

Peter Kwong. *The New Chinatown.* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1987) 198 pp., \$18.95.

Peter Kwong presents a provocative portrait of Chinese-Americans in *The New Chinatown*. This book describes aspects which have been the basis for the development of Chinese-American culture. However, the book does not (as the title indicates) clearly differentiate between a “new” Chinatown and an “old” Chinatown. Thus, an initial review left this reader wondering why the book is titled as such.

Kwong’s overview of the Chinese-American culture achieves breadth at the expense of depth. Areas covered include the Chinatown ghettos, economic stability in New York’s Chinatown, informal/formal political structures, gangs, Chinese and American labor unions, and grass-roots organizing. His experience and interest in community-based organizations provides a consistent focus in most of his discussions. He is to be commended on his analysis, but again, a more accurate title would give the reader a needed orientation.

This work has strengths and is worthwhile reading. Kwong makes a variety of claims throughout the book and does a good job of substantiating his statements with outside sources. He does an admirable job of meshing statistical data with more subjective observations based on his work in the Chinese-American culture. In one section, Kwong observes “Chinatown is like a warm bath—once a new immigrant decides to settle in, it is difficult to get out, even as the water slowly becomes cold.” He then proceeds to clarify and substantiate this view.

His inclusion of chapter notes, bibliographic sources, and an index clearly meets standards for an investigation such as this. The reader who wishes to pursue topics discussed in the book is provided ample sources for additional reading. Sources noted represent a diversity of perspectives. That is, referencing goes far beyond the acknowledgement of similar works which would have similar agendas.

Kwong presents a relevant portrayal of the Chinese-American ethnic experience. He does this, not as a major objective, but more as a secondary effect of his descriptions and diverse examples. His long term involvement with this culture no doubt adds to the richness of his perspective. Beyond present day events, he provides pertinent historical underpinnings regarding the development of the Chinese-American culture. This development gives a helpful context for the current situation.

A shortcoming of this work is that Kwong does little to suggest possible improvements. His analysis of present problems is appreciated, but a section discussing solutions (and the implementation of such solutions) would give his investigation a more well-rounded appeal. Certainly a person who has thoroughly studied such a topic would have ideas for how the current situation could be enhanced.

Kwong states “outsiders wrongly assume that the Chinese, in the ethnic enclaves into which they were forced a hundred years ago, are

unified, docile, and 'make it.'" Much of the book is dedicated to analyzing the images which perpetuate this assumption. Although many of these images are false, the author gives unique insights on how the foundations of such images are legitimate but how the interpretation of these foundations can be inaccurate. Kwong weaves commonly held notions regarding Chinese-Americans with substantiated interpretations of how and why these notions have evolved. His analysis provides an appreciable understanding of dominant culture white America and how a particular ethnic group is frequently interpreted and misinterpreted.

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Gail H. Landsman. *Sovereignty and Symbol: Indian-White Conflict at Ganienkeh.* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988) xii, 239 pp., \$19.95.

Anthropologist Landsman has written a fascinating study about the events surrounding the seizure of a 612-acre abandoned girls' camp in upstate New York in May 1974 by a group of Mohawks who named their settlement Ganienkeh. The ensuing Indian-white land dispute eventually culminated in the relocation of the Indians to parkland near the Canadian border in 1978 as a result of a unique arrangement, the Turtle Island Trust Agreement, which for "charitable, religious and educational purposes" under New York State law established "a permanent, non-reservation settlement of Indians claiming sovereign status."

In exploring the events surrounding the establishment of the Trust, Landsman utilized a variety of techniques of data collecting. Her fieldwork included open-ended interviewing, participant observation, and the analysis of documents and tapes produced by participants throughout the dispute; she also examined archival materials and reports of the "outside" news media.

Landsman writes from the point of view of "a neutral scholar" who managed to maintain good relations with both Indian and non-Indian informants because she was "unthreatening, honest, and respectful toward informants." Also, the dispute between the two groups was actually "the intersection of two preexisting controversies: the struggle for sovereignty by traditional Mohawks, and the upstate-downstate controversy in New York State politics." Various groups that became involved in the controversy viewed the dispute over Ganienkeh quite differently. By attempting to demonstrate what the dispute really meant to its various participants, Landsman not only provides a model for anthropological field work in a dispute setting but also offers many valuable insights for scholars of Indian-white relations, journalism, and