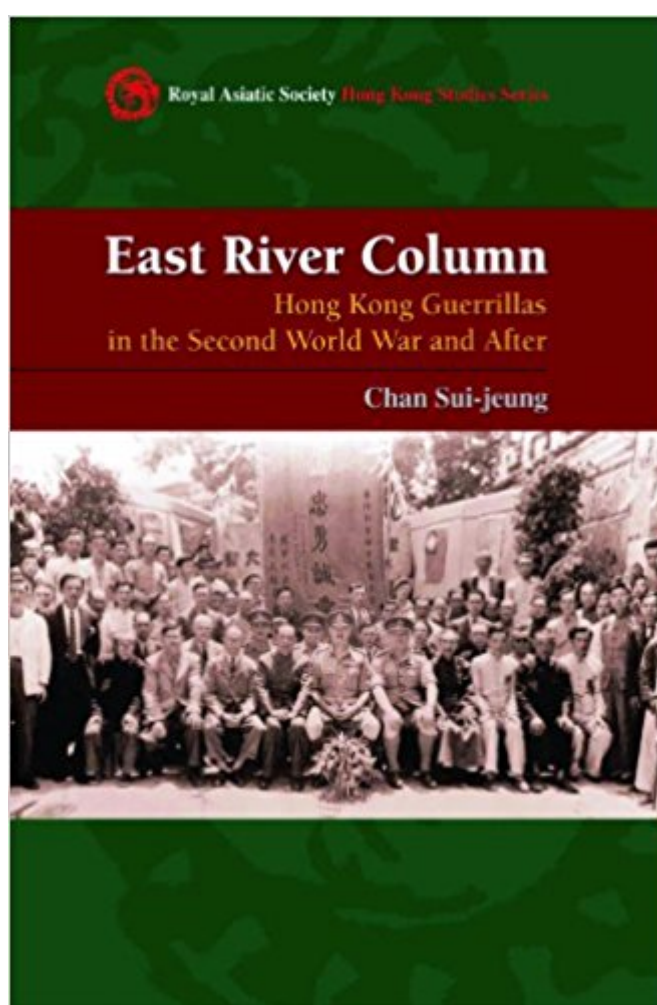


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East River Column: Hong Kong Guerrillas In The Second World War And After (Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Studies Series)



Synopsis

Hong Kong's story in the Second World War has been predominantly told as a story of the British forces and their defeat on Christmas Day 1941. But there is another story: the Chinese guerrilla forces who harassed the Japanese throughout the occupation played a crucial part in the escapes from Hong Kong's prisoner of war camps and in rescuing Allied airmen. This neglected part of Hong Kong's war is Chan Sui-jeung's topic in this pioneering book informed by his many contacts with participants in the guerrilla warfare.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Here for the first time in English is a comprehensive account of the huge contribution made by Chinese guerrillas to Hong Kong's resistance in the Second World War. In rescuing this story from oblivion through 25 years of interviews and documentary research, Chan Sui-jeung has rendered a major service to the history of Hong Kong and Guangdong province. (Philip Snow, author of *The Fall of Hong Kong*)

From 1968 to 1994, Chan Sui-jeung was a career Administrative Officer of the Hong Kong Civil Service. From 1980 to 1984, he was District Officer, Sai Kung, New Territories Administration, where he met many of the veterans of the East River Column. For over 20 years, he has been an Honorary Research Fellow of the Centre of Asian Studies at the University of Hong Kong.

There are plenty of books about the occupation of Hong Kong during WWII, but this is the first that takes an in-depth look at the patriotic soldiers that made up the East River Column in Hong Kong and southern China. For the most part, these guerrillas were peace-loving, apolitical men and women who wanted to be free from Japanese occupation. They were affiliated with the CCP in China, but worked with KMT soldiers and foreigners in a collaborative effort to bring peace to southern China and Hong Kong. Chan Sui-jeung provides a short bio of each character in the book, which is fascinating in itself. But what really struck me about this book was what happened after the war. Chan shows that the East River Column members who went on to hold leadership positions in the beginning years of the PRC for the most part were held back by the leadership in Beijing. Some were even imprisoned and tortured during the Cultural Revolution for collaborating with the KMT and foreigners during WWII. His book leads one to wonder how the second half of the 20th century could have turned out differently for China had Cantonese leaders been allowed to thrive.

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