Book Reviews

- Peter Boomgaard, Christine Dobbin, Asian entrepreneurial minorities; Conjoint communities in the making of the world economy, 1570-1940. Richmond: Curzon Press, 1996, xiii + 246 pp. [Nordic Institute of Asian Studies Monograph Series 71.]
- Ian Brown, Fukuda Shozo, With sweat and abacus; Economic roles of Southeast Asian Chinese on the eve of World War II, edited by George Hicks. Singapore: Select Books, 1995, xii + 246 pp.
- Ian Brown, George Hicks, Chinese organisations in Southeast Asia in the 1930s. Singapore: Select Books, 1996, xv + 168 pp.
- Matthew I. Cohen, Laurie J. Sears, Shadows of empire; Colonial discourse and Javanese tales. Durham/London: Duke University Press, 1996, xxi + 349 pp.
- J. van Goor, Anthony Reid, Southeast Asia in the age of commerce 1450-1680. Vol. II: Expansion and crisis. New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1993, xv + 390 pp.
- J. van Goor, Anthony Reid, Southeast Asia in the age of commerce 1450-1680. Vol. I: The lands below the winds. New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1988, xvi + 275 pp.
- David Henley, Saya S. Shiraishi, Young heroes; The Indonesian family in politics. Ithaca/New York: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, Southeast Asia Program Publications, 1997, 183 pp. [Studies on Southeast Asia 22.]
- Gerrit Knaap, P. Jobse, Bronnen betreffende de Midden-Molukken 1900-1942. Den Haag: Instituut voor Nederlandse Geschiedenis, 1997. 4 volumes. Rijks Geschiedkundige Publicatiën, Kleine Serie, 81, 82, 83, 84. Volume 1 bewerkt door P. Jobse, 2 en 3 door Ch.F. van Fraassen, 4 door Ch.F. van Fraassen en P. Jobse. xii + 578, xii + 578, xii + 711, x + 655, xi + 261 pp., Ch. F. van Fraassen (eds.)
- Indro Nugroho-Heins, Clara Brakel-Papenhuyzen, Classical Javanese dance; The Surakarta tradition and its terminology. Leiden: KITLV Press, 1995, xi + 252 pp. [Verhandelingen 155.]
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- Jaap Timmer, Aletta Biersack, Papuan borderlands; Huli, Duna, and Ipili perspectives on the Papua New Guinea Highlands. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995, xii + 440 pp., bibliography, index.

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Book Reviews

Christine Dobbin, *Asian entrepreneurial minorities; Conjoint communities in the making of the world-economy, 1570-1940*. Richmond: Curzon Press, 1996, xiii + 246 pp. [Nordic Institute of Asian Studies Monograph Series 71.] ISBN 0.7007.0404.3 (hardback). Price £ 45.-, ISBN 0.7007.0443.4 (paperback). Price £ 16.99.

PETER BOOMGAARD

The outstanding economic performance over the last decades of countries such as Taiwan, Hongkong, Singapore, and, recently, China, has been attributed by some scholars to the influence of Confucianism. Whatever the merits of this explanation, many scholars of earlier times were convinced that Confucianism was inimical to the 'modern capitalist spirit'. While it will obviously be quite difficult to reconcile these two views, it is also clear that attempts to explain the roots of economic success in terms of religion or world-view have not lost their appeal since the days of Max Weber's *The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism*.

Christine Dobbin, whose track record includes publications on the history of both India and Indonesia, has now joined the ranks of the 'Religion and Capitalism' crowd (no disrespect intended). In her book, she compares five Asian entrepreneurial minority (diaspora) communities which, by and large, have operated quite successfully over periods ranging from one century to three centuries or more. Dobbin calls them 'conjoint communities', because they all thrived under the eegis of, and in cooperation with, the colonial powers in Asia and Africa: the Spaniards in the Philippines, the Dutch in Indonesia, and the British in India, Burma, and East Africa. The communities she deals with are the Chinese mestizos in the Philippines, the Peranakan Chinese in Indonesia, the Parsis in Bombay, the Ismailis in Zanzibar and East Africa, and the Nattukottia Chettiars in Madras and Burma.

The author presents a fairly detailed description of each community, starting with their origins outside the region where they became successful. She then deals with what she calls the 'preadaptations' that explain part of their success. In their countries of adoption, members of these 'diasporas' became important traders, moneylenders, bankers, tax farmers, and sometimes even landowners. They were able to deal with segments of the local economy that were inaccessible to the large European merchant

companies and to the European colonial powers. The merchant companies and colonial governments, in turn, granted the minorities concerned the protection of the state and other forms of support. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, certain groups within these minority communities also made a successful transition to modern industrial enterprise.

Some of these success stories are probably familiar to readers interested in South and Southeast Asia, but few such readers can have been aware of the existence of an entire category of successful trading minorities. In my opinion it is in this comparative perspective that the main merit of Dobbin's book lies. In addition, however, it is also well written, and indeed approaches the 'unputdownable' quality so often attributed to crime novels.

Faced with so many cases of trading diasporas doing well, even to the point of making the transition to industrial entrepreneurship (a transition widely regarded as a litmus test for the 'modern capitalist spirit'), few authors could resist formulating a more or less elaborate explanatory theory. Dobbin is no exception, and in her introduction she casts her net widely, introducing relevant theoretical notions from the writings of – among others – Georg Simmel, Werner Sombart, Max Weber, and Joseph Schumpeter. In her conclusion she then links Schumpeter's notion of 'creative response' with the 'stranger' status (Simmel, Sombart) of the successful minorities. Her own contribution is the argument that all these conjoint communities 'possessed dual or multiple identities' (p. 199). 'Enlarging upon Weber', she continues, 'we may say that the spirit of capitalism in South and Southeast Asia can be discovered in as many spiritual sources as make up an identity, under conditions of stranger status. Where more than one spiritual source makes up an identity, economic creativity would appear to be heightened' (p. 200).

I must confess that I find this latter statement particularly hard to accept. Even if there is indeed a strong link between creativity and entrepreneurial success (and I would be prepared to argue that many successful entrepreneurs are actually just hard-nosed businessmen), the notion that economic creativity increases in proportion to the number of spiritual sources that make up an identity seems neither warranted by the case-studies presented here, nor intrinsically very plausible. In my experience, to have drunk from (too) many spiritual sources is not conducive to becoming imbued with the 'modern capitalist spirit', but rather to becoming utterly confused. This, however, is clearly more a matter of opinion than the result of rigorously tested hypotheses. The reader who does not like (part of) the theoretical conclusions of this otherwise admirable study can always substitute his or her own.

George Hicks (ed.), *Chinese organisations in Southeast Asia in the 1930s*. Singapore: Select Books, 1996, xv + 168 pp. ISBN 981.00.6969.3. Sing\$ 34,95.

Fukuda Shozo (George Hicks, ed.), *With sweat and abacus; Economic roles of Southeast Asian Chinese on the eve of World War II*. Singapore: Select Books, 1995, xii + 246 pp. ISBN 981.00.6101.8. Sing\$ 52,-.

IAN BROWN

These two books are translations of Japanese studies on the Chinese in Southeast Asia, first published in 1943 and 1939 respectively. The first, *Chinese organisations in Southeast Asia in the 1930s*, was published by the External Affairs Section of the Taiwan Government-General, and is an important fruit of the very considerable intelligence-gathering undertaken by the Japanese on the Chinese in Southeast Asia in the 1920s and 1930s. The three central chapters examine the structure and types of Chinese organization in the region, and then provide a detailed description of the Chinese organizations in each country in Southeast Asia – although the Dutch East Indies and Siam receive less attention than they deserve. In a valuable introductory comment, Edgar Wickberg argues that the study offers two main benefits to modern scholars: it assists towards an understanding of the position of the Chinese in Southeast Asia in the critical decade of the 1930s; and it provides a baseline for comparison with the major Western-language studies of the Chinese in Southeast Asia which appeared in the 1950s and 1960s. But this may be overstating the case. Substantial passages of the book are given over to small detail of no great importance – for example, the reproduction in Chapter 4 of the constitutions of Chinese organizations, clause by clause. In addition, the book frequently betrays its nature as an intelligence report rather than an academic study, not least by concentrating on those Chinese organizations in Southeast Asia which were seen to be, or suspected of being, opposed to Japanese interests. Some of the language here is chilling, as in the final paragraph: 'We should thoroughly eradicate all Overseas Chinese organizations that have been manipulated for the purposes of political movements and all hidden troublemakers should be eradicated' (p.164).

