

## Recent Books from Taiwan – March 2009

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The Chinese Encounter with Opium: Dreams of Colored Clouds and Orchid Fragrance / K. Flow

Taipei: SMC Publishing Inc., 2009  
426p,; 29cm  
ISBN-13: 9789576387135(HB)  
\$ 96.00  
ID: 106123

The smoking of opium was a very large subject in the past centuries both in international context and for the Chinese as a nation. This work does not focus on the purely political role opium played, but indicates the impact on daily life and the genesis of a narcotic culture which soon evolved. There was an almost hypnotic, irresistible attraction which the exotic fragrance of smoking this narcotic yet benevolent substance had over large parts of the Chinese population both in China and abroad. The general healing and life-enhancing properties of opium combined with the leisurely ritual using the beautiful, symbol-adorned smoking paraphernalia. Only toward the mid-twentieth century did the smoking of opium finally fade away - under strong political pressure, but also giving way to a faster, less leisurely lifestyle seeking quick hard experience. During almost three centuries - from smoking tobacco with opium to the final sublimely refined mode of smoking pure opium in a peculiar, Chinese-designed pipe, the transformation from medicine to anti-malarial fumes to a "heavenly fragrance" widening perceptions of existence, opium smoking captivated a huge number of people. It initiated capital accumulation to start new ways of economic development, it aided countless artists (singers, actors, artisans) to perform their skills, it improved memory and alertness to pass examinations, it supported the poor to withstand back-breaking work. The list of opium's benefit is long and it touched all strata of society. The arts and craft displayed are now rare witness to the enormous fascination. Opium smoking held over many millions of people for such a long period. The book serves as a visual guide to the material culture of opium smoking as well as the underlying fabrics of its integration into Chinese daily life.

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From the Background to the Fore: The Development of Gender Equality in Taiwan  
Taiwan: A Production of Kwang Hwa Mass Communications, 2008  
DVD; 48 Min  
ISBN-13: 4718000200288  
Chinese, English, French, Spanish, German, Japanese & Russian Language  
\$ 15.00

Since the promulgation of the Constitution in 1947, Taiwan's people have all been equal before the law. However, for a long time, unequal demands of and constraints on women remained embedded in traditional society and people's minds. The women's movement in Taiwan began in 1970. After nearly 40 years of striving for personal security, employment rights, and gender equity education, women's status in Taiwan has notably improved and constructive actions have been taken. Today, gender equity has become a universal value in Taiwan. The next goal, toward which more effort is needed, is to make progress on gender issues concerning minority groups.

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The Story of Taiwan's Industry Clusters

Taiwan: A Production of Kwang Hwa Mass Communications, 2008

DVD; 45 Min

ISBN-13: 4718000200295

Chinese, English, French, Spanish, German, Japanese & Russian Language

\$ 15.00

Taiwan has a booming IT industry and is one of the world's major manufacturers. Though its area is only a little over 35,000 sq. km, Taiwan has over 70 industry clusters. With their tight upstream and downstream structures and unrivalled efficiency and flexibility, these clusters are among the most competitive of their kind globally.

High-tech products are not the only flourishing industry in Taiwan. With continuous innovation, handcrafted goods and traditional industries that grew out of the country's local culture have also gained a competitive edge.

This film follows the stories of the growth of four unique industry clusters in Taiwan, the yacht industry in Kaohsiung City, the orchid industry in Chiayi and Tainan countries; the saxophone industry in Houli; and the machinery industry in Tatchung. Each of these clusters has become internationally renowned, and as the film demonstrates, even though their industry structures have changed, they have managed to adapt and remain leaders in their fields.

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