

Summary of asia's rise in the 21st century essay sample



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The book I chose to read is titled *Asia's Rise in the 21st Century* by Scott B MacDonald and Jonathan Lemco. One of the main reasons I chose this book was because of its relevance. The book was published in late 2011 so the majority of the material is extremely up to date. The authors did a really nice job organizing the book by first introducing the reader to Asia's historical and current economic position and then thoroughly explaining how Asia has become an economic powerhouse and where the economy will go. The first main topic that stuck out to me in the book was what the authors called the great divergence.

In this section they explained why Asian countries fell behind Europe in regards to economic and technological power. I specifically found the portion on China very interesting. The authors contend that because European countries had a long wave of globalization starting in the fifteenth century the Asian countries fell behind. The authors explained that during the Ming Dynasty the emperor ceased all seaborne voyages and embraced isolationism. As a result this allowed European entry into the Indian Ocean and Asia's waters without contending Chinese naval and economic power.

Also the isolationism and the refusal to accept outside technology during the era from the Ming to the Qing Dynasties resulted in China's inability to receive shiploads of people entering for trade or war. By the Opium war in 1840 European military power was much greater than that of China and resulted in many negative events for China. These events lead to the disorder and chaos that headed the Chinese revolution in 1911. The entire next chapter is dedicated to what the authors labeled as *The Rise of China*.

Here they examined Deng Xiaoping and his contributions thoroughly.

Starting by explaining how prior to Deng's short time with power, China was one of the leading opponents to globalization. The authors also did a really good job laying out Deng's unbelievably troublesome rise to power. By constructing a timeline with his time at a rural tractor factory during the start of the Cultural Revolution, and then to his very brief 3 years as premier deputy from 1973-1976. During which he created a government agenda he called the Four Modernizations.

This focused on improving agriculture, industry, technology, and defense, as well as stimulating a struggling economy. Then after more hardships including being ousted once again he rose to power again. This time creating Special Economic Zones and Township Village Enterprises as well as much more. Deng died in 1997 and the authors state that his most notable accomplishments included raising the standard of living for hundreds of millions of Chinese citizens and transforming China from an inward-looking agriculturally dominated economy into an industrial socialist market country.

Having large and fast economic growth in China inevitably leads to major economic challenges. The authors list tons of challenges that China faced but one that I found interesting because we were in such large cities was Urbanization. According to the book, Chinese cities are expected to grow by at least 300 million by 2020. This rapid urbanization has numerous implications for housing, education, food procurement, traffic congestion, crime, and health care. Another major challenge that China is facing is protecting the environment.

The book concludes with explaining that China has many paths it can choose to pursue in the future. These paths range all the way from viewing the United States, western powers and Japan as a major threat to once again laying low with Deng Xiaoping's ways of thinking. I really enjoyed this book because it analyzed Asia as a whole coming to power, with an emphasis on China and how quickly it became a fore runner in the world economy. Also learning about the historical, current, and future challenges which China has or will face was very interesting.