The second book, *With sweat and abacus; Economic roles of Southeast Asian Chinese on the eve of World War II*, is a far more substantial contribution. Its author, Fukuda Shozo, undertook the research while attached to the East Asian Common Culture Academy in Shanghai in the late 1930s. Later he became Director of the Third Research Committee of the East Asia Institute, and, from 1958 to his death in 1973, professor of economics at Chuo University in Tokyo. The book provides, notably in Chapter V, a

highly detailed account of the economic interests of the Overseas Chinese in each of the main countries of Southeast Asia. Chapters VI and VII examine the economic relationships between the Chinese in Southeast Asia and, respectively, China and Japan. A major strength of this book is its statistical compilations. One notable table, on p. 48, provides estimates of the value of overseas Chinese investment in British Malaya, the Netherlands East Indies, the Philippines, French Indo-China, and Siam for 1930, by major economic sector. It is immediately followed, on pp. 50-51, by a summary table of Chinese economic control in each country. This table, as Jamie Mackie notes in a valuable introduction, 'looks so effortless [but] must have been immensely difficult to compile: no one has managed anything comparable during the past 40 years' (p. viii). This book is essential reading for anyone interested in the economy of Southeast Asia in the 1930s, and in the historical evolution of the Chinese networks which have played such an important role in the region's rapid economic growth in recent decades.

Laurie J. Sears, *Shadows of empire; Colonial discourse and Javanese tales*. Durham/London: Duke University Press, 1996, xxi + 349 pp. ISBN 0.8223.1685.4 (hardback), 0.8223.1697.8 (paperback). Price £ 15,95 (paperback).

MATTHEW I. COHEN

Over the last years, scholars of Javanese cultures have increasingly been drawn to the study of the intercultural realm of the influence of the Dutch colonial presence upon 'indigenous' cultural formations. This fascination with the mestizo, hybrid cultures that emerged during the colonial period almost rivals the fascination of colonial scholars with Java's 'Indic' culture, the supposed remnants of pre-Islamic culture that continued to have meaning in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Laurie J. Sears' study of representations of *wayang kulit* or Javanese shadow puppet theatre can be situated in a series of books, monographs, and scholarly articles that examine the different cultural sites of contact and exchange between Java and the Netherlands. Like other recent studies of *gamelan* music, ritual, public events, written literature, and *batik* cloth, *Shadows of Empire* finds much to both celebrate and condemn in this exchange.

Sears is less interested in how *wayang kulit* is performed or was performed in the past, as in how it has been described, textually appropriated for various purposes, and represented for Javanese as well as foreign readers. At the heart of Sears' study is a series of readings of published texts concerned with *wayang kulit* written by both Javanese literati and European

scholars. These texts range from T.S. Raffles' *History of Java* to comic book versions of wayang kulit stories written and illustrated by R.A. Kosasih. Some of these readings are highly illuminating, while others seem far from the mark.

The book begins with a preface and introduction which situates the work in terms of recent scholarship on postcolonial studies, cultural studies, and Indonesian studies. In a chapter entitled 'Hearing Islamic voices in "Hindu-Javanese" tales', Sears then turns to writings by Javanese authors of the precolonial and early colonial periods who were concerned with wayang kulit. Much of this chapter in fact is devoted to a comparative analysis of different versions of the tale of the birth of Rahwana, the central protagonist of the Ramayana, which the author rightly sees as infused with Islamic ideas and forms. Sears is technically correct when she says that 'specifically Islamic elements in the *wayang purwa* ["early" wayang kulit] can be summarized in a few sentences' (p. 49). But the category of 'the *wayang purwa*' was a Dutch-Javanese creation of the late nineteenth century. There is no strong evidence to suggest that the periodization 'early' (*purwa*)/'middle' (*madya*)/'late' (*wusana*) wayang kulit was already operative in the Java of the early nineteenth century as addressed in this chapter. Instead, what is apparent from seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth-century texts such as the *Book of Tales*, *Manikmaya*, and *Purwakandha* is that Islamic prophets and Hindu-Javanese deities interacted in the same conceptual universe. Specifically Islamic elements were heavily implicated in all aspects of performance.

More perceptive is the book's treatment of representations of wayang kulit during the period of high colonialism, when European and Eurasian scholars invented a version of the shadow play after the image of Western classical culture. The poetic Old Javanese texts of pre-Islamic Java and wayang kulit became for 'the Javanese' what 'the Greeks' and 'Latin' were for Western Europe. Sears argues convincingly that Kusumadilaga's *Sastramiruda*, a dialogue between a teacher and student about the history of Javanese performing arts followed by an exemplary wayang kulit play-script, was taken seriously by colonial scholars because it closely conformed to the expected model of what an Oriental aesthetic 'should' be. On the other hand, these same scholars scoffed at Ronggawarsita's wayang kulit writings for coming too close to Western science with their invocation of dates on the Gregorian calendar and place names from around the globe. But while her contrastive argument between these two texts is quite engaging, I am nonplussed by her characterization of Ronggawarsita's multi-volume *Universal History*, the poet-encyclopaedist's *magnum opus*, as 'a kind of grand spoof' (p. 96). Surely this is not how Ronggawarsita himself would have viewed this work, and neither is it categorized as such by his Javanese readers.

In Chapter Three, Sears provides several highly stimulating readings of

texts by early nationalists and theosophists, who appropriated wayang kulit for their various purposes. Sadly, however, one of the most important moments of Dutch-Javanese interaction is neglected: the collaboration of the Dutch philologist J. Kats and the Leiden-educated Mangkunagara VII that resulted in Kats' encyclopaedic tome on wayang kulit and Mangkunagara VII's collection of 179 story-summaries. It is difficult to underestimate the combined effects these texts had on future generations of scholars, performers, and consumers of wayang kulit.

Chapter Four differs somewhat from the book's other sections, being based on ethnographic and ethnohistorical research carried out in the royal court city of Solo in the early 1980s. Sears succeeds in documenting the pervasive effects of schools of shadow puppetry associated with the royal courts on village puppeteers, beginning around the turn of the twentieth century. Through these schools, many ideas about wayang kulit that developed in the interactions of Dutch scholar-administrators and Javanese literati were internalized by puppeteers living in proximity to the royal court centres.

Chapters Five and Six bring the story of changing representations of wayang kulit up to the present by examining how wayang kulit has been configured in terms of Soekarno's nationalism, the political conflicts of the Soekarno period, the arts academies founded in Central Java after independence, and the 'national cultural' sphere of the Balinese-born Jakarta-resident Putu Wijaya and the comic book artist R.A. Kosasih. Sears shows how these representations are grounded not on performative realities so much as on the history of representations of wayang kulit that preceded them. These chapters also touch lightly on trends in the performance of wayang kulit in southern Central Java during the 1980s and 1990s. Not all of her remarks are on target. For example, the *Karna Tinandhing* production discussed is technically not *wayang padat* (which features a solo puppeteer) but rather an early example of *wayang sandosa* (which involves multiple puppeteers).

There is a danger inherent in a book of this sort, which is both a review of the literature on wayang kulit (leaning heavily upon Victoria Clara van Groenendael's annotated bibliography of writings on wayang kulit) as well as a critique of this literature, of reifying the dominant representation of wayang kulit as Java's classical cultural form. As Sears rarely touches upon newspaper or popular magazine accounts of wayang kulit written by writers untutored in this dominant aesthetic, or unpublished manuscripts that stand outside of the normative canon of writings about wayang kulit, readers are hardly able to see the pluralism of wayang kulit as a performative vehicle. The book would also have benefited from more careful attention to the diacritics of place. Both Sears and the writers she discusses have a tendency to write 'Java' when in fact 'southern Central Java' or 'Solo' is intended.

Shadows of Empire may not open up any brand new ethnographic or historical territory. But it does serve as a well-marked trek through the wilderness of writings on wayang kulit. As such, despite its noteworthy absences and inaccuracies, it will be of interest to students of Javanese culture, scholars of Asian theatre, and intellectual historians concerned with how European and European-trained intellectuals grappled with the complexities of an Other's culture and re-wrote such complexities in their own terms.

Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the age of commerce 1450-1680. Vol. I: The lands below the winds*. New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1988, xvi + 275 pp. ISBN 0.300.03921.2.

Southeast Asia in the age of commerce 1450-1680. Vol. II: Expansion and crisis. New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1993, xv + 390 pp. ISBN 0.300.05412.2.

J. VAN GOOR

Several endeavours have been made to rewrite the history of Southeast Asia on the basis of a central theme. One of the few to do this single-handedly is Anthony Reid, Professor of Southeast Asian History at the Australian National University in Canberra.

Reid's two volumes on 'Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce' are truly a *magnum opus*, thought-provoking and rich in content. Every page is proof of the author's great knowledge and wide reading. Especially interesting is the endeavour to bring into focus a less well-known period. Reid's effort is the most far-reaching and ambitious reappraisal so far of the history of this region between 1450 and 1680. Instead of blending a number of regional histories into a synthesis, Reid has searched for clues to what gave Southeast Asian society, culture and politics a character of their own. He has found them in his concept of an 'age of commerce', a period in which the region underwent great commercial, religious and social changes and saw great opportunities for an autonomous development.

