

Book reviews

Christoph Antons (ed.), *Law and development in East and South-East Asia*. London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003, 387 pp. [Curzon-IIAS Asian Studies Series.] ISBN 0.7007.1321.2. Price: EUR 116.00 (hardback).

ADRIAAN BEDNER

What have we learned about the relation between law and development in East and Southeast Asia after having read this book? First, that most of the authors conceive of development as economic development. Second, that law has been used all but instrumentally towards achieving this end. And third, that neo-liberal globalization has put the organization of the economies in the region under increasing pressure to reform their laws to allow for more competition and market access. These conclusions are not terribly exciting and give rise to the question whether the volume is worth reading.

The answer is yes for those who are interested in the specific topics of the separate chapters, but no for those who are looking for general theories on the role of law in economic development. The introduction provides an excellent summary of the chapters, but – for this reader – did not succeed in tracing a single red thread through their diversity. The chapters themselves vary not only in subject matter, but also in quality, ranging from outstanding to poor – although fortunately those in the former category outnumber those in the latter.

The first part of the book carries the subtitle 'Paradigms of law and development in Asia'. It starts with a chapter by Nobuyuki Yasuda, who intends to 're-establish the framework of Law and Development Studies (LDS) from an Asian perspective'. His perspective, however, turns out to have disconcertingly little in common with other scholarship in this field. Yasuda introduces his own terminology without offering much in the way of definitions, pretends to be discussing Southeast Asia while actually speaking about East Asia, asserts without considering alternative interpretations that Asian values explain the growth of Asian economies, and offers some incorrect factual data – claiming, for instance, that the 1999 elections in Indonesia were the first-ever democratic elections in that country. Much of his chapter was basically incomprehensible to the present reader.

By contrast, Bernard Bishop's discussion of competition policy in APEC countries after the 1997/1998 crisis is both clear and illuminating. Bishop begins 'with an explanation of the old style industry policy and its institutional

underpinnings', arguing that the main reason why interventionist industrial strategies got off the ground in Northeast Asia was that bureaucracies were more insulated from economic and political pressures there than in Southeast Asia. Differences in the degree of 'social plurality' also played a role.

Bishop goes on to show how democratization and deregulation – forced upon the region by international institutions – have undermined the capacity of the state to insulate its bureaucracy and continue to implement the old-style policy. APEC has sought to establish a new industrial policy for member economies which is diametrically opposed to the old one: no longer 'picking and nurturing winners', but levelling the market. Ironically, however, success in implementing this policy, as in the case of the old one, depends largely on institutional capacity, which in Bishop's eyes can only follow from reinforcing the rule of law.

While he is basically correct, Bishop gets somewhat entangled in his own argument here. The rule of law ties political and bureaucratic hands to rules, procedures, and substantive norms, whatever these rules and norms may be. What Bishop presumably means to say is that under the new liberal regime, effective courts and 'watchdog' institutions are needed to prevent the bureaucracy from interfering in the market in its 'old' ways. But apart from this, Bishop's is an excellent chapter.

The same is true of John Ohnesorge's chapter, entitled 'The rule of law, economic development, and the developmental states of Northeast Asia'. This provides a brilliant analysis of the 'rule of law speak' often used by the World Bank and IMF, and contests the claim by these institutions that the rule of law is a crucial element in economic development. Ohnesorge convincingly shows from the Northeast Asian economic success stories how this claim is far too simplistic, and warns of further 'kidnapping' of the rule of law concept by free-market economists. His meticulous analysis of what the rule of law means in the speeches and writings of economists is both original and helpful. In fact Bishop would probably not have fallen into the trap he set himself had he read Ohnesorge's chapter before writing his own. In any case, Ohnesorge's wake-up call to jurists to defend 'their' concept of the rule of law, as a combination of substantive and procedural checks to prevent arbitrary use of state power, deserves not to fall on deaf ears.

The next part of the book focuses on 'Japan as a model for law and development in Asia'. The first chapter here is by Harald Baum, who evaluates the role of law in Japan's economic success and the regulation of its financial markets – and does so very well. Baum immediately takes issue with one of the core elements of Yasuda's new paradigm when he states that it is doubtful whether there is any such thing as an 'Asian value', and that Japan's current economic troubles are not characteristically Asian at all, but rather the consequence of a clash between two different social and economic models.

Baum's main argument is that the system worked as long as Japan was catching up with modern economies, but that its model of big efficient exporters and 'hopelessly inefficient domestic sectors' is now collapsing under both foreign and domestic pressure. This has set the stage for important changes.

Focusing on the role of law in the old and the new model, Baum argues that the civil law system in Japan has always functioned well, in spite of claims that low litigation rates demonstrate the unimportance of law in citizens' relations. However, until recently the system of public law and economic regulation supported a structure conducive to inefficient rent-seeking behaviour. This system has now come under attack from the globalization of financial markets, and as a result changes have been introduced to break up the close relationships between the regulators and the regulated. In Baum's view this will lead to a degree of convergence between the Anglo-American and the Japanese regulatory systems. Contrasting practices, however, have become so deeply engrained that at present this convergence has barely begun.

Richard Boyd's chapter draws on both the World Bank's and the lawyer's version of rule of law in its discussion of Japanese industrial policy. Boyd provides clear evidence against the thesis that either of the two is a precondition for economic development. In an eloquent style he explores the importance of both forms of rule of law on the Japanese economy from a historical perspective. While this seems enough for one chapter, Boyd is not yet content and goes on to look at the role of law – not, now, the rule of law – in Japan's industrial policy. Here he draws a number of bold conclusions on the nature of regulatory law in Japan which offer much food for thought – partly because they seem to be contradictory – and would have warranted a more detailed justification than Boyd offers us.

The first is that law is important, but that its vagueness makes judicial review of government actions difficult. Government agencies enjoy broad competence without 'commensurate specific statutory powers', and as a result are not much bound in their actions. This seems to be at odds with Boyd's next conclusion, which is that the Japanese parliament has become an important player in its own right and now seeks to impose its views on the bureaucracy, at least in part through more specific legislation.

Third, much government action is informal in nature, but the typical approach is an intricate combination of formal and informal measures. It is perhaps this mixture which makes state power so hard for industries to resist. On the other hand, in the one specific case Boyd describes, the regulated community at some point sought support from the Fair Trade Commission against the policy of the Ministry of Transport, showing that sometimes resistance is mounted nonetheless. Likewise, Boyd's conclusion that industrial policy is a political compromise and not the result of elite unanimity, and that politics play an important role in daily bureaucratic life,

seems at odds with his assertion that bureaucratic competition leads to effective policies within particular industrial sectors.

