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Imperial Contagions: Medicine, Hygiene, and Cultures of Planning in Asia.

Edited by Robert Peckham and David M. Pomfret. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013. Pp. xi+307. \$25.

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This collection of essays edited by two history professors of the University of Hong Kong is an important addition to the growing literature on colonial medicine and public health in Asia. The book is interdisciplinary, with contributions from historians, geographers, and architects working mostly on British colonial cities in different parts of Asia (Hong Kong, Shanghai, Singapore, Delhi) and French Indochina in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It sheds new light on the spatial management of colonial Asian cities, a set of arrangements designed to tackle epidemiological threats that simultaneously articulated deeply seated social, racial, and political conflicts and anxieties.

In the afterword, Priscilla Wald summarizes neatly the book's main contribution: it illustrates the "pathologization of places by the colonial state and the spatial responses instigated to curtail the diffusion of disease" (p. 217), although the word "disease" has to be interpreted broadly to include social and moral pathology. The two editors highlight "enclavism" as a key idea underlying the spatial responses described in this book. It characterized the reaction to the threat of contagious diseases even when colonial states were apparently shifting toward more "open" modern public health strategies. Robert Peckham's analysis of Alexandre Yersin's makeshift laboratory in Hong Kong during the 1894 plague epidemic is an inspiring example of how the re-invention of an indigenous makeshift structure created a perfect modern "techno-scientific enclave" for exploring cutting-edge bacteriological knowledge in the field. Here Yersin was no less resourceful than urban elites of contemporary neighboring Canton city in Qing China where "a temporary plague hospital was put up in the western part [of the city], which had the merit of being thoroughly ventilated, and was kept very clean. It was a large mat shed built on piles over the water" (observation by American doctor John Kerr, working in the Canton Hospital, in *The China Medical Missionary Journal* 8, no. 4 [1894], p. 180).

Pomfret's description of the segregated, hygienic enclave in Victoria Peak in Hong Kong and in Dalat (Annam) for British and French children, on the other hand, addresses not only the threat of contagious diseases but above all racial and political tensions in the colonial context. This intriguing example echoes most interestingly the studies on housing and politics of property in colonial Singapore and Hong Kong by Jiat-Hwee Chang and Cecilia Chu, and that on urban planning in India by Stephen Legg. These papers highlight contradictions inherent in the colonies' sanitary and

housing needs that could not be easily generalized along simple racial or class lines. The volume successfully demonstrates that the “outward” shift from enclavism to public health was not a straightforward history that some earlier colonial studies wanted to show, but a complicated process involving variegated indigenous traditions and their interactions with changing politics of the metropole.

The pathologization of places, another main theme of the book, is clearly illustrated in Laurence Monnais’s paper on malaria control in French Indochina. Monnais convincingly shows how the French colonialists’ civilizing mission, focusing on improving the economic life of the indigenous population, resulted, in fact, in the wider spread of malaria, largely due to the expanding railroad network. While the colonial government worked hard to make sure that natural resources and goods circulated efficiently through modern technology, it never paid as much attention to the distribution of quinine in the region.

The inspiring studies in this volume, while inviting readers to reflect more deeply about the complex historical processes of hygienic modernity in colonial Asia, stop short at making more critical comparisons with other colonial sites, including Taiwan, Korea, and Manchuria in the Japanese Empire, the Philippines under the Americans, the Dutch East Indies, or China as a “semicolonial” region. But the research momentum gathered on health issues in colonial Asia in recent years does suggest that the field may soon be ready for a new phase of dialogues to explore this important period of Asian history from the perspective of biopower. The authors of *Imperial Contagions* should be thanked for having taken us a step closer toward that exciting phase.

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Everyday Technology: Machines and the Making of India’s Modernity.

By David Arnold. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.
Pp. 224. \$30.

This book is about small technologies in India. In particular, it focuses on several factory-produced goods that became embedded in the everyday lives of Indians. Through these goods, David Arnold narrates the story of Indian modernity and the making of its various utopias. He identifies the period between 1905 and 1914 as India’s “technological watershed” (p. 20), marked by the influx of various new machines, such as sewing machines,