Solly’s book is a pleasant coffee-table read and quite humorous in places. The best aspect of it, for me, is the collection of early photographs. Some are well known, others are unusual and interesting – particularly of spectacular buildings long since demolished (critics would say destroyed). Solly’s preservational instincts come through strongly here, an issue on which we are decidedly of the same mind.

PETER HALLIDAY

Gillian Bickley, *The Development of Education in Hong Kong, 1841-1897, as Revealed by the Early Education Reports of the Hong Kong Government, 1848-1896*, Hong Kong: Proverse Hong Kong, 633 pages, with a Preface by Edward Ho, a Foreword by Matthew Cheung, an Introduction by Ruth Hayhoe and a Commentary by Verner Bickley. From the Preface: ‘Following the return of Hong Kong to China, there has been increasing interest in Hong Kong’s heritage. There is also increasing interest in the history of Hong Kong. *The Development of Education in Hong Kong, 1841-1897*, as Revealed by the Early Education Reports of the Hong Kong Government, 1948-1896 is a contribution towards the conservation and understanding of one aspect of Hong Kong’s heritage while also providing a resource for the study of Hong Kong history. This book, sponsored by the Council of the Lord Wilson Heritage Trust, presents as part of Hong Kong’s heritage the official record of the early educational work of the British Hong Kong administration, in place from 1841 to 1897. The Reports now published together in sequence, corrected and edited, for the first time, give insight into the development of Hong Kong society, particularly of course its educational system and the administration of education, but also the relationships between and among the different groups of people living in Hong Kong, with their varying aspirations and different ways of living and thinking. This
interesting and significant book makes available material which up to now has been virtually inaccessible.'

Gillian’s book reproduces the 50 or so education reports to the Colonial Secretary, and in some cases the Governor himself (it is not clear how they have been ‘corrected and edited’). The reports consume 381 pages plus another 134 pages for ‘Notes.’ The Bibliography runs to 12 pages and the Index to 42. This leaves 50 pages or so for the actual book.

The *Historical and Editorial Introduction* is an interesting read until it reaches the ‘editorial’ part. Someone obviously did a great deal of work transcribing the actual reports, many of which would have been in longhand (presumably this is where the sponsorship from the Wilson Heritage Trust kicked in). One is struck by the candour of these early reports. People were much more apt to speak their minds in those days - a point which Gillian makes and with which I totally agree. Furthermore, people’s publicly expressed views tended to be rather more considered and erudite than is currently the case in Hong Kong (albeit rudeness, invective and diatribe have become deliberate political weapons). Her four short biographies of Hong Kong’s early educationalists (Smith, Legge, Stewart and Eitel) are well written. As to the reports being ‘virtually inaccessible,’ well all are available at the Public Record Building, in Kwun Tong, but Gillian has, nevertheless, brought them all together for the benefit of “couch researchers.” The Conclusion starts promisingly but deteriorates into a rather patronising dismissal of other writers on the subject of education in Hong Kong who, compared with Gillian, “didn’t get it quite right.”

Perusing the Reports, I was struck by early references to ‘learning by rote.’ Things have clearly not changed, as I can testify to in the case of my own kids, who come home laden like packhorses with homework and who are finding school increasingly dull and uninspiring. The litmus test of education in any given country/territory should surely be: Does it produce world leaders/Nobels/inventions/putting men on the Moon etc? Hong Kong, unfortunately, has some way to go in this regard and what irritates me intensely is that we have been talking about “doing something about” the education system here for over 40 years.

In the bibliography, a reference to Postiglione’s (1992) *Education*
and Society in Hong Kong would have been merited.

Clearly a book into which Gillian has put a great deal of effort.

PETER HALLIDAY


Philip Snow has done historians of Hong Kong a great service in producing this generally excellent book. His grasp of the sources for the period 1940-1946 is wide. He has consulted archives in London, Hong Kong, Tokyo, and Taipei (although he seems to have missed the Harcourt archive, and the unpublished war-diaries in the Muniments of the Imperial War Museum, in London), and has read very widely, consulting both collections of original documents and secondary material, in Chinese and Japanese as well as in English. The index to the book is excellent - indeed, rather better than merely excellent. The result is a book which will be a standard for many years to come. The plates included, however, are relatively ordinary: more plates, and plates more tightly connected with the text, would have been valuable. More photographs of the major figures of the Occupation period, both Japanese and local Chinese, would have been very welcome. As so often, alas, better maps would have benefited the book greatly.

Despite the title, the book has relatively little to say on the Battle of Hong Kong, the actual progress of the fighting in Hong Kong, or the fall of Hong Kong: presumably because there are other books which cover the actual fighting well. What the book does above all is illustrate in detail, and very convincingly, the months leading up to the Battle (the Governorship of Sir Mark Young), the developments in Hong Kong under the Japanese, and the post-war period of the Harcourt and restored Mark Young administrations. None of these periods has been entirely adequately covered elsewhere, and this book is the more valuable in consequence.

The book is particularly valuable in clearly identifying the changes which took place in Japanese attitudes to Hong Kong in the 3 years and