The next chapter, by Christopher Heath, offers a short and clear account of the Japanese intellectual property regime and its role in economic development, together with even shorter but equally clear accounts of the corresponding situations in Korea, Taiwan, China, and the developing countries of Southeast Asia. Heath shows how Japan's intellectual property law has served to stimulate the Japanese economy without enabling foreign parties to enforce their rights. Not surprisingly, this is a system enthusiastically copied by other states in Asia. Finally, Heath points out that the TRIPS agreements can be incentives to economic growth as well as tools of American imperialism. They may even serve as catalysts to stimulate respect for human rights more generally.

The most ambitious chapter in this part of the book is Christoph Antons' comparison of the roles of law in economic development in Japan, Singapore and Indonesia. Antons singles out five roles of law in this respect: to enlist a cooperative work force, to mobilize capital, to nurture economic enterprises, to stimulate technological upgrading, and to privatize successful state companies.

In his claim that he mainly looks at law and not at its effectiveness, Antons is fortunately too modest, as much of what he discusses is not limited to legal questions. Most of the merit of this chapter lies in Antons's careful analysis of the five elements in the various countries, which is a major achievement given the limitations in space. Antons' conclusions unfortunately remain somewhat sketchy. He finds that in all three cases law has been used instrumentally (so there has been no rule of law), but sometimes to achieve opposite goals. While all three countries have bridled their workforce by law and maintained a large state sector, with respect to capital formation they deployed law in very different ways: Japan largely blocked foreign investment while Singapore did everything to attract it, with Indonesia somewhere in between. Antons remarks that all three countries rely to a large extent on general, broad laws giving much power to administrative agencies. This seems to work well in the cases of Japan and Singapore, but in Indonesia it has led to widespread corruption.

In a very short chapter opening the third part of the book ('Law in a "socialist market economy": the case of China), Jianfu Chen shows how the use of law in China does not differ much from the way it has been used in any of the countries described earlier in the book: in a purely instrumental manner. As an introduction to outsiders the chapter is useful, but it contains neither new facts nor new insights. Chen demonstrates that Deng Xiaoping's views on law were in fact the same as Mao's: law was no more than a 'mature form of policy'. Chen is equally sceptical about the decision of the fifth Party Congress in 1997 to rule the country by law. The enthusiasm on the part of

many Chinese legal scholars that this would pave the way for a rule of law is misplaced, according to Chen, who argues that the rule of law has never been seen as a goal in itself and is unlikely to be established in the foreseeable future. Chen concedes, on the other hand, that the start of a debate among legal scholars on the notion of rule of law may ultimately foster deeper shifts in legal thinking and policy.

In the next chapter, Connie Carter explores an interesting attempt at intra-Asian economic/legal transplantation: the adoption of the Singapore model of Jurong Industrial Park in Suzhou, China. After an introduction to some features of the Singaporean and Chinese legal systems as they relate to economic development, the author turns to the actual project, which involved the transfer of law relating to land use, environment, building construction, town and industrial estate management, labour, and social security. Intensive collaboration between Singaporeans and Chinese on this project has yielded considerable improvements from an investor's point of view, the crucial elements being legal clarity, ideological acceptability, and the degree of authority delegated to the Park's governing body.

Strangely enough, in 1999 it was announced that despite its successes the cooperative side of the project was going to be terminated. Carter can only speculate as to the reasons for this rift. As possible factors he mentions Singaporean irritation at the founding of a competing industrial park nearby, the political climate in China, and legal developments in China at the national level. The last explanation, however, seems unlikely as the situation has not changed much in this respect since the start of the project. Here Carter leaves space for new research, but fails to provide an analytical agenda for such a project.

Part Four of the book is called 'Southeast Asian approaches to law and development' and contains two rather disappointing chapters. Wu Min Aun's account of the regulation of organized labour in Malaysia seems adequate in its overview of the legal side of the subject, but apart from a short historical introduction offers little context or explanation. It also lacks a conclusion. In short, for those looking for a legal brief, the chapter will work, but for those looking for something more, it is lacking in substance.

The same applies in still greater degree to Michael Blakeney's account of 'the legal regulation of technology transfer arrangements within ASEAN'. For non-jurists this is law at its worst: a list-like description of legal substance, without any reflection on or explanation of why this is important. A further missed chance, even given Blakeney's lack of analytical ambition, is his failure to compare the systems discussed and consider the potential implications of their differences.

The final part of the book contains two chapters under the heading 'Law and development and "the region"'. The first, by Robert Lutz, could as well

have been placed within the first section on 'paradigms'. It deals with changes in the ways in which trade disputes are resolved and arbitrated. Lutz's discussion is informative in showing the various international influences on the trade dispute regime and the steady increase in the number of fora available. But in my view the piece puts too much value on the influence of the 'Asian' concept of dispute resolution with its emphasis on harmonious relations between parties. Another point is that when he discusses the enforcement of arbitral awards, it is not always clear whether Lutz is addressing the legal or the practical aspects of enforcement. Nonetheless, this chapter does contain that respectable measure of reflection which is missing in some of the others. It ends with the clear and well-argued conclusion that arbitration is gaining ground as a mode of dispute resolution in Asia, and at the same time becoming increasingly transnational in nature.

The final chapter of the book, by Roman Tomasic, is not terribly illuminating in its conclusion that when trying to understand the larger questions of law and development, we must look at the big picture but at the same time not abandon the 'grass-roots' approach. This we are told after a lightning review of the 'Hongkong story' as told by Chris Patten, the 'Singapore story' as told by Lee Kuan Yew, a study of human rights and labour law in Pacific Asia by Woodwiss, Tomasic's own work (with Little) on insolvency law and practice in Asia, and finally Pistor and Wellons' study of the role of law and legal institutions in Asian economic development from 1960 to 1995. While all of these works merit attention, the author unfortunately does not get beyond description, failing to tie them together in a meaningful way.

Recapitulating, we may conclude that *Law and development in East and South-East Asia* lacks cohesion but contains some excellent articles – alongside a few weak ones. It makes useful reading for those who are interested in the legal side of economic development in the region, and offers a building block for those working on more encompassing theories of law and economic development.

David B. Dewitt and Carolina G. Hernandez (eds), *Development and security in Southeast Asia*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003, three volumes (hardback). Volume 1: *The environment*, xxi + 248 pages, ISBN 0.7546.1767.X, price GBP 50.00. Volume 2: *The people*, xxiii + 248 pages, ISBN 0.7546.1791.2, price GBP 50.00. Volume 3: *Globalization*, xix + 299 pages, ISBN 0.7546.1792.0, price GBP 59.95.

FREEK COLOMBIJN

This book on development and security in Southeast Asia has a peculiar structure. It consists of three volumes, centred on respectively the environment, people's experiences, and globalization. Each volume has the same table of contents of *all* the volumes, acknowledgements, map of study area, and general introduction by Dewitt and Hernandez. In every volume, the general introduction, which thus appears three times, is followed by an introduction to that specific volume, and between six and nine case studies. Each article – introduction or case study – is followed by its own list of references, but all references in each volume have also been grouped in a bibliography at the end of that volume. The three-volume book thus has a remarkable coherence.

The book is the result of a Canadian-Philippine-Indonesian partnership, the Development and Security in Southeast Asia (DSSEA) Program. All contributing scholars, with two exceptions, come from these three countries, and most of the case studies, despite the title of the book and the programme, actually deal with either the Philippines or Indonesia, and not with Southeast Asia as a whole. The influence of the main sponsor of the programme, the Canadian International Development Agency, is visible in the formulation of policy implications at the end of most of the articles.

In the general introduction, Dewitt and Hernandez link security with development so intimately that the distinction between the two concepts becomes blurred. The original concept of military state security has been broadened to include economic instability, ecological degradation, and social inequality as sources of insecurity. 'Development' has been broadened to include basic human needs, environmental quality, gender equality, education, and freedom from political persecution. The model of rapid economic development of Southeast Asia is not sustainable, because it creates unacceptable social and political inequalities. Lasting security is only possible given sustainable development. Conversely, resource depletion, conflict over resources, authoritarian rule, political instability, and insecurity go hand in hand. Following the earliest thinking in ASEAN, Dewitt and Hernandez believe that regional security is only possible when each national community can feel secure in its own socially, ecologically, and politically sustainable development.

In the introduction to the volume on the environment, Jennifer Clapp and Peter Dauvergne warn that environmental crises come in slow-motion, with the result that people do not always recognize the urgency of the situation because they have grown accustomed to the crisis. Women are often the first to become aware of an ecological crisis because they feel the impact earliest, but state officials often disregard it, unless the state itself is threatened. As the state is unwilling to act or incapable of doing so, local and international NGOs and other supranational institutions play a growing role in environmental protection. Global economic pressures create new ecological problems. The case studies in this volume deal with hazardous waste, forestry, power plants, mining, food production, industrial pollution, and climatic change.

The second volume, 'The people', introduced by Jorge V. Tigno, is about people who are affected by and adapt to the changing economy, environment, and political situation in Southeast Asia. The chapters in this volume focus on how various people perceive the costs of development. What strategic choices do they make? Tigno argues that human security concerns should deal with ethnic identity, human dignity, religious freedom, competitiveness, workers' rights, and income security. This volume's case studies deal with labour migration, labour regulations, food vendors, and the effects of the Asian crisis of 1997 on labourers. It also contains a somewhat out-of-place article about Christian-Muslim violence in Indonesia and the Philippines. Many articles deal with the relationship between state and individuals.

The third volume discusses, even more explicitly than the others, the impact of globalization on development in Southeast Asia. Hadi Soesastro explains in his introduction that Southeast Asian governments believe their countries can profit from participating in the global economy. However, certain interest groups, associated with crony capitalism, have at times tried to seal themselves off from global competition. The Asian crisis demonstrated the enhanced financial vulnerability of Southeast Asia. The case studies in this last volume deal with regional military security, ASEAN approaches to international security risks, tensions between 'Asian values' and universal human rights, financial markets, how people coped with local economic effects of the Asian crisis, and the Indonesian military's perception of globalization.

Of course, the quality of the chapters in such a large book varies considerably. Several articles are very good. Some authors lose themselves in detail, so that their pieces are interesting only to specialists. If one did not know about the DSSEA Program, the inclusion of so many articles about these two countries – and not others – would appear arbitrary in a book with the term 'Southeast Asia' in its title. Moreover, few of the articles make systematic comparisons even between the Philippines and Indonesia – although there are exceptions, such as the fine comparison between Philippine and Indonesian overseas women workers by Ruth R. Lusterio.

As a whole the book is successful in illustrating the many facets of development – or security – in two countries. Hopefully its policy recommendations will circulate outside the academic arena and reach the policy-makers to whom they are addressed. Some of the thought-provoking recommendations follow here. (1) ‘International agencies, donors, and NGOs need to recognize that the underlying meaning of environmental [concepts] [...] can differ within and between countries’ (Vol. I, p. 29). (2) ‘These studies further suggest that decentralization will not automatically improve management [of natural resources] and enhance community security’ (Vol. I, p. 30). (3) ‘The needs of micro-entrepreneurs [ambulant vendors] need to be recognized and expanded to go beyond training and micro-credit to include *access to space*’ (Vol. II, p. 196).

Lily Kong and Brenda S.A. Yeoh, *The politics of landscape in Singapore; Constructions of ‘nation’*. Syracuse NY: Syracuse University Press, 2003, xiii + 254 pp. ISBN 0.8156.2961.3, price USD 39.95 (hardback); ISBN 0.81562.980.X, price USD 19.95 (paperback).

BEN DERUDDER

This book intelligently examines the various forces that have shaped Singapore’s emergence as a ‘nation’. The authors’ starting point is that the power relations that define (and contest) a nation are played out in and through its day-to-day landscapes. This implies that a detailed examination of the ideological and material projects undergirding Singapore’s national project may help in unravelling the attempts of the state to attain ideological hegemony and maintain political legitimacy. Although this book is essentially a research monograph dealing exclusively with Singapore, it is obvious that its scope allows for larger ambitions: the authors clearly hope that their study will be relevant beyond the rather narrow time-space specifics of their case study. However, an overarching discussion in which the main findings of this book are generalized is lacking; it would have been a welcome plus.

Singapore, with its rather recent independence (1965) after a colonial past (1819-1963) and a short-lived, turbulent union with Malaya (1963-1965), may very well be the perfect case study for an analysis of nation-building in a global era. While Singapore’s post-colonial trajectory parallels the experiences of many other countries in the erstwhile ‘Third World’, there is also much specificity here. Singapore’s booming economy and geographical constraints suggest a curious throwback to medieval times when city-states, rather than

nation-states, dominated the political landscape. Kong and Yeoh's thorough examination of the processes underlying nation-building in Singapore gives the reader the opportunity to become acquainted both with the general processes of contemporary nation-building, and with the remarkable specifics of the Singaporean case.