Reid argues that in the fifteenth century the demand for spices from the Moluccan islands, and for pepper from Sumatra, initiated a period of sustained economic growth in Southeast Asia. During this period the area also witnessed major cultural changes through the introduction of the 'religions of the book' (Islam and Christianity). Thanks to a process of rapid urbanization, a new type of people, city-dwellers, came to the fore, and in the course of that process they also came to adopt a more rational world view. The 'cosmopolitan metropolis', larger than contemporary European

cities, became the cradle for a radically new lifestyle. Hence the 'age of commerce' marked the apogee of Southeast Asian independence and cultural vitality. After 1680, however, these developments came to a standstill, nipped in the bud by European intervention. By monopolizing the spice trade, the Dutch destroyed the vitality of commerce and shipping in the archipelago and consequently reduced the indigenous options for an autonomous political, economic and cultural life. They brought many princedoms under their sway and put an end to the economic and cultural exchange which had led to the flowering of the region during the previous period. Mainland Southeast Asia also felt the consequences of Dutch pressure – Thailand, for instance, returning to isolationism when the reign of king Narai ended in 1688. Reid takes the line that political independence and economic growth are strongly related, so that the economic potential of Southeast Asia only began to be realized once again after the restoration of independence in our century (II:329).

Reid's lavish provision of examples and cases of comparable developments all over Southeast Asia makes the story seem very empirical, but his approach is nevertheless structural, inspired by the French historian Fernand Braudel and his great study of the Mediterranean region and its 'collective destinies'. A key feature of Braudel's work is his attention to geography and the underlying structures that shape both natural and human history. The 'Southeast Asian Mediterranean', the 'Lands below the Winds', the area between India, China and Australia (minus New Guinea), seemed an appropriate stage for another 'total history'. Notwithstanding great cultural variety, material conditions throughout this region were more or less similar (I:xiv).

Volume One consists of a description of the geographical and environmental characteristics of the region, its technologies of human well-being, and the material culture and social activities of its population. This volume reads like an inventory of the phenomena found in the area, which sometimes makes it difficult for the reader to distinguish between the structural and the incidental, as for instance in the case of the description of penis bells (I:146) in the section on sexual behaviour. One would have expected a digression on fashion here and a look at short-term changes in dress, hairstyle and the like. A more important question, however, is how much these enumerations really reveal about the structural homogeneity of the region. Do people necessarily act in the same way, or think more or less alike, when they live on a similar diet or wear the same type of dress? A number of the characteristics listed for Southeast Asia can be found outside the area too. The religious and cultural diversity within the area, conversely, is so great that in many cases similarities can only be detected from a great distance, as it were, and are consequently superficial.

Volume Two deals with the economic, social and political developments

between about 1400 and 1680. The long time-lapse between the publication of the two volumes is visible in some changed insights in the second part. The concept of the 'theatre state' (I:174), for instance, is not used in Volume Two, which concentrates instead on the 'absolutist state'.

Reading these volumes is an intellectual pleasure, but also a puzzle. A study like this cannot be based only on a broad exposition of the events; the reader is also in constant need of the author's theoretical insights. Unhappily enough, however, Reid hardly explains his preferences for specific models. A book in which strong connections are postulated between trade, state formation, urbanization, religious change and the emergence of a rational world-view needs to do more than just hint at its author's conceptions of how those connections work.

Among the questions that deserve further scrutiny, apart from the central problem of the region's coherence, are the periodization which Reid employs, his thesis of sustained economic growth from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, the scale of urbanization during that period, the character of the 'absolutist' state, the impact of the Europeans (especially the Dutch), and the nature and quality of the sources used.

Reid admits that his periodization is not always consistently defined (II:xiii). Political as well as economic data are used to distinguish the beginning and the end of the age of commerce. The start of the period of 'sustained economic growth' is located around 1400, although, as the author admits, figures to substantiate this hardly exist. The end of the period is marked by the fall of the indigenous harbour cities, starting in 1629 with Aceh's failure to conquer Portuguese Malakka and the withdrawal of Mataram's troops from beleaguered Batavia. The death throes of the age of commerce are represented by the 'conquest' of Banten, the author's epitome of Southeast Asian urbanization, in the 1680s. The economic end of the great boom period is also said to coincide with this political downfall. However, we have a problem here.

Banten was neither politically nor economically impotent after 1680. The city was not actually conquered by the Dutch in the 1680s; the VOC only helped Sultan Haji in the struggle for the throne. Except for its pepper contract with the Dutch, the sultanate remained autonomous and independent. Reid's implicit assumption that the Dutch immediately took over the economy and management of Banten is incorrect. The VOC only acted as a wholesale dealer. The export of pepper went on as before, and moreover the prices paid for Banten pepper were the same as those prevailing on the free market (Van Goor 1992:29). The one to profit most was the sultan – a situation completely in agreement with Reid's views on the 'absolutist state' (II, Chapter 4). From descriptions by European visitors like the painter Cornelis de Bruin, who held long conversations with Zainal-Abidin, it is clear that the succeeding sultans did not lose their

interest in the wider world. There is no sign that the Dutch hampered the religious life of the city; the haj, for instance, was undertaken by several members of the ruling house (Talens 1997). The only great difference was that European traders other than the Dutch were barred from the harbour.

The other example used by Reid to illustrate the end of the age of commerce in the archipelago is Mataram. Here again Reid's view is open to serious question. Mataram was indeed unable to conquer Batavia in 1629, but this did not mean that it lost its position of power on Java or was no longer able to maintain diplomatic intercourse with other states in the archipelago. On the contrary, Mataram remained a formidable power. The main problem there was the same as in Banten: internal strife among pretenders to the throne. After 1680 the rulers of Mataram repeatedly requested the support of the Company in succession conflicts, just as in Banten. Involvement in the internal politics of its neighbours was not the VOC's idea of a stable relationship; the Dutch wanted quiet neighbours and a quick succession, so they generally just supported the most feasible candidate (Nagtegaal 1986). Extension of Dutch rule was not the aim, and the character of the Javanese state was not changed.

On the mainland one can also question Reid's choice of 1680 as the end of an era terminated by Dutch aggression. The turmoil in Thailand after the death of king Narai can hardly be ascribed to the Dutch. In Ayuthaya the VOC preferred to keep a low profile and stay out of court politics (Van Goor 1982). This behaviour explains their long and rather uneventful stay in the Thai capital between 1613 and 1765. As far as Europeans were involved, it was not the Dutch but the French, who had to leave the country after Narai's downfall. But does this constitute a retreat from the wider world and a beginning of the country's closure to foreign influences? One might rather ask whether Narai's diplomatic overtures in Asia as well as in Europe have not been overexposed thanks to the French propaganda of King Louis XIV. Neither is there any reason, on the economic front, to suppose that Thai trade was strangled by the Dutch presence. In fact it was much more the other way around: Narai's successor, King Phetracha, acted rather high-handedly toward traders. As Dhiravat na Pombejra shows (Reid 1993:250-73), there is no indication that 1688 marked a retreat to economic and political isolationism. One only wonders why Reid did not make use of Pombejra's insights, or of Victor Lieberman's comparable thoughts on the history of Burma (Reid 1993:214-50). In neither mainland nor island Southeast Asia, in fact, can one speak of a political downfall of the indigenous states or a structural change in their character. Almost all of the states that existed in the sixteenth century were still there two hundred years later.

The combination of economic and political parameters which Reid employs is not always an easy one. Although his data (II:14, Fig. 3) show a decline in the export of fine spices to Europe in about 1630, the level is still much

higher than in the sixteenth century. A comparable production in the eighteenth century was more than sufficient for the world market. A decline indeed, but no collapse. Pepper is a different story again. Reid's graphics (II:21, Fig. 5; II:300, Fig. 41) show a tremendous growth in production coupled with a collapse in prices between 1650 and 1670. But because developments after 1680 are left out, the reader is not able to ascertain whether this collapse represented a temporary incident or indicates a continuing recession after a period of overproduction. Pepper remained in demand after the enthronement of Sultan Haji in Banten in 1682, and in the following years the price of pepper exported via Banten rose to a level higher than that paid by the English in Silebar (*Generale Missiven* V:251, 324, 342, 373).

The arguments for a long period of sustained economic growth from the fifteenth to the late seventeenth century are rather weak, especially if the whole of Southeast Asia is taken into consideration. One weakness is that the author bases his conclusions mainly on European statistical material, which is available only for the period after 1500 and becomes reasonably abundant only after 1600. Exports to Europe are therefore rather over-emphasized in the account. On the other hand Reid does not tackle the question of the development of the economy after 1680. His observation that the seventeenth century witnessed a strong fluctuation in the world market for fine spices and pepper is convincing, and the impact of the Dutch conquest of the Banda islands and Ambon was certainly great. Also clear is that the world demand for pepper led to an enormous increase in production and a subsequent collapse in prices when demand slumped. The real question, however, is not whether the world market was volatile, but how long the pepper crisis lasted, and whether it led to a long-term change in production or productive capacity.

More important still is the question of whether the drop in prices really led Southeast Asians to abstain from production for the market. During the eighteenth century pepper remained an important item among Asian exports to Europe, and the production process underwent no change. Although the VOC was an important buyer of pepper, it never achieved a monopoly in this particular spice; other Europeans, as well as Chinese and Asians, were also active in the pepper market. There is no indication that the trading chain between the producer and the harbour changed. Neither, as the spread of coffee in West Java after 1720 shows, did the Javanese population shy away from the possibility of earning cash by growing export crops. Within a few years Java's coffee production surpassed that of Mokka (Knaap 1986). Coffee, like pepper, was paid for in cash, and the impact of these cash payments will be considered briefly below.

