



The Portuguese in the East: A Cultural History of a Maritime Trading Empire (International Library of Colonial History)

Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya

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Vasco da Gama's voyage to India in the late 15th Century opened up new economic and cultural horizons for the Portuguese. At the height of Portugal's maritime influence, it had created an oceanic state ranging from the Cape of Good Hope to China. While Portugal's direct political influence in Asia was comparatively short-lived, its linguistic influence remains. Here Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya charts the influences of the Portuguese in more than fifty Asian tongues, illustrating the extent of Lusitanian links. Luso-Asian influence became engrained in eastern cultures in more subtle ways than other European empires which followed, such as the Portuguese oral traditions in folk literature, now embedded in postcolonial Asian music and song. These Portuguese cultural legacies are a lasting reminder of an unexpected outcome of seaborne commerce.

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