The structure of the book is straightforward. After a general introduction on the rationale of studying 'landscape politics', a number of short chapters flesh out various aspects of Singapore's nation-building project. The topics covered are diverse, ranging from an analysis of religion's role in the creation of Singapore as a nation, to an examination of how changes in street names reflect the nation-building process, and a discussion of how the framing of performing arts spaces in Singapore is geared towards enhancing nationalist feelings. The book's simple structure implies that the various chapters should be perceived as parallel contributions that motivate the overall argument, rather than as consecutive stepping-stones towards an overarching conclusion. Taken as a whole, the book's most fundamental conclusion is that Singapore's nation-building is reflected in myriad landscape inscriptions that eulogize the construction of a modernist city-state characterized by an ever-expanding economy and a 'gracious' society.

Although the conclusions may seem rather simple and clear-cut, it is well worth reading the insightful and carefully constructed discussions informing them. This book may even be considered an essential read for everyone interested in Singapore's remarkable status in the world economy in general and in Southeast Asia in particular. It is obviously well researched, and its only apparent drawback is that readers not cognisant with Singapore may miss some of the insights offered here: while reading the book, I got the impression that the authors presuppose a fair amount of preliminary familiarity with the city. Taken as a whole, however, this is an interesting and well-written account of the ideological and material construction of Singapore as a 'nation'.

Andrew Hardy, *Red hills; Migrants and the state in the highlands of Vietnam*. Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2003, xxiv + 359 pp. [Monograph Series 93.] ISBN 87.91114.80.2, price GBP 50.00 (hardback); ISBN 87.91114.74.8, price GBP 18.99 (paperback).

HANS HÄGERDAL

Unsurprisingly, the Vietnam War still looms large in writings on modern Vietnamese history. In a way the war has become paradigmatic, and constitutes a theme in much of the historiography around which other social and

economic topics are set out. In this respect the recent work of Andrew Hardy constitutes a deviation from the established rule. Although the conflicts of the 1945-1975 period are of course frequently referred to, *Red hills* covers an aspect of modern history that has its own dynamics: migration. Although Hardy points out the pitfalls of the available statistical data, it is clear that literally millions of people migrated under peaceful conditions (not directly driven by the war events) within socialist Vietnam during the second half of the twentieth century. Hardy's book traces this migration from the densely settled lowlands to the forest-clad highlands of the northern and (after 1975) central parts of Vietnam. Although internal migration does figure in earlier literature, it has certainly been understudied. Well-known authorities like Bernard Fall have paid insufficient attention to this vital aspect of modern Vietnamese history. A thorough study that traces the history of migration back to the French colonial period is therefore more than welcome. Hardy's work is based on a comprehensive treatment of oral, archival, and published sources in Vietnamese, French, and English.

The study starts with two long introductory chapters that set out the circumstances and methodological challenges of the research. These are followed by four sections dealing with the history of migration to the hills during successive chronological phases. The first phase covers the era of French colonialism up to 1945. With the intention of facilitating the development of the country and easing overpopulation in the Red River delta, the French authorities energetically promoted migration. The results of this policy, however, were unsatisfactory. An interesting debate here concerns the assumed traditional attachment of Vietnamese peasants to their home villages. This has often been seen as a deep-rooted cultural impediment to migration even under conditions of great economic stress. Hardy, as a good historian, questions this assumption. He identifies two cultures of mobility among the peasantry in northern Vietnam in the colonial period: one based on village and family networks, the other on opportunities offered by the colonial presence. His conclusion is that the colonial state's limited success in getting peasants to leave their ancestral villages reflected the poor means of subsistence then available in the highlands, together with local bureaucratic resistance to encouraging emigration.

Next, Hardy briefly discusses the violent transition to independence in 1945-1954. In these years the forests of the highlands became the nation's 'capital', and their image changed accordingly. Moreover, the war razed whatever old structures still bound Vietnamese peasants to their ancestral villages. After the conclusion of the conflict against the French, the new Democratic Republic of Vietnam came to regard the hills as a resource-rich area of strategic importance. The third and longest part of the book details the policy and practice of migration from 1954 to 1989. Here the discussion is extended from the north to the central highlands, which became available as

a destination for state-sponsored migration after 1975. Unlike the French, the new Marxist regime promoted migration with a great deal of political will and thorough organization. Hardy provides a lively, grass-roots account of how individual peasants and families decided to make the move, how they moved, and how they settled into their new environment. He also discusses the policy of migration implemented by the authorities. Hardy notes that few people were actually forced to go, but also that for many the state programme was (to reproduce his own near-exact quotation from *The Godfather*) 'an offer they simply could not refuse' (p. 177). Breaking down the process to an individual level, Hardy shows that the success of the programme was quite mixed. The expectations of the newcomers to the hills were higher than those conceived by the state, which saw the new settlements in terms of subsistence rather than improving individual living standards. A lot of people failed to settle successfully in the hills, and withdrew from the programme. The fourth and last part of the work discusses the practice of free migration, outside official programmes, to still available lands in the central parts of Vietnam in the years 1986-1998. This uncontrolled migration created confusion and uncertainty among policy makers, partly because of its unpredictable social and ecological consequences.

Red hills is an admirable effort to expand our knowledge of Vietnam's social history in the last hundred years or so by presenting a history from below. The author has conducted numerous interviews with people involved in the various stages of migration. Illuminating and sometimes moving eyewitness accounts dot the pages. Hardy refers to his approach as the 'evocation' of landscapes, lives, and events. This evocation occurs through the author's own observations, through written and spoken observations by others, and through maps. People's images of the landscape thus play a leading role in the account.

At times, however, the quotations tend to become repetitive and slow down the rhythm of the text. The use of oral history also raises questions about the use of the materials. Occasionally Hardy does note the limitations of oral sources, which may very well present a significantly idealized or distorted version of past experiences. Nevertheless, a clearer methodological discussion would have been useful. Classics in the field of oral history, like the work of Paul Thompson, are not in the list of references.

Another aspect of the migration question that one might have expected to hear a little more about is the interaction between the Kinh (Viet) majority and the ethnic minority groups which have long inhabited the highlands in northern and central Vietnam. Although not ignored, this issue is taken up by Hardy only in passing. The minority insurgency group FULRO, for instance, is mentioned, but the relationship between minority discontent and Kinh migration is not systematically examined.

