



# The Common Law in Two Voices: Language, Law, and the Postcolonial Dilemma in Hong Kong

*Kwai Hang Ng*

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**The Common Law in Two Voices: Language, Law, and the Postcolonial Dilemma in Hong Kong** Kwai Hang Ng

Hong Kong is one of the very few places in the world where the common law can be practiced in a language other than English. Introduced into the courtroom over a decade ago, Cantonese has significantly altered the everyday working of the common law in China's most Westernized city. In *The Common Law in Two Voices*, Ng explores how English and Cantonese respectively reinforce and undermine the practice of legal formalism.

This first-ever ethnographic study of Hong Kong's unique legal system in the midst of social and political transition, this book provides important insights into the social nature of language and the work of institutions. Ng contends that the dilemma of legal bilingualism in Hong Kong is emblematic of the inherent tensions of postcolonial Hong Kong. Through the legal dramas presented in the book, readers will get a fresh look at the former British colony that is now searching for its identity within a powerful China.

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