



# Colonial Legacies: Economic and Social Development in East and Southeast Asia

*Anne E. Booth*

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It is well known that Taiwan and South Korea, both former Japanese colonies, achieved rapid growth and industrialization after 1960. The performance of former European and American colonies (Malaysia, Singapore, Burma, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Indonesia, and the Philippines) has been less impressive. Some scholars have attributed the difference to better infrastructure and greater access to education in Japan's colonies. Anne Booth examines and critiques such arguments in this ambitious comparative study of economic development in East and Southeast Asia from the beginning of the twentieth century until the 1960s. Booth takes an in-depth look at the nature and consequences of colonial policies for a wide range of factors, including the growth of export-oriented agriculture and the development of manufacturing industry. She evaluates the impact of colonial policies on the growth and diversification of the market economy and on the welfare of indigenous populations. Indicators such as educational enrollments, infant mortality rates, and crude death rates are used to compare living standards across East and Southeast Asia in the 1930s. Her analysis of the impact that Japan's Greater Asian Co-Prosperty Sphere and later invasion and conquest had on the region and the living standards of its people leads to a discussion of the painful and protracted transition to independence following Japan's defeat. Throughout Booth emphasizes the great variety of economic and social policies pursued by the various colonial governments and the diversity of outcomes. Lucidly and accessibly written, "Colonial Legacies" offers a balanced and elegantly nuanced exploration of a complex historical reality. It will be a lasting contribution to scholarship on the modern economic history of East and Southeast Asia and of special interest to those concerned with the dynamics of development and the history of colonial regimes.

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