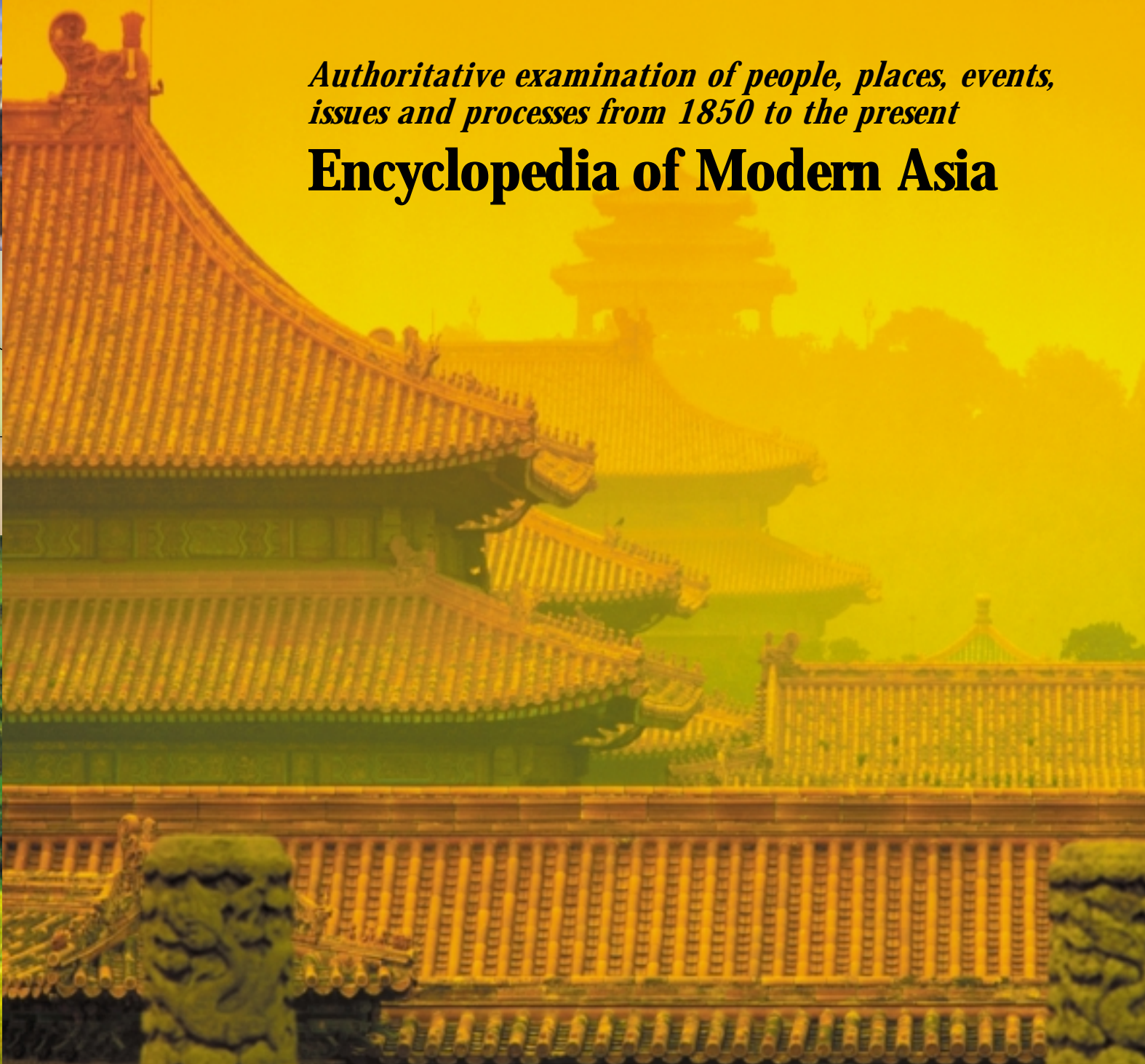


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Encyclopedia of Modern Asia



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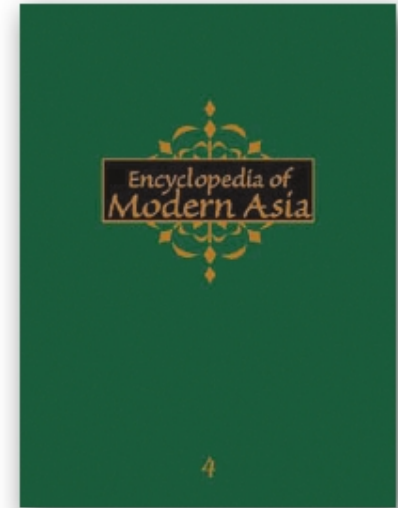
The *Encyclopedia of Modern Asia* provides students, scholars, professionals and general readers access to information and knowledge about key people, places, events, issues and processes across Asia. Comprehensive, authoritative and fully cross-disciplinary, the *Encyclopedia's* focus is Asia since 1850, but ample historical information makes clear how the past influences the present as well as the future.

The *Encyclopedia's* world systems view of Asia treats Asian nations and their institutions as increasingly significant participants in regional and international economic, political and cultural networks. Previously ignored topics now take center stage: contemporary political and business networks; human rights issues; regional environmental pollution; the role of women in Asian societies; regional and sub-regional alliances; ethnic and religious conflicts; internal and external migrations; demographic transitions; and tourism.

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The sheer scale of Asia — 30 percent of the earth's surface and 60 percent of its population — demands a new orientation for the global citizens of a new century. Asia contains the world's most populous nations — China and India — and six of the world's 10 most widely spoken languages originated there. Tens of millions of people of Asian ancestry live elsewhere in the world. Never before has a single authoritative source on Asia been so relevant.

Nine of the world's fastest growing economies are in Asia, with China, Thailand and South Korea leading the list. High school and college curricula now require the study of non-Western history and cultures, and interest in Asian studies is growing. Global communications allow for regular and uncensored contact between people in Asia and the West. The hundreds of thousands of young people from Asian nations who now live, study and work in Western nations are also important, creating millions of human connections between Asia and the West.



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What is Asia?: Diversity and Continuity