In general, however, there is little to complain about in this compact study. Hardy's thorough treatment of diverse categories of source materials commands respect, and many of his ideas and themes will undoubtedly provide food for future thought and discussion.

Hanneman Samuel and Henk Schulte Nordholt (eds), *Indonesia in transition; Rethinking 'civil society', 'region', and 'crisis'*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2004, x + 252 pp. ISBN 979.347751.2 (paperback).

DAVID HENLEY

This book is a stimulating reflection on Indonesia and its history in the light of the first years of the post-Soeharto era. The collection originated in a workshop held at the University of Indonesia (UI) in August 2003 in connection with the 'Indonesia in Transition' research programme of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences (KNAW). Henk Schulte Nordholt is coordinator of this programme; his co-editor Hanneman Samuel is Chief Sociologist for Social Development at the research centre of the UI Department of Sociology. The book includes 13 chapters by an impressive line-up of Indonesian and foreign contributors.

The editors' introduction gives a concise and very clear overview of how academic perceptions of the New Order evolved in parallel with changes in the nature of the regime itself over the three decades during which it held sway. When it comes to the post-Soeharto period, Schulte Nordholt and Samuel tend to shy away from drawing even provisional conclusions. Their circumspection is no doubt as prudent as it is frustrating. Now and again their piece does seem to linger too close to its intellectual roots in the liberal left critique of the New Order. When recording the 'surprise' of 'many professional Indonesia watchers' that the New Order turned out to be a 'fragile state' (p. 2), for instance, it is unfair not to mention that the concluding chapter of Michael Vatikiotis's 1993 book *Indonesian politics under Suharto* was entitled precisely: 'The fragile state'. Not everybody, evidently, needed the wisdom of hindsight to notice this fragility: conservative analysts (or New Order apologists) like Vatikiotis had long regarded it as obvious.

The quality of the other contributions is uneven, with the chapters immediately following the introduction being the weakest. Writing on 'globalization' seldom arrives at stimulating conclusions, and Ignas Kleden's 'Globalization and the nation-state' (Chapter 2) is unfortunately no exception. Chapter 3, Francisia Seda's 'The making of civil society in historical perspective: some

preliminary observations', a five-page reflection on whether or not the concept of civil society is a useful one in the Indonesian context, is all too true to the second part its title, but says almost nothing about the making of civil society in historical perspective.

By contrast Martin van Bruinessen's 'Post-Soeharto Muslim engagements with civil society and democratization' (Chapter 4) is an excellent essay, at once balanced, sympathetic, and uncompromisingly frank regarding the dangers posed by uncivil forms of Islamic radicalism as well as the importance of mainstream Muslim organizations like Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah as pillars of civility and tolerance. The piece is also clear, wide-ranging, parsimonious, and often – at least for the non-specialist – surprising. Its discussion of the conspiracy theories which feed the political paranoia of many Indonesian Muslims is convincing and disturbing. It makes brief but incisive use of the theoretical distinction made by Robert Putnam between 'bonding' and 'bridging' forms of social capital.

The next and related chapter, by Farid Wajidi, expands on Van Bruinessen's observations regarding NU. It describes how NU-related youth organizations in Yogyakarta intersected during the 1980s and 1990s with movements of social and political activism, and looks in detail at post-New Order attempts at reconciliation between those affected by the killings of communists and their associates by NU followers in 1965. This too is a clear, informative, and surprising contribution, although much narrower in scope and – partly for that reason – more unreservedly optimistic than Van Bruinessen's.

Chapter 6, by Pamerdi G. Wiloso, widens the focus to discuss 'Civil society in Central Java: 1998-2004'. Like Van Bruinessen and Wajidi, Wiloso sees NU as one important force for both civility and democracy. Here, however, attention is also given to the activities of secular NGOs and political parties. Wiloso's conclusions are upbeat, but it should be noted that the conception of civil society informing this piece is one which gives more emphasis to political freedom, and less to institutional stability and social solidarity, than in the other chapters on the same topic.

With Gerry van Klinken's 'Dayak ethnogenesis and conservative politics in Indonesia's Outer Islands' (Chapter 7), the focus shifts from the current prospects for civility to the historical origins of uncivility. Van Klinken traces the roots of the recent ethnic violence in Central Kalimantan partly to a 'politicized Dayak ethnicity' which 'arose in step with the modern colonial state and the Christian mission' during the early twentieth century (p. 109). As far as Kalimantan itself is concerned, this is a convincing story which draws innovatively on African literature as well as on primary and secondary Borneo sources. The parallels elsewhere in Outer Island Indonesia, however, are perhaps less strong than the title of the chapter implies. In the following chapter, 'Geography, historiography and regional identity: West Sumatra

in the 1950s', Gusti Asnan takes up the same themes of ethnogenesis and invented tradition. He gives a well-researched account of how schoolbooks and maps both reflected and shaped the regional identity of West Sumatra in the 1950s, and makes interesting observations about how the colonial Minangkabau Council, founded in 1918, embodied ideas about *adat* as the essence of Minangkabau society. But at the end of the day Minangkabau ethnicity, unlike Dayak ethnicity, is not an artefact of colonialism or the state. And because Asnan does not examine its precolonial antecedents, he is not really able to say what difference was made to it by the colonial and postcolonial developments which he describes.

There follow two more chapters focusing on the 1950s. Chapter 9, by Esther Velthoen, is an excellent study of the political thinking of legendary Darul Islam rebel Kahar Muzakkar, who led a sustained insurgency in South Sulawesi from 1952 until his death in 1965. Although the title of this chapter refers to 'contested visions of the nation-state', Velthoen's thrust is to stress the continuities between Kahar's ideology as a rebel and that of the Republic of Indonesia during the national revolution, in which he had participated. In particular, she emphasizes that Kahar's conversion to the cause of an Islamic state was a late and incomplete development dictated at least partly by the need to appeal to the inchoate ideals of his rural constituency. Chapter 10, by Howard Dick, looks at the Indonesian economy in the 1950s, providing among other things a refreshingly clear explanation for the disastrous exchange rate policies of that period.

While it is understandable that Indonesia's return to representative democracy, regional autonomy and separatist strife has revived interest in the 1950s, none of the three chapters dealing with that decade really strives for contemporary relevance. Dick, in fact, states explicitly that the similarities between the 1950s and the period since 1998 are 'mostly superficial' (p. 175). This raises doubts about the wisdom of highlighting the 1950s so explicitly in the book. Likewise, Ben White's comparison of the 'social history of economic crises' in Yogyakarta (Chapter 11) is stronger on differences than on parallels between the crises of the 1930s, 1960s, and 1997-2002.

