



The East Asian Challenge for Human Rights

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The "Asian values" argument within the international human rights debate holds that not all Asian states should be expected to protect human rights to the same degree. This position of "cultural relativism," often used by authoritarian governments in Asia to counter charges of human rights violations, has long been dismissed by Western and Asian human rights advocates as a weak excuse. This book moves beyond the politicized rhetoric that has dogged the international debate on human rights to identify the more persuasive contributions by East Asian intellectuals. The editors of this book argue that critical intellectuals in East Asia have begun to chart a middle ground between the extreme, uncompromising ends of this argument, making particular headway in the areas of group rights and economic, social, and cultural (ethnic minority) rights. The chapters form a collective intellectual inquiry into the following four areas: critical perspectives on the "Asian values" debate; theoretical proposals for an improved international human rights regime with greater input from East Asians; the resources within East Asian cultural traditions that can help promote human rights in the region; and key human rights issues facing East Asia as a result of rapid economic growth in the region.

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