It is also worth noting that from a comparative point of view, one may seriously doubt whether periods of more than two centuries of uninterrupted economic growth occurred at all before the industrial revolution (De Vries and Van der Woude 1997). Even in Europe, to which Reid

repeatedly refers, the early modern era did not witness such an uninterrupted period of growth in any one specific area. Rather, there was a constant shifting from centre to centre (Davids and Lucassen 1995: Introduction).

Cities, and more specifically *big* cities, play a central role in Reid's model of innovation during the age of commerce. The city is portrayed as the epitome of everything that made Southeast Asia exceptional in this period. The level of urbanization is said to have been higher than in later centuries, and higher even than that of Europe at the same period (II:68, 75). Here again one would be more readily convinced if reliable figures were available. As it is we are faced with widely divergent estimates supplied mainly by European visitors. In one case the ratio between the highest and lowest estimates for the population of the same city is as high as 26:1 (II:69). On the basis of high figures for the seventeenth century, Reid supposes a very low level of population growth between then and the nineteenth century, which would support his thesis on the stagnation of Southeast Asia after 1680.

Apart from the reliability of the figures, however, other questions also need to be solved before this thesis can be substantiated. First, a practical one: how could these great cities be fed? Banten was dependent on imports for three quarters of its rice requirements, Patani for half, Melaka almost completely (II:77). If one person needed 0.6 kg per day (I:23), then 1000 tonnes of rice would feed about 4500 people for a year. In the seventeenth century Japara and East Java apparently exported about 10,000 tonnes of rice annually to the Moluccas, Banjarmasin, Banten and Batavia (I:24). This would only be enough to feed 45,000 people, or just 13,000 more than the population of Batavia alone in 1680 (Niemeijer 1996:26). Moreover, it was not only Banten and Batavia which needed imported rice; there were also the populations of Semarang and Japara to be fed, each allegedly a hundred thousand strong.

It is difficult to believe, therefore, that the town of Banten was inhabited by 800,000 people, to name the most fantastic seventeenth-century estimate reproduced by Reid. The most reliable information regarding the population of Banten in the seventeenth century is probably the source from 1696 which mentions 31,848 'men of Surasowan' (II:72). It is unclear, moreover, whether even this figure refers only to the city or to the whole realm of Banten, which also stretched far southward into the mountains. If the whole realm was included then the population of the sultanate probably consisted of some 125,000 souls, villagers included. Contemporary Dutch drawings, which show a sparsely inhabited town with many trees, also suggest a much smaller city.

The problem of reconstructing the actual level of urbanization in Southeast Asia at the period in question simply cannot easily be solved. Even if we accept Reid's estimate of five percent living in 'large cities',

however, his conclusion that this was 'a proportion larger than contemporary northern Europe' (II:75) is still rather misleading. Among the economically most advanced regions of Europe in 1600, urbanization varied between 24 percent in the northern Netherlands and 16 percent in northern Italy (Davids and Lucassen 1995:63). Europe contained a great variety of regions with different levels of political, economic and urban development.

Kingship and state formation in Southeast Asia are already much-debated subjects. Reid adds another element to these debates by introducing the idea of the 'absolutist state'. This term is borrowed from European history, but among historians of Europe it has lost its appeal because of possible misunderstandings about the extent of the power of the so-called absolute monarchs. The great difference between the absolute monarchies of Europe and those of most Southeast Asian states was that royal power in Asia was less hampered by representative institutions. In Europe it was circumscribed by legislation and institutions, and the legal protection of subjects and foreign traders alike was much more highly developed than in the Southeast Asian port cities. In Europe there was less room for royal arbitrariness. Reid's idea nevertheless represents a great improvement on the 'theatre state', a model in which the economic and political functions of kingship were hardly discussed.

Apart from a few exceptional periods in which 'orang kaya' were able to have a queen enthroned, most states in Southeast Asia did not show a clear development of their political systems over time. As Jeyamalar Kathirithamby-Wells makes clear in her contribution to a volume edited by Reid (1993:123-51), the conditions for the emergence of an indigenous merchant capitalist class in Southeast Asia were lacking before 1800. Neither do Dutch sources from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries offer indications that the nature of kingship changed significantly over that period. The same battle for resources between the king and his great men went on, security of life and property for subjects and foreigners remained problematic, and trade was used in a political way, while the ruler lost none of his supernatural pretensions.

The coming of the Europeans, in fact, hardly influenced the indigenous political models; the local political players were simply joined by outsiders who were only interested in trade and who brought in large amounts of money. The European export of silver and gold to Asia did not come to a standstill after 1680 (II:26); Dutch bullion exports were higher in the eighteenth century than in the seventeenth. The foreign newcomers were ideal partners for rulers who aspired to a better grip on trade in their realm (Van Goor 1986; 1994:68-92). It was not necessary to 'bully' kings into an agreement with the VOC as Reid suggests (II:280); during the eighteenth century many examples can be given of sultans and *raja* who voluntarily offered economic privileges to the Dutch in exchange for a political

contract, just as their forefathers had done in the early seventeenth century. In this respect 1680 marked no change in the political system of the area. The vicissitudes of politics forced rulers to depend on tactical alliances with other powers, and despite Reid's vision of a world of Islam unified against the unbelievers (II:183, 320), they typically did so regardless of the religious affiliations of the parties involved. Although Islam was used at times as a rallying cry against the Dutch, the VOC was never short of Muslim allies and auxiliaries. Here Reid makes too much of the changes in South Sulawesi (II:150). Three centuries later, after all, pre-Islamic religious elements were still to be found there (Chabot 1996:189).

Another important question raised by Reid is that of the long-term economic impact of the coming of the Europeans. Reid's account of the 'origins of Southeast Asian poverty' (II, Chapter 5) can be summarized as follows. In contrast to the Portuguese, whose effect had generally been to strengthen the Southeast Asian trading states, the Dutch weakened them by achieving a monopoly in the clove and nutmeg trade and a strong position in the pepper ports. This led ultimately to the disappearance of autochthonous trading and shipping in the archipelago, setting the stage for a more general impoverishment.

It does seem that a downward trend in Javanese maritime trade, already apparent in 1600 due to the coming of Chinese and European shipping connected with trade networks outside the archipelago, continued after the Dutch arrival (Knaap 1996). But this did not mean a complete disappearance of indigenous shipping. The Dutch monopoly was a partial monopoly meant to protect the spice islands, not to wipe out all other commerce. Moreover, if Dutch and Chinese trade is included, there was an enormous increase in the total amount of maritime trade between 1600 and 1775 (Knaap 1996:168). Cash payments for pepper, nutmeg, cloves, coffee, tin, and other products continued as before.

Reid's vision of the Southeast Asian past is cyclical: after a glorious age of commerce came the dark era of European overlordship that only turned bright again after independence. I doubt whether the situation was that bad. After the ousting of Asian and European competitors from the spice islands, for instance, the spice producer was assured of a fixed price for all he produced – a situation that still appeals to any agrarian society producing for the world market. Accordingly, the Ambonese population around 1700 produced two or three times the world demand for cloves. The effectiveness of cash payment as an incentive to local production was also visible in the success of coffee cultivation in West Java and of pepper production in several parts of the archipelago.

The impact of cash crop payments on local societies is not easy to measure. The proceeds from cash crop sales probably remained marginal to the economic situation of most farmers. Considering the products and areas involved, it seems likely that even in the eighteenth century only small

groups were actually dependent on money income for a living. At the level of the harbour princes who collected the lion's share of the money paid for the export products of the hinterland, there was little change either. Much of their income continued to go into conspicuous consumption and political wealth.

Southeast Asia in the so-called 'age of commerce' is perhaps better characterized as a subsistence society which also produced a few cash-crops for the world market, the proceeds of which were used by a class of 'absolutist' feudal lords who exploited their realm for their own benefit. Incentives to economic change stranded on the one hand on an agrarian population which had sufficient land at its disposal to make a living and was insufficiently protected against greedy overlords to amass sufficient means for investment, and on the other hand on a ruling class which preferred to invest in status and political wealth rather than in economic activities of its own. Outsiders – traders from India, China and Europe – came to fill the trading niches in this socio-political system. Once Dutch hegemony was established, a few big ships, instead of a multitude of small vessels, sufficed to transport the greater part of the archipelago's export production to Batavia and beyond.

Reid's books represent an impressive attempt to write history on the very largest scale, identifying links and parallels which span the globe. Yet they also illustrate the limitations of such an approach when the terminology employed is hardly defined. Implicit comparisons are made with early modern, Renaissance or medieval Europe without any indication of which part of Europe, in what period, is implicated. The level of diversity within Europe, however, is as great as that within Southeast Asia. One cannot, for instance, take English demography as representative for Europe as a whole (I:47, 48), and even within England it is necessary to take class differences into account. Reid's discussion of the European military advantage in Southeast Asia also involves such superficial comparisons. After stating that Southeast Asians used firearms and gunpowder to good effect, and quickly learned the art of fortress building, Reid ascribes the European successes partly to Asian auxiliaries. However one element, perhaps the most important, is left out: the greater proficiency of European armies thanks to intensive drilling, discipline and logistics. Until the nineteenth century, war in the archipelago took much simpler forms than in Europe.

Coming now to the end of my review, I want to return to the concept of a Southeast Asian 'age of commerce'. The term has the charm of incorporating a series of developments that unevenly influenced different parts of Southeast Asia from the fifteenth century onward. There are also signs that in the seventeenth century the economy went through a period of crisis, due among other things to the coming of the Dutch. Nevertheless I hope to have made clear that I doubt the extent, depth and duration of this

crisis and the applicability of the 'age of commerce' concept. The periodization is too vaguely defined, and the parameters do not suffice to convince the critical reader that the years between 1450 and 1680 can be considered a period as such. Reid's assumption that the indigenous states broke down under European pressure is incorrect from a political point of view. The years around 1680 did not see a structural change in the indigenous state system, and neither is there a reason to assume far-reaching changes in the subsistence economy of the great majority of the population. The very existence of the large cities as described by Reid is doubtful, the evidence being too divergent to make possible a reasonable guess at their populations. There is reason to think, however, that the cities were much smaller than the figures given by visitors suggest. The 'age of commerce' is a thought-provoking concept, but does not convince.

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Saya S. Shiraishi, *Young heroes; The Indonesian family in politics.* Ithaca/New York: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, Southeast Asia Program Publications, 1997, 183 pp. [Studies on Southeast Asia 22.] ISBN 0.87727.721.4. Price: \$ 16.-.

DAVID HENLEY

This fascinating book deals with the relationship, much remarked upon but little analysed, between family life and political behaviour in modern Indonesia. From the first page, headed by a quotation from Suharto's autobiography in which the president disconcertingly refers to his cabinet ministers as his 'children', right up to the closing quotation from the lyrics of 'Lessons in Love', an underground pop song satirizing Pancasila Moral Education, the reader's attention is held by new surprises and new insights into the workings of Indonesia as a nation of families and a family state.

Much of the great attractiveness of this book derives from its compelling descriptions of Jakarta people and situations. At her best, as in the following description of the exit from the arrival hall at Cengkareng airport, Shiraishi writes more like a novelist than an academic.

'This four-foot wide space between the glass walls and the railings behind which the crowd gathers manifests the division of contemporary Indonesia. One half is the air-conditioned, high rise, official world that is constructed with ruler-straight lines and right angles; here, dark glass walls are in plentiful supply. From the inside a man can get a good view of the sun-bathed outside world, but from the outside, this official world is mysteriously dark, silent, and forbidding. The other half is the world of the shapeless mass of the little people, whom the visitor is to meet now in the steaming heat.' (p. 16)

This is unmistakably the Indonesia which we foreign Indonesianists know and love/hate. In such passages Shiraishi writes with an almost innocent clarity and immediacy. Her descriptions of the Jakarta streets, their muddy, potholed pavements symbolizing the virtual absence of any kind of public space in the city or the society, ring equally true. Pedestrians, in the eyes of middle-class Jakartans, are 'walking manifestations of exposure' (p. 30) to the dangers and discomforts of the world beyond the extended family, a

world which wiser or luckier souls see only through the tinted windows of the cars in which they traverse it from relative to relative and protector to protector. One of Shiraishi's most fundamental points in this book is that the importance of the family in Indonesian life reflects the poverty of other sources of security and identity when every stranger is a potential thief and policemen are as much to be avoided as pickpockets. The same kind of logic, moreover, applies to the metaphorical family formed by the *bapak* or political patron and his *anak buah*, a term which Shiraishi usefully translates as 'protégé' (p. 34). This, she argues, explains why New Order media, from children's books to television newscasts, often seem to celebrate, rather than deplore, the violence or potential violence of the streets. 'The deeper one's fear of such outside danger is', Shiraishi observes, 'the stronger is the grip of *bapak* over one's life' (p. 35).

Within the Indonesian family, metaphorical or real, only two types of behaviour tend to be regarded as fully desirable: unconditional giving on the part of the parent-protector, and unconditional gratitude and obedience on the part of the child-protégé. The political implications of the latter are familiar enough, but in two very strong sections entitled 'Generosity and Corruption' and 'Tolerance and Arbitrariness', Shiraishi also succeeds in shedding some intriguing new light on those of the former. It is often generosity, as much as greed, which lies at the root of corruption, and in societies like Indonesia the moral obligation to show generosity to dependants easily overrides any ethical value attaching to bureaucratic or legal rules. This does *not* mean, however, that those rules are simply a 'dead letter'. On the contrary, they are fundamental to the whole political structure. But their main function within that structure is not to limit personal power, as in modern civil societies, but rather to reinforce it.

'This logic is built into the act of *penyelewengan*, irregularities. Office workers who commit irregularities are well aware that they are guilty and that their irregularities are tolerated by their *bapak*. They thus submit voluntarily to their *bapak*'s personal authority and power. The *bapak* can be tolerant of his subordinate's irregularities, because he has an official position with its power and authority.' (p. 108)

The tolerance of the *bapak*, then, 'is a way of transforming the power and authority of his official position into personal power and authority'. In Indonesia, moreover, tolerance is one gift which usually costs the giver nothing. In this looking-glass world, laws and regulations are quite literally made to be broken. Without them, father-protectors would not be able to display their generosity by tolerating transgressions, or to increase the gratitude and dependence of their *anak buah* by protecting them from the rules themselves.

Shiraishi's book ranges over many different settings and incidents in Indonesian social and political life, from the Rengasdengklok affair of 1945 to the Bank Duta scandal of 1990 and from the massacres of 1965 to the

first day at a contemporary infants' school. To do this coherently, and to provide consistently interesting arguments and commentary along the way, represents a considerable achievement. The price which Shiraishi pays for this achievement, however, is that her evidence sometimes seems over-interpreted and her linkages contrived.

At one point, for instance, she makes much of an incident at an *arisan* meeting in which a mother apparently saw her five-year-old daughter reaching for a red candy, and quickly placed a green candy in the girl's mouth instead, whereupon the child, to the amusement of the onlookers, spat it out on the floor. Having consulted 'an American graduate student', 'a middle-aged primary school teacher' and an unspecified number of other nameless informants regarding the significance of these 'disturbing' events, Shiraishi arrives at the following interpretation.

'She stopped her daughter from choosing what she desired to have; she gave her a green candy; and she did not punish her by denying her a candy altogether. She thus proved herself to be a mother capable of making highly intricate manoeuvres. The girl has to learn that she will not get what she wants if she reveals her desires, as American children learn that a hat has to be kept on the hat stand.' (pp. 73-4)

Shiraishi claims that her informants spontaneously linked the sweet incident with, among other things, arranged marriages and the authoritarian character of the Indonesian family. But the (admittedly small) sample of Indonesian women to whom I have shown the passage do not recognize even the situation which it portrays, let alone the interpretation which it offers. Indeed, the idea of a mother frustrating the desires of her infant daughter merely for the sake of it seems to be in blatant contradiction with Shiraishi's own assertion elsewhere that unconditional gratification of such desires is the very hallmark of Indonesian motherhood (pp. 63, 70, 98).

This tendency to read too much into individual events is complemented and exacerbated by Shiraishi's fashionable habit of exaggerating both the political significance, and the political malleability, of language. In her view, for instance, the possibility of revolt by *anak buah* against their *bapak* was 'eradicated from the language itself' when Suharto declared that air force commander Omar Dhani could not possibly have been kidnapped by his own men during the 1965 coup attempt (p. 53). And today it is once again 'the language' which 'requires *bapak*, above all *bapak* government officials, to do what *bapak* is expected to do in defiance of laws and regulations of the state they are supposed to uphold' (p. 95). To follow Shiraishi's argument in all its convolutions is to enter an almost medieval world in which words become the things they designate and everything is meaningful. A whole nation is imprisoned by the spell of its own words, and its very spirit is revealed in the fall of a child's sweet.

Closely related to this epistemological naivety is Shiraishi's insistence

that 'bapak-ism', 'family-ism' and even the family itself are 'constructs', the origins of which can be dated to whenever anybody first called them by name and systematized them in print. In the case of *kekeluargaan* it is Ki Hajar Dewantara, writing in the 1920s and 30s, who receives most of the credit (or rather, the blame). But the fact that the 'family principle' has always had such a high ratio of adherents to ideologues (and an even higher ratio of adherents to *competent* ideologues) is already a strong indication that what we are dealing with here is not a 'construct', but rather – for want of a better word – a tradition. Shiraishi herself rejects this possibility with the following argument.

'One may argue that the principles introduced by Dewantara for education and adopted by Soeharto in running the state and guiding the nation derive from the erstwhile Javanese tradition and that the Indonesian "family" is essentially Javanese. But Kenji Tsuchiya and John Pemberton tell us that the "Javanese" tradition is a Dutch-Javanese creation. And one can ask in the same spirit about the Javanese family. Was there such a "thing" as the Javanese family before Hildred Geertz invented it in her now classic *The Javanese Family*?' (p. 11)

After Tsuchiya and Pemberton, such rhetoric does indeed threaten to slip by unremarked. But what exactly does Shiraishi mean by this allegation, actually rather serious, that Hildred Geertz 'invented' the Javanese family? Not, we may surely assume, that the Javanese did not have families until she wrote about them. Was Geertz, then, wrong in her characterization of those families? Did she generalize too widely from too little evidence (a criticism which, coming from Shiraishi, would not be without irony)? Or is it rather that the Javanese themselves had no concept of the specifically Javanese family until some of them read the account of it by Geertz – and if so, then so what?

