Bernhardt positions herself in opposition to the Japanese pioneers of the field of Chinese property and inheritance law who paid little attention to change over time. Arguing that the trajectory of Chinese property law looks different when viewed from women's vantage point, she underscores two major changes. In the early Ming the widow of a man without sons was required for the first time to appoint a posthumous heir from among his agnatic nephews, a ruling that hurt both daughters and widows. It not only eliminated the possibility of daughters inheriting in default of a brother, but also the possibility of a widow either gaining full rights of her husband's property or choosing a more distantly related young child with whom she could form a mother-son bond. Its impact on widows, however, was mitigated by the second major change. Beginning in the late Ming, as the cult of widow chastity grew, judges came more and more to protect the right of a chaste widow to choose an heir she liked, seeing her as in need of more protection than the principle of patrilineal transmission of property. Bernhardt's findings here are important and raise many questions for social and cultural historians to tackle, both concerning the cultural environment that led to these legal innovations and the impact of them on the choices families made as they maneuvered around the law.

Long parts of Bernhardt's historical sketch are devoted to arguing against the common view that daughters had stronger claims to property in Song times than before or after, requiring the author to dispute the interpretation of a series of legal cases. Bernhardt usefully points to the legacy of the Tang equal field system and the Song government's interest in appropriating land of extinct households. Her interpretation rests primarily on her conclusion that one key author was mistaken in his understanding of the law. Specialists will want to work their way through this material carefully, consult the newly available translation of key source material (Brian E. McKnight and James T. C. Liu, trans., *The Enlightened Judgments: Ch'ing-ming Chi*, SUNY Press, 1999), and the forthcoming book-length study by Bettine Birge.

This fluently written book could easily be assigned to students. Bernhardt has immersed herself in Chinese legal writings and excels at explicating judges' decisions. Moreover, her long historical sweep provides ideal material for discussion. My only real complaint is that I would have liked more. It may seem unfair to ask that a book that already surveys 989 years cover another decade, but I would have appreciated an epilogue on the connections between the legal rulings of the Republican period and the better-known changes in the law after 1949, both in the mainland and in Taiwan. Since, as she notes, during the Republican period the new code had nearly no impact outside large cities and even in the cities was not well understood, I was left wondering whether I should be interested in the rulings of the 1930s and 1940s strictly as examples of the difficulty of mixing principles drawn from two radically different legal systems, or whether they were a necessary stage in the transformation of the legal basis of the Chinese family over the course of the twentieth century, which would make them much more important in Chinese social history and women's history.

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Hong Kong Remembers. Edited by SALLY BLYTH and IAN WOTHERSPOON. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1996. 285 pp.

Hong Kong's Transitions, 1842–1997. Edited by JUDITH M. BROWN and ROSEMARY FOOT. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997. xiv, 213 pp. $59.95 (cloth).

The Challenge of Hong Kong's Reintegration with China. Edited by MING K. CHAN. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1997. xx, 221 pp. $27.00 (paper).

Hong Kong: An Appointment with China. By STEVE TSANG. London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 1997. xiii, 274 pp. $17.95 (paper).

One sometimes wishes that history were more logical. If the Qing rulers had not been so preoccupied with keeping the "barbarians" at arm's length, the British would not have bothered to acquire the fishing village of Hong Kong (HK)—they would probably have chosen a more developed place like Shanghai. If Britain had genuinely sympathized with a struggling China, it could have returned HK between the two World Wars. If the Chinese Communists had wanted to recover HK when they first came to power, this territory would have long been "liberated." Lastly, if Tianamnen had not occurred, HK's transitional politics and the retrocession itself would not have been nearly this dramatic.

One can think of other "ifs," but the four books under review deal, all quite ably, with what actually happened. *Hong Kong Remembers* contains reminiscences of events in HK from the 1940s to the present. Thirty people, including HK's top policy-makers of different eras, political activists, business people, professionals, and artists all sat down to talk. They did not speak as academics offering hypotheses and propositions, nor as politicians waxing polemic. Most relived their personal experiences. The result is a historical mosaic of vivid, often opinionated, but all informative views of how they think HK arrived where it is today. Readers with a keen eye can gather rich information on such issues as corruption and riots in the 1960s and 1970s and Sino-British negotiations and local politics in the 1980s and 1990s.

Hong Kong: An Appointment is a gem of a little book, a concise history of the kind that could be written only by a master hand. In just over 200 pages, the book covers the HK issue from its inception as a colony to Sino-British negotiations and democratization during the transition. Unlike the other three books, it also deals with the consideration and policy-making of the People's Republic of China (PRC) toward HK. It is easily accessible to general readers but will also be valuable to scholars, especially because of its detailed notes.

Hong Kong's Transitions is a collection of articles that zeroes in on the present from a distance both chronological and geographical. Contributions explore HK in the context of overall British colonial policy and Sino-British relations, of its overseas communities, and of its global economic links. Other contributions reflect on the meaning of being Chinese in HK.

The Challenges takes a largely social science approach. The contributions focus on contemporary issues such as the problems reintegration would pose to HK's legal system, civil service, democratic institutions, media, and public confidence. Most are scholarly and highly informative.