Chapter 12, a 'field report' by Agus Indiyanto on the post-Soeharto crisis in West Sumatra, concentrates on the increasing importance of successful emigrants – stimulated by administrative decentralization and cheap air fares – as weekend players in village politics. The book ends somewhat enigmatically with an essay by anthropologist Patricia Spyer (Chapter 13) on the 'proliferation of images and voices of children in national media across Indonesia' (p. 236) as a symptom of public uncertainty and insecurity. Like post-Soeharto Indonesia itself, *Indonesia in transition* has the character of a fascinating and unpredictable work in progress.

S. Margana, *Pujangga Jawa dan bayang-bayang kolonial*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2004, xii + 271 pp. ISBN 979.347782.2 (paperback).

MASON HOADLEY

Translatable as *Javanese literati and colonial images*, the title of this work is particularly apt. Its contents focus on the intellectual histories of Surakarta practitioners of Javanese letters during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, whose scholarly environment was increasingly influenced by the activities of the colonial state.

The time period, geographic focus, and orientation of the book are clearly stated in the Introduction (*Pendahuluan*). For practical reasons of source availability this work concentrates mainly on the period after the division of the Mataram kingdom into the principalities of Surakarta and Yogyakarta through the 1755 Treaty of Giyanti, and the creation of the Mangkunegaran via a second treaty signed at Salatiga the following year. Considerable attention, however, is also paid to literary works produced under the predecessor of the two Surakartan principalities, Kartasura, during the rule of Pakubuwana II (1725-1749). More specifically, *Pujangga Jawa* deals with literary products touching on the Javanese past, both *babad* (histories, narratives) and non-*babad* (literature, didactic prose), with a consistent focus on history in the broadest sense, be it a matter of 'hard events' or the softer concepts of the past held by key literati.

Chapter 2 ('Sastra babad dan non-babad dalam problematik penulisan sejarah modern') takes up problematic issues raised by the contents of both types of texts for the contemporary historian. These include their origin in oral and written sources, whether they are individual or collective creations, the perpetual issue of how indigenous 'histories' can or should be interpreted, and the even more problematic one of if and how more self-consciously aesthetic works of literature contribute to historiography ('writing-in-history' or 'history-as-writing', p. 41). Chapter 3 ('"Renaissens" dalam konteks sejarah sastra Jawa abad XVIII dan XIX') presents and comments upon the theory, as advanced by Th. Pigeaud and others, of a renaissance of Javanese letters during the period considered. The crucial question is whether the appearance of a relatively greater number of texts at this time is the product of a real renaissance, or simply the result of lack of preservation during preceding periods. The lack of materials induces the author to draw freely upon the contents of C.F. Winter's *Zamenspraken* (1888).

Chapter 4 ('Dunia akademis kolonial dan intelektual Java abad XIX') is one of the key chapters of the work. After first tracing the relationship which had grown up between Dutch 'Javanici' and the literary world of Surakarta,

Margono examines the not inconsiderable influences of these scholars on the 'Javanese world'. The chapter ends with a discussion of 'Javanologi, Teknologi, dan Renasens'. By far the longest and most informative section of the work is Chapter 5, 'The world of the Surakarta literati and the tradition of Javanese intellectuals in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries' ('Dunia kapujanggan Surakarta dan tradisi pemikiran intelektual Java abad XVIII dan XIX'). Here the careers of key *pujangga*, including such well-known literary/historical canons as Yasadipura I, Yasadipura II, and Ranggawarsita, are summed up. The chapter ends with a discussion of the latter's mysterious death and, more important, an evaluation of the end of the flowering of Javanese letters. Contemporary judgments as to the character and utility of the work of later *pujangga* were typically ambivalent and accompanied by laments for fading knowledge of the old (Old Javanese) and lack of relevance to the new, emerging modern world.

The final substantive chapter, Chapter 6, ('Raja-raja patron kesastran Jawa: beberapa gejala polarisasi peran') discusses the changing role of patronage in the world of the Surakarta literati. It suggests that the shifting character of the political and economic world of the central Solo court – the influence of which tended to be usurped both by the *Kapatian* (the court of the heir apparent) and by the minor court of the Mangkunegaran – led to the emergence of alternative sources of patronage. Overshadowing these, however, were the material and social benefits associated with the sponsorship of Dutch Javanici, which changed forever the traditional world of the Javanese literati. This helps to account for negative developments within the courtly tradition and the end of whatever renaissance in Javanese letters had occurred under the Pax Neerlandica. A succinct summary of the book's major themes and arguments is provided in an Epilogue.

Despite being open to criticism on a few points – for instance, a tendency to repeat information several times, and the lack of a much-needed index – Margana's work provides a clear and informative picture of the high point of Javanese letters centered at Surakarta. The fact that it contrasts with the (at least in this reviewer's opinion) esoteric and long-winded discourses on texts and *pujangga* produced by many of the experts cited by Margana underlines its usefulness to those of us less initiated in the mysteries of things Javanese.

A couple of observations produced by reading the book can serve to close my review. The first is that many of the Western experts cited in the context of Javanese literature are historians by training, as are both the author and the reviewer. Is this the height of hubris on the part of an intellectual corps increasingly marginalized in the academic world? Or is it a simple necessity in view of the meagre amount of source material bequeathed by time and chance? My second closing observation concerns the relatively large number of scholarly works cited by Margana which are contributions by Indonesian

scholars writing in Indonesian about an eminently Indonesian (Javanese) subject. While in most Southeast Asian countries this focus on indigenous scholarship would be unremarkable, a glance at any Indonesian university curriculum reveals a striking absence of Indonesian works in comparison to translations of Western scholarship. It is to be hoped that the book considered here reflects a general swing towards a more Indonesia-centric historical/literary tradition.

Karel E.M. Bongenaar, *De ontwikkeling van het zelfbesturend landschap in Nederlandsch-Indie: 1855-1942*. Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2005, 856 pp. ISBN 90.5730.2675. Price: EUR 49.50 (hardback).

GERRY VAN KLINKEN

Some histories are written to explain today's world. Some deliberately avoid contemporary relevance. And some do not aim for relevance but have it anyway. Karel Bongenaar's wonderful, somewhat unwieldy book is of this kind.

Self-governing lands (*zelfbesturende landschappen*) were indirectly ruled territories that only finally lost their constitutional identity in the 1950s. They were a link between colonial and precolonial forms of governance. They also embody a peculiarly cultural form of statecraft that tends to pop up again and again. This gives Bongenaar's book its unintended relevance. Post-New Order regional autonomy saw the ceremonial reinstatement around the country of many sultans whose domains had been dissolved decades earlier. The boundaries of the districts empowered by regional autonomy often originate with these precolonial entities.