"Asia" is an imagined concept. There is not now, nor has there ever been, a single Asia. The idea of one Asia — often called "the Orient" — was the product of a Western worldview in which the peoples and nations of Asia were perceived as fundamentally different from the peoples and nations of the Western world. The reality of Asia is far more complex. The *Encyclopedia of Modern Asia* emphasizes diversity, with attention given to each region and each nation.

The *Encyclopedia of Modern Asia* uses a broad, inclusive definition of Asia:

- **West Asia:** Iran, Iraq, Turkey
- **Southwest Asia:** Afghanistan, Pakistan
- **Central Asia:** Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan
- **East Asia:** China, Siberia, Japan, Mongolia, North Korea, South Korea, Taiwan
- **Southeast Asia:** Brunei, Cambodia, East Timor, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam
- **South Asia:** Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma (Myanmar), India, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka

Amid all the diversity, the *Encyclopedia* emphasizes some elements of broad regional continuity — such as Buddhism and Islam and wet rice agriculture. It also tracks the growing process of westernization — or Americanization — as evidenced by the proliferation of U.S. firms and businesses and the growing use of the English language. Here, too, is the challenge of anti-westernization and anti-Americanism. The *Encyclopedia* is the essential tool for understanding the new world order and the growing opposition it has inspired.

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Encyclopedia of Modern Asia: The Team: Nearly 700 people helped develop, write and compile the *Encyclopedia of Modern Asia*. Directed by David Levinson and Karen Christensen, the project team of editors and contributors was truly international. Asian scholars from 60 nations contributed to the *Encyclopedia*. Contributors also include journalists, businesspeople and government employees representing a wide range of disciplines, including: history, archaeology, anthropology, sociology, literature, linguistics, religious studies, economics, demography, geography, management, law, medicine, political science, art history, history of science and regional studies.

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