Some of the region's best scholars and leading public figures have contributed to these volumes, which constitute a most welcome addition to the small but rapidly growing literature on HK. If there is one common theme that ties them together, it is the anxiety over HK's future. There is an apparent lack of confidence in the feasibility of the "one country, two systems" concept, which, as Deng envisaged, would keep China's socialism and HK's capitalism apart while bringing them together under one sovereignty. But in the view of many contributors, what HK will be like largely depends on the future of China and, to a lesser extent, vice versa. On the one hand, John P. Burns argues that how China's policy toward the civil servants of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) is implemented "depends on China's experience of managing issues such as accountability, neutrality, and selection in its own civil service" (*The Challenge*, p. 44). On the other hand, Ming K. Chan suggests that "how the Chinese communist leadership manages HKSAR will shape its agenda for domestic modernization and reform" (*The Challenge*, p. 26). In the same vein, Michael Yahuda titles his chapter "HK: A New Beginning for China?" (*Hong Kong's Transitions*, pp. 192–210).

Integrating these two systems is fraught with problems. Indeed, if China were democratic, the HK issue as we know it wouldn't exist. And, in the long run, HK will have much influence on the mainland. In this sense, the above observations are incisive. But these are also long-range analyses and may not be very helpful for our understanding of what happens in the shorter term.

James T. H. Tang' s contribution (*The Challenge*, pp. 177–97) partially corrects this either/or disposition by noting that neither globalization nor nationalism should be understood simply as a one-directional development. The former stresses the liberalizing impact of global economic interdependence; the latter emphasizes the rise of Chinese nationalism and reassertion of control over HK. Tang cautions that the nationalism school should not overlook the impact of globalism on the perceptions and behavior of Chinese leaders, and the globalists should avoid the tendency to underestimate the resilience of the Chinese state. Indeed, many of the developments during HK's transition and indeed in China during the reform era can be understood in the context of this tension. China has "muddled through" for almost two decades and perhaps so will HK. It may very well be that HK will become neither just a political backwater nor the model democracy which it never was. Failure to appreciate this possibility will not only color what we see in HK but skew our understanding of its importance.

Steve Tsang's book paints a more contingent picture. HK's future will depend not only on such long-term variables as China's system, but perhaps even more on the interactions between HKSAR and China's central government. Tsang suggests, sadly but I think correctly, that "to minimize the erosion of its own system and way of life, the SAR must exercise enough self-restraint to make sure that its continuance does not threaten the socialist [i.e., communist] system in the PRC" (*Hong Kong—An Appointment*, p. 219). Ironically, the more secure Chinese leaders feel about their control over HKSAR, the more autonomy HK will probably get. Much will also hinge on the trust level between HKSAR's Chief Executive and the central leaders.

Many of the writings under review make reference to the golden-goose argument—that HK's economic significance and China's high stakes there require self-restraint on the part of Beijing. This argument, however, has seldom been empirically examined. Economic interdependence doesn't operate in a vacuum, and China's rational self-interest is at least in part defined by its anticipation of the HK business community's response to its policies. One way to examine the problem is to

look at the HK business community's influence on China's HK policy. But there seems to be a moral hurdle. HK's business community has been roundly condemned for not standing up for democracy. But one can argue that while it failed to support rapid democratization in HK, it doesn't always side with China, especially on such issues as free flow of information, fair play, and the rule of law. Because of the importance that Beijing attaches to the united front, HK's business community has and will continue to exert some restraint on Beijing.

Two questions arise. First, what should be the basis for evaluating HK's future condition, the health of participatory democracy or continued stability and prosperity? Ming K. Chan's reference to "economic prosperity, social freedom and political democracy" (*The Challenge*, p. 25) suggests it is both. But in the short to medium term, their relationship may not be a linear one. Indeed, as Michael Taylor suggests, so long as China's economy stays sound, HK will continue to enjoy prosperity, regardless of the political developments.

The other question has a heavy moral undertone. To the extent that the role of HK's business community is mentioned at all, it is often in a negative context. Alvin Y. So refers to the ties between Beijing and HK's business people as the "unholy alliance" (*The Challenge*, p. 51). Steve Tsang talks about the business community's "resilience" only in the sense of survival. Even in *HK Remembers* this is evident. Lo Kok Shing is the business representative pitted against Martin Lee—HK's most celebrated gadfly, Jimmy Lai—the political iconoclast, and student activists who came of age politically after Tianamen. But the choice of Lo is unfortunate in that among HK's business people, he is more a caricature than a true representative. His reputation is so dubious that even China long ago stopped considering him a credible friend. In contrast, there were others who turned down the personal wishes of China's top leaders to start a newspaper or a political party in HK and deliberately put some distance between themselves and the Beijing regime when Beijing was not acting in HK's interest. Business people are interested first and foremost in their own businesses, but in HK, that interest may not always be so different from the interests of the larger community. To the extent that these interests overlap, HK's business community may have a constructive role to play in terms of HK's future. We may not be able to resolve the moral dilemma involved, but more studies should examine this issue.

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Cognitive Processing of Chinese and Related Asian Languages. Edited by HSUAN-CHIH CHEN. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1997. xvii, 456 pp. $39.50 (paper).

This book is the latest in an informal series of volumes that comprise papers presented at language processing conferences in China, Japan, Hong Kong, and Taiwan over the past two decades. On the positive side, the volume represents an improvement over its predecessors because it is better produced, because it more fully represents the range of work being done in the field, and because it downplays the field's traditional overemphasis on Chinese character processing by including articles in other important but neglected areas. On the down side, the quality of the contributions is still somewhat variable.