book, which might have assisted the reader in understanding the sometimes very detailed descriptions of individual streets or regions.

Given the encyclopedic nature of the presentations, the chapters in the book are best read on a as-need basis, rather than parts of a comprehensive whole. There are several reasons for this suggestion. First, although the editors have produced a volume which has but an occasional spelling error or mismatch between figure labels and text references, they have permitted a considerable amount of overlap and duplication from chapter to chapter, which can be very distracting. Thus the reader is repeatedly told that the climate of Shanghai is subtropical, that the headwaters of the numerous streams crisscrossing the area are found in the Tai Lake, that the rivers that surround Shanghai are tidal, that the population during the 1990s was around 12.9 million, that Shanghai is the second largest city in China, that the early history of Shanghai as a modern port was due to the British winning the Opium Wars during the 1840s, and that the growth of Shanghai's and evolution into a major financial center through the end of World War II and the Chinese Civil War was cut off after 1949. Unfortunately this overlap and duplication is hard to manage or reconcile without reading the entire volume since there is no index, although the chapters on geomorphology, climate, soils, vegetation, rainfall, and the urban climate make a conscious effort to explicitly link materials from one chapter to another. Second, there is little consistency between chapters in citation format: some chapters use footnotes, while others use a modified Harvard system, where the entire name of the author is used.

There appears to be no rationale for listing works in the end of chapter bibliographies—for sure, none follows alphabetical order. No comprehensive bibliography is included at the end of the book. Third, since there is no introduction, the reader is left without a clear sense of how Shanghai as a city and region is administratively defined or structured. For example, nowhere in any of the chapters is there any mention of the fact that Shanghai was deliberately overbounded in the 1950s, although large increases in area or population are mentioned. Without this key piece of information, it is hard to understand the scale of Shanghai, the presence, changes, and potential of agriculture in the regional economy, population movements to and within the region, or the challenges in exploiting what are seen as key or pillar industries, which could be used to move Shanghai into the ranks of the major world cities or financial centers.

Despite the seeming weakness of this book, it does belong on the bookshelf of China geographers and those interested in the role of major cities in regional and national development. The book does contain a wealth of information. It demonstrates the progress that China geographers have made since the 1980s in analyzing problems. It provides a basis for future research.

*Roger Mark Selya*  
University of Cincinnati