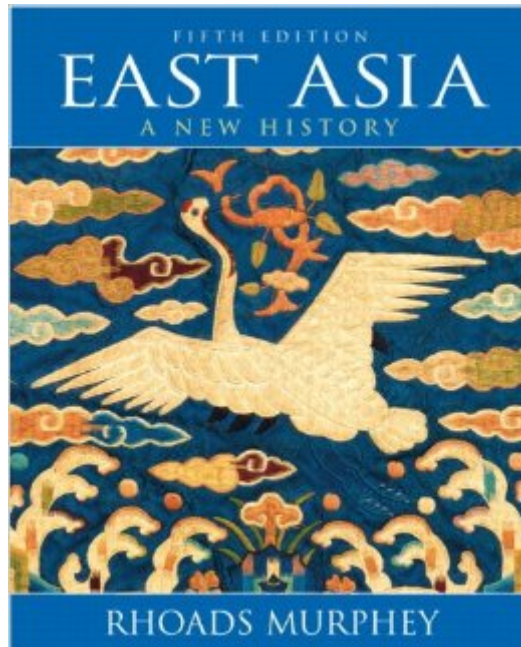


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# East Asia: A New History (5th Edition)



## Synopsis

This accessible text offers a comprehensive history of China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam, including coverage of everyday life, women and gender-related issues, and the environment—topics often neglected in other texts. Throughout his distinguished career, author Rhoads Murphey has inspired within students an appreciation for the rich and unique history of Asia. The Fifth Edition of this text on East Asia is certain to bring this fascinating region to life for many of today's students.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I found this book in 1997 after desperately searching for something to replace Shirokauer's creaky Modern China and Japan. I have used it for several Modern East Asia courses and am presently using it for a Traditional East Asia survey, and I find that students of all levels of knowledge appreciate it. It does have a few shortcomings, as I feel would be the case for any textbook on Asia, as the topic is so expansive and many situations are downright confusing. However, it gives a good balance of political to social history, has extremely useful maps and insets, and the writing is consistently good. I would also recommend it for the casual reader who wants to get a decent background on Asian culture.

There are a few weaknesses and factual errors in this book. 1. Index is very weak. Many important concepts are not listed in the index. 2. Too much emphasis on ancient/imperial China but not enough coverage of modern and contemporary East Asia. 3. Organization is puzzling. For instance,

such an important historical period as the Northern Expedition is put under the chapter "China and Japan: the Road to War." This is an important period that deserves to have its own chapter.<sup>4</sup> Opinions(?) as facts. On page 349, the following description is given: "Zhang Xueliang and his troops kidnapped Chiang Kai-shek where he was spending a few days at a hot spring resort (with a lady not his wife!) and demanded...." The author has provided no documentation for Chiang's alleged liaison with another woman. Moreover, no other reference to this affair seems to be available in all relevant literature about the Xian Incident and Chiang Kai-shek. Chiang is a controversial figure but this allegation just cannot be supported. Also stated in the book is the following statement: "The [Chinese] communists were tying down about a million Japanese troops..." during WWII. Considering the total number of Japanese troops in China during that period, this is tantamount to suggesting that the communist guerrillas pretty much single-handedly handled all the Japanese troops whereas the Nationalist troops did nothing. This is factually wrong and cannot be supported by historical facts. These are just a few examples of the problems associated with this book. Here is hope that future editions will correct some of the aforementioned problems. The author did make an effort to weave all countries and historical periods together, which was challenging. He succeeded in some areas, but failed in some other.

Rhoads Murphey's *East Asia: A New History* covers everything a lay person needs and wants to know about this complex region and culture. This book is a fascinating and easy-to-read summary of Dr. Murphey's 60-year-long living and teaching experience in China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam and other Asian countries. It is an excellent introduction to Asia not just as a textbook but a very useful primer for corporate executives, professionals and even tourists. I've read this book and its various editions ever since 1973 when I first studied with Professor Murphey as a graduate student. Readers will get from this book not just the facts, images, philosophy and poetry of East Asia. You will see the humanity of a great teacher, scholar, writer and romantic who knows how to make Americans understand and appreciate our fellow men and women of this important part of the world. The book never fails to make me smile and re-discover the many simple truths about cultures that we so easily forget.

This book is written very poorly. I find myself distracted by the informal speech and confusing sentences. This book might be more worth while with A LOT of editing. Typos, run-on sentences (seriously, like a sentence ran on for 12 lines!), and inserting opinion as fact. Very unprofessional. If I didn't need it for school, I would have given up reading it.

Not only did this book help me with my studies and was 40% cheaper than my campus bookstore and it actually helps keep my attention as a good read rather than that of just a book to source in my essay.

I love this book more than life! I will treasure it and will more than likely be using it again for my research!

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