That they fell into oblivion is not difficult to understand. Already by the late nineteenth century they looked like anachronisms. The colonizers had begun to impose their will on nearly every part of the archipelago, and had thoroughly transformed some parts. By the early twentieth century an increasingly powerful colonial bureaucracy, a modern nationalist movement, and a cosmopolitan city life seemed to make the traditional principalities mere vestiges of an order that was politically and morally defeated. The remaining self-governing lands lay mostly in the backward outer islands. When Indonesia became independent, modern nationalists took over the same bureaucratic tools that had served the Dutch and the Japanese so well. A wave of republicanism swept away all but one of the remaining kings and sultans who traced their lineage to precolonial ancestors (Yogyakarta's Hamengkubuwono was the exception). The history books generally portrayed the birth of Indonesia as a struggle for modernity, tracing its origins

to the (proto)nationalist movements of the years before World War I – as well as, it had to be admitted, to the Dutch Ethical Policy whose paternalism Indonesians loved to hate. Soekarno built an Indonesian identity out of the common experience of resisting ‘350 years of colonialism’.

One scholar who brought the self-governing lands back into the story was the Jakarta-based law lecturer (and poet) Han Resink. In a series of essays written in the 1950s and 1960s and later republished in an English volume (Resink 1968), he portrayed modern Indonesia as much more strongly determined by those older indigenous entities. Except in Java and parts of Maluku, Dutch colonialism went back hardly more than half a century. Throughout the nineteenth century, and arguably into the twentieth, the ‘Netherlands Indies’ was a patchwork quilt of international treaties between sovereign powers. After abandoning its earlier stance of abstention (*onthouding*) in the 1870s, the Netherlands sought to bring all the existing entities under its control. The status of the self-governing lands could now be likened to that of a protectorate under international law (Bongenaar, pp. 87-92). Not till 1910, according to Resink, did they lose their sovereignty (p. 96). The colonial official who later rose to become Dutch prime minister, Hendrikus Colijn, saw the loss of sovereignty occurring earlier – in 1885. In between those two dates, Bongenaar concluded, the indigenous principalities enjoyed a rather dubious ‘sovereignty under the glass bowl of Dutch authority’.

However, even after 1910 the self-governing lands continued to exist. Things were organized somewhat differently in them than in directly ruled territories, and the differences grew in the 1930s when the government chose to restore the prestige of their traditional rulers. Thus ‘tradition’, fossilized rather than sovereign in form, became institutionalized into colonial governance. We are now a long way from the precolonial ‘lands below the winds’ (Reid 1988-93). After 1912 contracts were no longer signed with the traditional ruler as a person, but with the land as an institution (p. 121). ‘Tradition’ also had a role in the directly administered territories, where different laws applied to different racial groups.

The proportion of the Netherlands Indies covered by the institutional arrangement known as the self-governing lands was substantial. In 1930, 43 percent of the population of 19 million outside Java lived in one (see maps in Cribb 2000:124). Another four million lived in the Javanese royal lands around Jogjakarta and Surakarta. The total number of these lands was nearly 400, including many very small ones in Aceh and Timor (Bongenaar, p. 500). Such large figures, one would think, mean that the self-governing territories deserve more than the small number of historical studies so far to appear on them (Locher-Scholten 2003 is a much-quoted exception).

Bongenaar was a lawyer, like Resink. Their meeting in Jakarta in 1989 inspired him at a mature age to write his dissertation on the self-governing

lands. It was supervised by Cees Fasseur. Sovereignty was the central question. When did the treaties lose their genuinely bilateral character to become unilateral impositions? When were treaties no longer made with the sultan personally but with their 'land' as an institution of state? Were the ordinary folk who lived there citizens or subjects, and to whom did they belong? These are among the core questions Bongenaar addressed. Throughout the nineteenth century the Netherlands Indies was effectively a 'federation', except that there were no provisions to limit the powers of the federal government (p. 256). The debate was therefore about the exact location of the boundary between Dutch and indigenous sovereignty in the transitional period between about 1870 and 1910. Many Dutch scholars wrote their dissertations on this debate before World War II, among them H.J. Spit (1911), Th.H.M. Loze (1929), J.M. Somer (1934), H.D. von Meyenfeldt (1936), C. Nagtegaal (1939), G.W. Fris (1940), and J.C.C. Haar (1940) (pp. 25-9). But independence took the practical urgency out of the issue and the field dried up almost completely. The scholarly exchange Bongenaar conducts with these prewar authors thus makes his book read a bit like a conversation with the glorious dead.

His modest refusal, quoting lack of knowledge, to write a general history of the self-governing lands (p. 31) contributes to a sense of frustration on the part of a reader who wants more. This is a legal history, and one restricted, like its prewar predecessors, to the question of sovereignty. 'The visions of jurists' form the substance of this book. For Resink, as for Bongenaar, these provide 'the decisive view on the political history of a country' (p. 93). Perhaps so, but while jurists dreamt up their visions, life went on in places they never set foot in. What was it like to be a subject of one of these traditional rulers? What was it like, for that matter, to be a ruler and not just an unequal partner with the Dutch *controleur*? What was happening on the ground beyond the declarative language of the formal treaties between ruler and Dutch officialdom? How was justice actually administered? What happened in the breach of Batavia's legal rulings? How 'traditional', really, were arrangements put in place under the gaze of a colonial ruler able to reward or punish as he pleased? No doubt these questions are not easy to answer. The colonial sources are overwhelmingly concerned with competency boundaries, and ordinary people hardly figure in them, as Elsbeth Locher-Scholten points out in her study of the Jambi sultanate (2003:16-19). But there are possibilities. Han Resink was not above using the novels of Joseph Conrad for insight into social conditions in the remote kingdoms of nineteenth-century Borneo. We miss such freedom of spirit in Bongenaar's massive tome.

We also miss a comparative perspective. Apart from a few tantalizing glimpses of Belgian central Africa (pp. 285, 492, 811), other colonies that practised similar forms of rule are missing. Yet there is a large international literature on the problem of indirect rule. The latest addition to it is Colin

Newbury's global survey of 'patrons, clients and empire' (Newbury 2003). This argues that the term 'indirect rule' incorrectly creates an impression of complete European control, when the reality points to European adaptation to a precolonial indigenous patrimonial/clientelist system. Indonesia is unfortunately missing from Newbury's global survey. I suspect the reason is not so much a lack of material as a failure to keep an eye on the broader questions.