As it is, only one thing is clear to the reader: Shiraishi's refusal to believe that *kekeluargaan* has older roots which have nothing to do with either Dewantara or the Dutch certainly saves her a considerable amount of work. 'To study New Order Indonesia's political culture', she declares in her introduction, 'we should not turn to Java's remote villages in search for its authentic culture, but examine how the "Indonesian" family has been constructed in Indonesian historically, culturally, and politically' (p. 12). In other words, it is sufficient to read the writings and listen to the words of modern, literate, urban Indonesians. Small wonder, then, that the beginning of Shiraishi's story coincides with the emergence of that group in the late colonial period.

Yet it does not take too great a familiarity with the anthropological and historical literature to know that the widespread use of kinship metaphors in Indonesian social and political life is much older than this, and that there has probably never been a time when families in Indonesia were not thoroughly political institutions. Moreover, the stereotyped nuclear 'Indo-

nesian family' – parents and their children in their own house – which Shiraishi dismisses as a 'vacuous syntactical structure' (p. 164) constructed by New Order educationalists, actually bears a suspicious resemblance to the household type which all available field studies reveal as the traditional norm in rural Java.

A final criticism which might be directed against this book relates to its moralistic style and tone. Shiraishi's text is an accusatory catalogue of the failings of modern Indonesian political culture, as judged from the privileged vantage point of a developed civil society in which civic rights and obligations seem self-explanatory. Such an approach might be easier to accept if it were coupled with a constructive analysis of how those failings could be overcome, but unfortunately the most optimistic suggestion which Shiraishi can offer is that the 'vacuity of the national concept of family, or, for that matter, the vacuity of the national language itself' might still offer scope for a more democratic reinterpretation of the 'family principle' – though not, apparently, for its actual abandonment (p. 166).

The problem of how to forge a civil society out of a familistic society is, of course, a tough one. But for that very reason, it is unlikely to be solved at the level of words and language. In essence, it might be described as a problem of social coordination. Individual Indonesians are usually easy enough to convince that in principle it would be better if everybody followed the same impersonal rules. The problem arguably lies less in getting individuals to shed the cultural burden of *bapakism*, than in getting everyone to switch to the alternative pattern of civic behaviour *simultaneously*. In the absence of such coordination, the individual who suddenly starts treating strangers with respect or taking the traffic rules too literally tends simply to be taken advantage of by the still-uncivic majority, thus disadvantaging or even endangering not only himself, but also all those who still rely on him as their *bapak*. The only possible escape from this vicious circle is a *collective* escape, and its first precondition is that people trust each other enough to act collectively. To generate that trust is perhaps the greatest challenge facing not only Indonesia, but also much of the contemporary world.

Bronnen betreffende de Midden-Molukken 1900-1942. Den Haag: Instituut voor Nederlandse Geschiedenis, 1997. 4 volumes. Rijks Geschiedkundige Publicatiën, Kleine Serie, 81, 82, 83, 84. Volume 1 bewerkt door P. Jobse, 2 en 3 door Ch.F. van Fraassen, 4 door Ch.F. van Fraassen en P. Jobse. xii + 578, xii + 578, xii + 711, x + 655, xi + 261 pp. ISBN 90.5216.074.0, 90.5216.074.7, 90.5216.077.5, 90.5216.078.3. Prijs: f 395,-.

GERRIT KNAAP

Het eerste gebied in Azië dat door Nederlanders werd gekoloniseerd was Ambon en omliggende eilanden. Dit gebeurde in 1605. De Ambonse eilanden worden sinds de onafhankelijkheid van Indonesië ook wel Midden-Molukken genoemd. De aanraking tussen Nederland en Ambon is dus van langere duur dan tussen Nederland en enig ander gebied in de Oost, c.q. Indonesië. Behalve de duur van de relatie is er meer wat de band een bijzonder karakter geeft. In tegenstelling tot de meeste andere gebieden in Indonesië is in de Midden-Molukken een flink deel van de bevolking tot het Christendom overgegaan. Ambonnezen zijn vanaf de zeventiende eeuw als huurling actief geweest in de koloniale strijdkrachten. De christen-Ambonse soldaat was op het einde van de negentiende eeuw zelfs een speciale categorie in het Nederlands-Indisch Leger. Vanaf die tijd waren er ook Ambonnezen werkzaam op de kantoren van allerlei diensten van de koloniale bureaucratie. Toen Indonesië onafhankelijk werd waren er dan ook bepaalde groepen Ambonnezen c.q. Midden-Molukkers die moeite hadden de overgang in loyaliteit van Nederland naar Indonesië te maken. Mede als gevolg van de verwickelingen die daaruit voortvloeiden kwam er begin jaren vijftig een omvangrijke groep Molukse militairen met familie naar Nederland. Zij zijn doorgaans in Nederland gebleven. Deze militairen en hun nakomelingen zijn zich de laatste decennia in toenemende mate gaan interesseren voor hun eigen cultuur en geschiedenis. Het is dan ook niet zo verwonderlijk dat het Instituut voor Nederlandse Geschiedenis, de belangrijkste bronnenpublicaties verzorgende instelling in Nederland, deze regionaal georiënteerde serie heeft uitgegeven. Het inmiddels opgeheven Programma Indonesische Studiën van het Cultureel Akkoord tussen Nederland en Indonesië heeft echter de belangrijkste subsidies verstrekt voor het totstandkomen van deze publicatie.

Ondanks het feit dat het zich beperkt tot in Nederland aanwezig archiefmateriaal is het een lijvig werk geworden, bestaande uit vier delen en verzorgd door twee bewerkers. Allerlei onderwerpen passeren de revue. In het eerste deel, dat de periode 1903 tot 1918 beslaat, treft men veel aandacht aan voor de onderwerping van de periferie van Ambon, dat wil zeggen de berg- en oerwoudgebieden van het grote eiland Seram. Dat levert veel expeditieverslagen op, waarin niet alleen militaire zaken aan

bod komen, maar ook etnografische beschrijvingen van diverse in het binnenland aangetroffen groepen. Zeer interessant zijn daarbij de beschouwingen en gedachtenwisselingen, meestal van de hand van militairen, over de Kakian en de Saniri Tiga Air. Een bijzondere categorie documenten, ook vol met etnografische informatie, zijn de verslagen van zendelingen, die veelal actief waren in het westelijk gedeelte van de Midden-Molukken. In de eerste decennia van deze eeuw maakte het christendom veel bekeeringen onder de animistische bevolking van West-Seram en van Buru.

In het tweede deel, dat is de periode 1918-1926, staat veel informatie over de nationalistische beweging, met name over het optreden van de vereniging Insulinde en de aanvankelijk onder Ambonse militairen op Java actieve Sarekat Ambon. In 1923 kwam de voorman van de Sarekat Ambon, Alexander Jacob Patty, naar de Midden-Molukken. Twee jaar later werd hij door het koloniaal bestuur gearresteerd, van Ambon verwijderd en in ballingschap gezonden. De stukken over Patty's activiteiten en verbanning zijn uitermate belangwekkend. Behalve over de nationalistische beweging is er in deze tijd veel discussie over de economische ontwikkeling, die als uiterst traag gekenschetst kan worden. Ook is er in deze tijd veel te doen geweest over politiek-bureaucratische hervormingen, zoals de instelling van de Ambonraad, de hervorming van het dorpsbestuur, het afschaffen van de schutterijen, het verval van de Ambonse burgerstatus en de vervanging van de herendienst door de belastingplicht.

In het derde deel, 1926-1942, worden minder hectische bestuurszaken beschreven. De nationalistische beweging was minder actief en de bestuurshervormingen waren inmiddels uitgekristalliseerd. Het woord 'routine' is voor de bestuurlijke praktijk van de jaren dertig voor de bewakers van de koloniale status quo, de ambtenaren van het gewestelijke bestuur dan ook zeker een juiste karakterisering. Gememoreerd dient wel te worden de verzelfstandiging op religieus gebied, in het bijzonder binnen de Protestantse kerk, uitmondend in de Molukse Protestantse Kerk. De laatste documenten hebben betrekking op de verovering van Ambon door de Japanners.

