Multination States in Asia

As countries in Asia try to create unified polities, many face challenges within their own borders from minority groups seeking independence. This book brings together international experts on countries in all regions of Asia to debate how differently they have responded to this problem. Why have some Asian countries, for example, clamped down on their national minorities in favor of homogeneity, where as others have been willing to accommodate statehood or at least some form of political autonomy? Together these experts point out broad patterns and explanatory factors that are rooted in the domestic arena, including state structure and regime type, as well as historical trajectories. In particular, they find that both the paths to independence and the cultural elements that have been used to define post-colonial identities have decisively influenced state strategies. This is a global phenomenon – and this book explains the broader theoretical and political implications – but violence and ethnic unrest have been particularly prevalent in Asia. This is as true of China in its relationship to Tibet as it is of Burma and Sri Lanka in relation to their national minorities. As the first book to analyze this phenomenon across Asia, *Multination States in Asia* will attract a readership of students and scholars across a broad range of disciplines.

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Multination States in Asia

Accommodation or Resistance

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## Contents

*List of Tables and Figures* .......................... page vii  
*List of Maps* ........................................... ix  
*List of Contributors* ................................... xi  
*Acknowledgments* ....................................... xiii

1. Introduction ............................................. 1  
   Jacques Bertrand and André Laliberté

2. Revolutionary State Formation and the Unitary Republic of Indonesia ............................................. 29  
   Anthony Reid

3. The Crisis of Border States in India ......................... 51  
   Rajeev Bhargava

4. Pakistan: Neither State nor Nation .......................... 81  
   Sumit Ganguly

5. Constitutional Politics and Crisis in Sri Lanka ............... 103  
   Sujit Choudhry

6. The Dilemmas of Burma’s Multinational Society ................. 136  
   Ardeth Maung Thawngmung

7. The Double-Edged Sword of Autonomy in Indonesia and the Philippines ............................................. 164  
   Jacques Bertrand

8. China and the Virtual Taiwan Nation .......................... 196  
   André Laliberté

9. The Failure of Ideologies in China’s Relations with Tibetans ............................................. 219  
   Gray Tuttle
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 Leninism’s Long Shadow in Central Asia</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Schatz</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Conclusion</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacques Bertrand and André Laliberté</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables and Figures

TABLES

1.1 Proportion of sub-state national groups per region  page 10
1.2 Sub-state national groups by region  11
3.1 Population by religion (India)  60
3.2 Population by major language group (India)  61
3.3 States and union territories by population size (India)  62

FIGURES

1.1 Proportion of sub-state national groups per region  12
9.1 Tibetan autonomous units of government in the People’s Republic of China  220
List of Maps

1. Pakistan, Northern India, and Bangladesh  page xv
2. Southern India and Sri Lanka  xvi
3. Burma (Myanmar)  xvii
4. China  xviii
5. Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines  xix
6. Central Asia  xx
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This book has its origins in a workshop held at the University of Toronto in September 2007 on “Multination States: East and West.” It first posed as an empirical puzzle a contrast between European and North American experiences in the recognition and accommodation of sub-state nations, and Asian ones, which are deemed far less responsive to these groups. It soon became clear that such a contrast was exaggerated, if not altogether wrong. Variance within Asia seemed just as large as between some of its counterparts in Europe and North America. If fact, this variance became the new question that our book addresses. Rich discussions at this workshop provided the stimulus for this volume, and we are very grateful for the inspiring quality of those exchanges. We would like to thank those who provided formal comments on those initial papers, including Tutku Aydin, Bruce Berman, Joe Carens, Marijo Demers, Susan Henders, Rafael Iacovino, Sanjay Jeram, Elisabeth King, Marie-Eve Reny, Richard Simeon, Arjun Tremblay, Phil Triadafilopoulos, and Luc Turgeon. Of course, this book relies on the contributions from our authors, who have been exemplary in their dedication to this project. Ardeth Thawnghmung and Gray Tuttle deserve our particular gratitude for having stepped in late, long after the workshop, and enriched our comparative analysis by adding further cases.

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of the EDG project is to explore the ways in which societies respond to the opportunities and challenges raised by ethnic, linguistic, religious, and cultural differences, and to do so in ways that promote democracy, social justice, peace, and stability. The EDG team strives to produce a “toolbox of conceptual and practical options” reflected both in innovative academic analysis and in an array of strategies available to citizens and governments working through their own ethno-cultural conflicts, tensions, and opportunities. It is our hope that readers will discover embedded within this book – and in other EDG outputs – new understandings of previously neglected or understudied aspects of the nature of ethnic-identity formation, the causes of ethnic conflict, and the relationship between ethnic conflict and democratic governance.

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Jacques Bertrand and André Laliberté
Maps

Map 1. Pakistan, Northern India, and Bangladesh.
Map 2. Southern India and Sri Lanka.
Map 5. Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines.