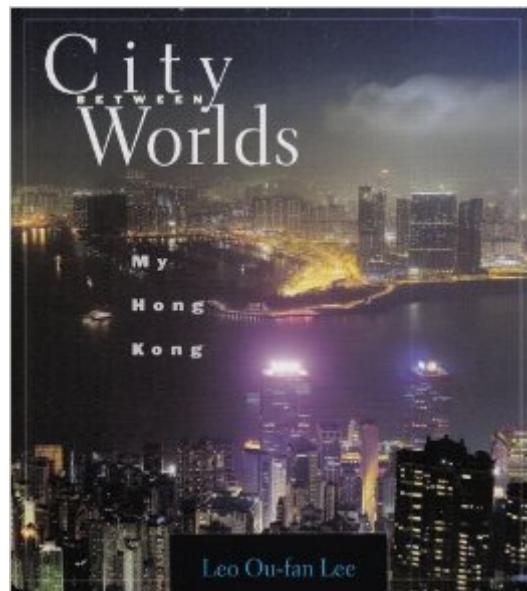


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City Between Worlds: My Hong Kong



Synopsis

Hong Kong is perched on the fault line between China and the West, a Special Administrative Region of the PRC. Leo Ou-fan Lee offers an insider's view of Hong Kong, capturing the history and culture that make his densely packed home city so different from its generic neighbors. The search for an indigenous Hong Kong takes Lee to the wet markets and corner bookshops of congested Mong Kok, remote fishing villages and mountainside temples, teahouses and noodle stalls, Cantonese opera and Cantopop. But he also finds the "cereal" Hong Kong in a maze of interconnected shopping malls, a jungle of high-rise residential towers, and the neon glow of Chinese-owned skyscrapers in the Central Business District, where land development, global trade, capital accumulation, consumerism, and free-market competition trump every value—except family. Lee illuminates the relationship between Hong Kong's geography and its colonial experience, revisiting colonial life on the secluded Peak, in the opium-filled godowns along the harborfront, and in crowded, plague-infested tenements. He examines, with a critic's eye, the "Hong Kong story" in film and fiction: romance in the bars and brothels of Wan Chai, crime in the walled city of Kowloon, ennui on the eve of the 1997 handover. Whether viewed from Tsing Yi Bridge or the deck of the Star Ferry, from Victoria Peak or Lion Rock, Hong Kong sparkles here in all its multifaceted complexity, a city forever between worlds.

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Customer Reviews

City Between Worlds is not a travel book; it is much more. Its author, Leo Ou-fan Lee, is a long-time resident of Hong Kong who appreciates the multiple facets of the city and understands that Hong

Kong means quite different things to different groups of people. First, says Lee, there is the Hong Kong from the perspective of a native, someone who has grown up there and experienced it as the context for everyday life. Then there is the expat Hong Kong, the city to which thousands come to work in its robust finance center, and which drew the European powers of old to colonize the island for trade. The English created the third, colonial Hong Kong, yet another face of the city and one that, although disappearing, still retains a hold on the imaginations of many. Finally, there is the fourth Hong Kong, an emerging urban and global consciousness that encompasses and transcends all three of the other perspectives. This is, largely, the lens through which Lee reveals Hong Kong to his readers, "voicing opinions, wherever possible, on behalf of a Chinese community whose members have not chosen to write about their city in English. It is for the views of these Cantonese speakers that I purchased this book, as I feel a need to learn a bit more about Hong Kong than what the city presents to the casual tourist or career-focused expat. I am looking forward to spending two months in Hong Kong this summer with a group of graduate students who will be doing field research. I believe that our experience of the city will be enriched by Lee's book, which gives a much broader view of Hong Kong than most of the other books currently available.

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