Het vierde deel van de serie bestaat uit het 'apparaat' van de bronnen-publicatie, dat wil zeggen de inleiding en verantwoording, een bijlage (Reglement Binnenlands Bestuur voor Ambon alsmede de Molukken Publicatie van 1824), een overzicht van bestuursambtenaren en militaire commandanten, een glossarium, een lijst van afkortingen, de literatuur-opgave, het omvangrijke register en enige kaarten. Van dit apparaat is evenals van de uitgave en annotatie van de documenten zelf buitengewoon veel werk van gemaakt, waarvoor alle lof. Ik zou slechts twee kanttekeningen willen maken. Ten eerste: de inleiding en verantwoording was uiteindelijk toch beter op zijn plaats geweest in deel 1 dan in deel 4. Zo'n stuk hoort aan het begin van een publicatie. Ten tweede: in hun verantwoording stellen de bewerkers, dat zij zich bij de selectie van op te

nemen stukken uit in Nederland aanwezige archivalische verzamelingen hebben laten leiden door de wens door deze bronnen een zo breed mogelijk tijdsbeeld te geven van Ambon en omliggende eilanden, alsmede van de politieke activiteiten van Molukkers elders, voorzover die van invloed waren op de situatie in de Midden-Molukken. Wat niet duidelijk wordt is, welk deel van het op dit gebied betrekking hebbend archiefmateriaal in deze publicatie uiteindelijk een plaats heeft gekregen. Ondanks deze kanttekeningen moet echter geconcludeerd worden dat de hele serie een bijzonder rijke *Fundgrube* is geworden voor iedereen met serieuze belangstelling voor de geschiedenis van de Midden-Molukken.

Clara Brakel-Papenhuyzen, *Classical Javanese dance; The Surakarta tradition and its terminology*. Leiden: KITLV Press, 1995, xi + 252 pp. [Verhandelingen 155.] ISBN 90.6718.053.X. Price: f 60.–.

INDRO NUGROHO-HEINS

This publication attempts to familiarize its readers with the complex idiom of classical Javanese – that is, Solonese – dance. Studying the alphabetically ordered list of dance terms (p. 122), the reader may attempt to perform a fairly common hand movement like *ukel*, or a more complicated combination like *ngigel* or *singgetan*. One can even look up particular terms to refresh one's memory – was it *jamang* or *ukel pakis* that was used in that section of *Gambyong*?

This is the first time I have come across such a compilation. To my knowledge Javanese dance movements are classified according to type of movement. Some movements are executed by certain parts of the body (for instance, hand, arm, foot, leg and trunk movements), while others fulfil a certain function within the context of the dance itself (transitional movements, fixed poses). More important, but missing here, is their definition by rhythm, each movement lasting a fixed number of 'beats' which concur with the musical patterns of the *gamelan*. Thus *sabetan* consists of twelve beats, *sindet* of four. Many movements will only be executed in accordance with musically fixed points, such as *gong*, *kempul* and *kenong*: a *sembah* will always 'fall on' the *gong*, *seblak sampur* almost always on a *kenong*. Not to mention this traditional Javanese way of classifying is confusing. One could argue about the relevance of knowing whether an entry, say *ridhong sampur*, is a movement proper or merely a fixed position, but from a dancer's point of view this is important.

There are also differences between the descriptions of the movements in the treatise from the Mangkunegaran, beautifully illustrated with the original early twentieth-century photographs (Chapter IV), and the ones in

Laporan

1993 *Tari tradisi Keraton Surakarta, tinjauan tentang makna simbolik, fungsi ritual, dan perkembangannya; laporan penelitian kelompok.* Surakarta: Sekolah Tinggi Seni Indonesia.

Prabowo, W.S.

1991 'Sosok tari tradisi Keraton, sebuah pengamatan' (makalah [reading] for Taman Budaya Surakarta); in: *Laporan* 1993.

Shigeru Sato, *War, nationalism and peasants; Java under the Japanese occupation, 1942-1945.* Armonk, New York: Sharpe, St. Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1994. xx + 280 pp. [ASAA Southeast Asia Publication Series.] ISBN 1.56324.544.3 (hard-back); 1-156324-1545.0 (paperback).

LÁSZLÓ SLUIMERS

This seminal book is in my opinion a must for anybody professionally concerned with modern Indonesian history and politics. This contention is based on two considerations. First, Dr Sato's ably stated argument that there exists a manifest continuity between the Dutch colonial era, the Japanese interregnum and the period of independence. And secondly, the fact that partly due to language barriers and partly for historical and psychological reasons, the Japanese period in Indonesia is insufficiently explored outside Japan.

Dr Sato obtained an MA in French at Niigata University before becoming engaged in Southeast Asian studies in Australia. His book employs a holistic approach and is inspired by the work of prominent Japanese scholars such as Goto Kenichi and especially Kurosawa Aiko. It consists of two parts, the first dealing with politics and the second with rural sociology. A central theme is the rice supply situation as it resulted from administrative measures taken by Japanese authorities who were often completely ignorant of Javanese conditions.

The argument of the first part of Dr Sato's book boils down to a statement that the search for harmony between the desires of the Indonesian nationalists and the war aims of the Japanese military was in fact a quest to square the circle. Those nationalists involved in the mass organisations set up during the Japanese era, from the Parindra/Pamong Praja-dominated Gerakan Tiga A (Triple A Movement) through the Soekarnoist Putera (Pusat Tenaga Rakyat, Center of Peoples Forces) to the more directly Japanese-'guided' Jawa Hoko Kai (Association of Public Service to Java), all wanted to make use of the Japanese to achieve their independence aspirations. The main local aim of the Japanese war effort, on the other hand, was to exploit all useful resources with an intensity incompatible with independence. And so the military simply pushed aside the lofty

the alphabetical list. Whereas *ridhong sampur*, *rimong sampur*, *tanjak kiwo* and *tengen* are described in the Mangkunegaran treatise as fairly complicated (sets of) movements, in Brakel's list they are described as fixed positions. Has the meaning of these terms, or the execution of the movements to which they refer, perhaps changed in the course of time? Although the author mentions the great flexibility and sometimes confusing use of Javanese dance terminology (pp. 62-3), she does not ponder any further on the obvious explanation that the art and techniques of Javanese dancing are orally transmitted. Meaning and performance are therefore only loosely defined, and each succeeding generation of dancers and *guru* interprets them anew.

There are very few written sources on classical Javanese dancing, and even fewer published ones. In that sense this is a valuable publication, richly illustrated with clear, attractive pen drawings. Brakel's endeavour to present to us these rich data is therefore a laudable one. Especially in the first part of this study (pp. 1-65), the author offers some valuable insights into the development of Javanese classical (court) dances. She points out, for instance, the strong influence of (semi-)religious ideas and practices, such as *yoga* (*semèdi*) and other manifestations of Javanese philosophy and *kebatinan*. However, besides being presented as the result of an etic (as opposed to emic) approach, the alphabetical list is also incomplete and does not include a number of terms from the Mangkunegaran, like *pramusinto* (a type of *laras*), *sabetan* (in female style), *panggal* (a transitional movement, equivalent to *kèngser* in Kraton terminology) and *bopongan* (Kraton: *pondhongan*). Likewise, although the term *kébar* is mentioned, comparable musical patterns like *ciblon(an)*, *mérong* or *kiprah(an)* are missing. Finally, most of the Javanese works translated and referred to here have been published elsewhere: *Serat Wédhataya* (p. 6) has been used and translated by Prabowo (1991) and reproduced in a so-called *laporan penelitian* (*Laporan* 1993), while the treatise from the Mangkunegaran has been published by Dharmamulya (1981).

It is with sadness that I come to the conclusion that the results of an in-depth study like this would have been even more worthwhile had it been carried out as a cooperative effort by a number of experienced dancer-researchers, each complementing the others. However, who knows where future initiatives will lead.

References

- Dharmamulya, S.
1981 *R.M.Ng. Wignyahambeksa, hasil karya dan pengabdianannya*. Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, Direktorat Sejarah dan Nilai Tradisional, Proyek Inventarisasi dan Dokumentasi Sejarah Nasional.

ideals of *Hakko Ichiu* (Universal Brotherhood) and Common Prosperity which Japanese ideologues like Okawa Shumei and Ishiwara Kanji propagated so assiduously in Japan. In their view, actual independence for the Southeast Asian countries was at best a long-term aim.

The sociological part of Dr Sato's work takes as its starting point the fact that when Lieutenant-General Imamura Hitoshi's Japanese Sixteenth Army arrived in Java in March 1942, it brought with it fewer personnel than were necessary to control the administrative and economic machinery of Indonesia's main island. Rejecting the services of Dutch civil servants, they were forced to recruit Japanese to fill the gap. Shortly after the Dutch surrender Imamura's Chief of Staff and concurrently Director of Military Administration, Lieutenant-General Okazaki Seizaburo, travelled back to Japan and succeeded in engaging some 500 officials, mainly former functionaries of the Japanese *Ken* or Prefectures, for this purpose. Put to work mostly as local functionaries in occupied Java, these people were totally ignorant of the situation in the areas now under their control. Their response was usually just to apply the Japanese methods with which they were familiar, no matter how inappropriate. Aided in part by the Indonesian *Pamong Praja*, who were necessarily retained as the only people who still knew what was going on at the local level, all kinds of Japanese administrative grandees took irrational and often contradictory measures of their own accord.

In Dr Sato's opinion, this administrative confusion was the main cause of the economic (and political) chaos which the Japanese left behind at the end of their three-year rule. His analysis here pivots around the rice situation. Government rice distribution was nothing new either in Japan, where the economy had been on a war footing since the Manchurian Incident in 1931, or in Indonesia, where the colonial government had set up the so-called Foodstuffs Fund (*Voedingsmiddelen Fonds*) following the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939. This, however, was the only similarity between the food situations in the two countries.

