

The Ambivalent Consumer: Questioning Consumption in East Asia and the West



In *The Ambivalent Consumer*, Sheldon Garon and Patricia L. Maclachlan bring together an array of scholars who explore the ambivalence provoked, especially in East and Southeast Asia, by the global spread of American consumer culture. As the world's second-largest economy, Japan has long engaged in a vibrant consumerism tempered by deeply held beliefs about morality, thrift, community, and national identity. Its neighbors in East and Southeast Asia—South Korea, China, Malaysia, and Singapore—have likewise anxiously balanced consumption and saving. The first comparative volume to examine global phenomena of consumer culture from the perspective of East Asia, this book analyzes not only the attractions of mass consumption but also the many discontents and dilemmas that arise from consumerism. Placing Japan and the United States in a transnational context, the book's contributors find that European countries more closely resemble Japan than they do the United States in their saving rates, consumption levels, environmental concerns, and discomfort with consumer credit. *The Ambivalent Consumer* offers a useful perspective on the political economies of consumption to address such pressing topics as movements against genetically modified foods; shifting relations among consumers, producers, and states; the differential influence of gender on consumption; and conflicting consumer attitudes toward globalization. Contributors: Takatsugu Akaishi, Nagasaki University; Lizabeth Cohen, Harvard University; Deborah S. Davis, Yale University; Sheldon Garon, Princeton University; Andrew Gordon, Harvard University; Charles Yuji Horioka, Osaka University; Patricia L. Maclachlan, University of Texas at Austin; Laura C. Nelson, California State University, East Bay; Takao Nishimura, Yokohama National University; Jordan Sand, Georgetown

University;Sven Steinmo, University of Colorado at Boulder;Frank Trentmann, Birkbeck College, University of London;Shunya Yoshimi, Tokyo University

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