In Japan the circulation of both rice and money could easily be controlled, as nearly all prefectures had rice mills where the harvested rice could be processed locally. In Java, by contrast, where some areas produced a rice surplus and others were importers, the rice had to be transported to the mills by Chinese middlemen. True to Japanese domestic practice, however, the so-called *Gunzoku* (administrative personnel attached to the army) attempted to control not only the middlemen but also the process of rice production itself. Often this led to prohibition of rice export from one regency to another, and hence to secret collusions between Chinese middlemen and *Pamong Praja* officials who saw that money could be made by breaking such rules and selling rice to those areas where the prices were highest. Even more important was that the rural population included great numbers of landless people with no regular rice income who nevertheless

now had to obtain rice somehow for forced delivery to the Japanese. In this way an uncontrollable chaos of black marketing and agrarian distress was inadvertently created. In Japan itself, where even the smallest peasants were careful to save some of their rice income, such phenomena were practically unknown. Dr Sato also gives some examples of gross inequalities with respect to rice deliveries. In those areas where deliveries were imposed in accordance with the old land tax, for instance, the Indonesian village elite were in an advantageous position as their lands were often technically 'communal' plots enjoying tax exemption. Chaos, injustice and suffering in the countryside led to explosions of popular anger not only toward the Japanese, but also toward the Indonesian establishment.

To conclude this review, a few critical remarks on Sato's work. After some correspondence between Dr Sato and myself, first of all, it transpired that the statistical data on pages 130-31 are incorrect, although the mistake involved constitutes little more than a slip of the pen and does not weaken Sato's analysis. I do disagree, however, with Dr Sato's contention that the American reconquest of the Aleutian island of Attu (12 May 1943) was a turning point in the Pacific war. In my opinion this was only a minor tactical victory for the Americans. Strategically speaking the dies were cast much earlier, during the naval battle of Midway (5-6 June 1942) in which Japan lost its First Aircraft Carrier Squadron, its main instrument for taking the strategic initiative and therefore a necessary precondition for winning the war. But again, this is a minor point and does not affect Sato's main argument.

P.N. Holtrop (red.), *ZGKN 100; Een bundel opstellen over de Zending van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland ter gelegenheid van de honderdjarige herdenking van de Synode van Middelburg 1896*. Kampen: Werkgroep voor de Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse Zending en Overzeese Kerken, 1996, 199 pp. ISBN 90.75651.04.X.

KAREL STEENBRINK

In 1896 accepteerde de synode van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland een aantal beginselen op het gebied van de zending. Belangrijkste besluit was wel, dat niet een particuliere zendingsorganisatie, noch een centrale landelijke kerk, maar alleen een plaatselijke gemeente predikanten kan uitzenden. Dit besluit had een hoog theoretisch gehalte. In feite werd het werk van de zending toch meestal op een centraal niveau gedaan, vanwege de grote kosten, en Chr. de Jong schrijft dan ook over 'De onhoudbaarheid van de visie van Middelburg'. Als die 'visie van Middel-

burg' voor de realiteit dan zo weinig opleverde, waarom er dan toch een boek aan gewijd? De reden hiervoor is, dat de interne theologische debatten zowel in Nederland als overzee toch heel wat gemoederen hebben bezig gehouden. Heel veel ideologie dus in deze verzamelbundel, waar keer op keer wordt geconstateerd, dat tussen de verscheiden zendende instanties stevige theologische verschillen bestonden ook al 'werkte de praktijk sterk nivellerend' (Van den End, p. 101). Even bescheiden stelt Holtrop zich op: 'De geschiedenis, het leven, de politieke, maatschappelijke en culturele context, dat alles is sterker geweest dan de leer' (p. 160). In het moderne Indonesië, waarin de centrale staatsmacht zo groot is en weinig aan de besluitvorming van de basis wordt overgelaten, werkte zo'n gedecentraliseerd stelsel al helemaal minder dan in Nederland, waar het ook niet van de grond kwam.

In de marge van dit ideologisch vuurwerk, dat zonder veel geweld werd gedoofd, zijn er aardige overzichten over de ontwikkelingen in de wereld van de zending sinds 1945 (D.C. Mulder) en vooral over de visie van Abraham Kuiper op de Islam, die via zijn 'Abrahamitisch denken een aanknopingspunt voor een vruchtbare benadering van de islam' bood, helaas niet opgevolgd, door mensen als J.H. Bavinck en Hendrik Kraemer, die wél rechtstreeks contact hadden met moslims in Nederlands-Indië (p. 158). Het boek bevat nuttige bijlagen als teksten van A. Kuiper, synodeverslagen en een index. Het is ook uitgegeven als deel 2 in de derde jaargang van het *Documentatieblad voor de Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse Zending en Overzeese Kerken*.

Aletta Biersack (ed.), *Papuan Borderlands; Huli, Duna, and Ipili perspectives on the Papua New Guinea Highlands*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995, xii + 440 pp., bibliography, index. ISBN 0.472.10601.5 (hardcover). Price: US\$ 59.50.

JAAP TIMMER

Papuan Borderlands reacts against the traditional view of Papua New Guinea Highland anthropology in which the localized, kinship-based community was seen as analytically embedded in a network of more or less similar communities. Against this view, the volume aims to situate local investigations in wider regional and political frameworks of the post-independence state and the world at large. The twelve studies result from a conference held at the Australian National University in Canberra in 1991. Appearing four years later, the essays express an awareness of regional and temporal variation and the effects of trans-local and trans-national relations. In what Biersack calls 'ethnography in the ex-centric mode', the

authors go beyond the essentialist ethnographic descriptions that have long ascribed authentic ontologies or mentalities to Central Highland peoples: 'big-men', ceremonial exchange, clan parish organisation, intensive subsistence production, and a preoccupation with bodily substances. The Western Highlands, the book's regional focus, were counterposed to this Highland prototype and became marginalized in the literature as a domain of eccentric 'fringe' groups. While the Central Highlanders became the 'true' Highlanders, the western borderland was regarded as a backwater. The Mt. Kare and Porgera gold and ore mines in the area, however, drew the attention of the new Papua New Guinea nation-state and of world financial markets. Focusing on these modern developments and on the historical relations between groups, as well as on the resulting processes of cultural syncretism, *Papuan Borderlands* successfully establishes a place for the Western Highlands within Melanesian anthropology.

Following a thorough introduction to the area's historical and present-day character as 'a heterogeneous conglomerate of multiple worlds', the chapters take up a broad range of issues. Though each study is clearly the result of a specific research interest, most underscore the book's theme of connections between cultures and the dialectics of inter-cultural mediations. The Huli receive ample treatment. Robert Glasse's analysis of the relationship between mission Christianity and traditional Huli ritual shows how pacification and apocalyptic expectations of the return of Christ can be attributed to the way in which Hulis syncretically reinvented themselves as Christians. Huli notions of the millennium are also taken up by Jeffrey Clark in relation to the discovery and mining of gold at Mt. Kare. John Vail provides a chronology of the gold rush at Mt. Kare and a discussion of mining politics, largely from a Huli perspective. Laurence Goldman offers a detailed sociolinguistic analysis of Huli secrecy, supplying information on the trickster figure Iba Tiri whom Huli share with Duna and Ipilis. Basing himself on thorough field research, Bryant Allen analyses Huli residence patterns and invites further theorizing on the nature and functions of social organization in this part of the Highlands. Jeffrey Clark and Jenny Hughes examine changing ideologies of gender relations among the Huli by looking at pollution and beliefs about sexually transmitted diseases.

Focusing on the Duna, Gabriele Stürzenhofecker also takes up the history of gender relations. She concentrates on conceptions of witchcraft in connection with negative stereotypes of women that serve the cause of male domination. Nicholas Modjeska is also concerned with male domination among Duna people. He makes a strong argument for the use of objectivist approaches that gauge exploitation in Melanesian societies as it actually exists, thereby challenging Marilyn Strathern's critiques of neo-Marxism. In contrast, Aletta Biersack takes up Marilyn Strathern's (and Roy Wagner's) challenge to search for specifically Melanesian modes

and theories in her discussion of marriage, transaction, gender, and sexuality among the Ipili.

Constructively taking up the central theme of the book, Andrew Strathern discusses Duna ritual history as characterized by eclecticism, creativity, and a mixing of traditions of knowledge. In his preliminary ethnography of the Bogaia, Paul Sillitoe also deals with the long-standing connections and interactions of this small group with the neighbouring Duna, Ok, Hewa, and Tsinali. Sillitoe closes his paper with a discussion of Bogaia adaptive responses to increasing pressure on land, a theme that is again taken up by Paul Wohlt in his exploration of a 'fringe' Enga group, demonstrating that global generalizations about particular ethnic groups can be problematic.

These fascinating case-studies indicate that the regional shift away from the Central Highlands and the infusion with new research models is highly promising. By presenting new research strategies for dealing with the processes of hybridization, inter-cultural mediation, and re-authentication that characterize Western Highland cultures, the authors provide important incentives to Melanesian anthropology as a whole.