And yet, *De ontwikkeling van het zelfbesturend landschap* is a wonderful book, packed with information, and relevant – a relevance Bongenaar could not have foreseen, since he did his work during the centralizing New Order and died in March 1999. During the six years it took to prepare his manuscript for publication, the development of regional autonomy touched off local ethnic movements that looked back nostalgically to the period Bongenaar describes (Schulte Nordholt and Van Klinken forthcoming). The sultanates of Sambas, Landak, Mempawah, and Pontianak, for example, were revived amidst a somewhat thuggish 'Malay' movement for control over newly subdivided district administrations in West Kalimantan (Van Klinken forthcoming). Bongenaar (p. 220) is able to tell us that the sultans of Sambas and Mempawah had already yielded all of their judicial powers to the colonial state in the early part of the nineteenth century, driven by vociferously republican-minded Chinese tin miners in the area. This makes it easier to understand why, after the New Order, not even the Malay activists themselves could generate enough respect for the sultans to make them real political actors. With the exception of Pontianak (which had a much longer history of autonomy), the revived West Kalimantan sultans have been little more than nicely dressed mannequins for other interests. At least seventy traditional principalities retain some life today, about a third of them newly revived. There is something of interest in Bongenaar's book about each one of them.

The revival of sultanates and other kinds of principalities conveys some of the same conservative logic that led the Dutch to try to reinvent them in the 1930s in the face of a feared communist uprising. In the midst of a flush of new political parties offering democracy and reform, the new post-1999 sultans mostly have a record with the New Order political party Golkar. All are close to emerging new local powerholders, or aspire to become one themselves. Sultanhood enhances the prestige of the district chief or governor, over and against Jakarta but also against local rivals. The two are not oppositional figures. Almost none of the new sultans have been associated with the many movements for social justice that emerged around Indonesia after the collapse of the New Order.

Here too, Bongenaar has something to offer today's debate about the place of tradition in a time of modernizing change. Throughout the last decades of colonial rule, a debate was taking place within the bowels of the bureaucracy (for none of this ever reached either the Volksraad or the Dutch parliament)

about the desirability of retaining the self-governing lands. Its most curious feature, for me, was that conservatives and progressives were found on both sides of the argument. The debate dealt with the most fundamental issue facing colonialism, namely the shape of the modernity being brought to the Indies. Those who believed in modernity, and who therefore had little time for the traditional rulers, thought in terms of closer bureaucratic control (a conservative agenda). But they also thought of ameliorative programmes in health, education, irrigation, agricultural credit, of legal certainty, and (later) of democracy (a progressive idea). Those who were less impressed with modernity thought tradition should be valued because it offered local communities protection against the destructive penetration of modern capital and administration (also a progressive idea). But at the same time tradition insulated local communities from emancipatory movements for justice and democracy (which pleased conservatives). We might call the two groups modernists and (neo)traditionalists.

Modernist bureaucrats had the initial advantage. Emboldened by the missionary Ethical Policy as foreshadowed in *Max Havelaar*, they wrote reports in the years 1904-1909 condemning the 'extortionate practices' (*knevelarij*) of this sultan and that – Bulungan, Tidore, Bima (pp. 266-8) – and soon after, a number were dismissed dishonourably. Proposals to gradually dissolve the self-governing lands had been circulating since 1883 (p. 276). Some of these plans were driven by administrators wanting greater bureaucratic control. Governor-General J.B. van Heutsz wrote a secret policy document in 1906 that proposed closer regulation of the self-governing lands. As government advisor, Colijn wrote a long modernizing 'nota' in the same spirit in 1907-1909, also envisaging the gradual disappearance of the self-governing lands (pp. 277-8, 330). The self-rule regulations (*Zelfbestuursregeling*) of 1919 simplified and standardized administration in those territories, and placed more matters beyond the ruler's jurisdiction on a 'negative list' (pp. 477-9). Others, such as a Dutch academic working group under J. Oppenheim who wrote a report in 1922 ('Proeve'), believed that self-rule ought to disappear in the interests of popular democracy (pp. 466-70). As late as 1929, an internal government commission (*Extraterritorialiteitcommissie*) formed in 1926 (p. 411) still wrote approvingly that the self-governing lands should be allowed to disappear gradually, and that once the traditional self-rulers were gone, local democracy would flourish.

However, the tide was turning. This last commission's report was kept secret. The new director of the bureaucratic corps (*Binnenlands Bestuur*), A. Mühlenfeld, disliked the notion of democracy emerging in place of traditional self-rule. From this time on, self-rule was promoted by neotraditionalists as a useful safeguard against democracy. By the late 1920s the modernists, their confidence already shaken by the horrors of World War I, faced growing

financial difficulties. The trump card for neotraditionalists in a time of world economic crisis was that self-governing lands were cheap (pp. 166, 288-90). Combined with a determination to prevent the emergence of democracy, this led to the restoration of a number of self-governing lands that had previously been dissolved (*ingelijfd*). This happened in Gowa and Bali in the 1930s (pp. 332, 538-46). The restoration movement had intellectual support from academics and bureaucrats such as B.J. Haga, F.H. Visman, and Ph. Kleintjes, and it would have gone further if World War II had not intervened (pp. 334). The inspiration for the neotraditionalist movement had come from Leiden professor C. van Vollenhoven.

Capital – plantation and mining interests – were ambivalent towards the traditional rulers. Their main concern was free access to land. Traditional communal land title potentially stood in their way, but so did the greatly increased legal supervision of a modern bureaucratic state. They leaned towards self-rule provided its powers were neutered (p. 269). They were always opposed to the modernizing Ethical Policy, with its expensive programme of state welfare penetrating every corner of society (p. 494).

Bongenaar did not share the neotraditionalists' admiration for restoration. Indigenous forms of rule had much to recommend them, in his view, but in the colonial pressure cooker something quite different had emerged, something which offered inhabitants neither the social integrity of indigenous rule nor the emancipation of modernity (pp. 343-50, 395). Colonial interference had created 'kings' who were more monarchical than they had been before, since the Dutch preferred to deal with just one person rather than the previously common college of rulers. Diffuse, consultative forms of government that had permitted different ethnic groups to coexist disappeared under the pressure of simplification. Dignitaries who had stood between the ruler and the village and helped to soften his rule also disappeared. Small territories were dissolved into larger ones. In short, the 'tyranny' of the self-rulers, so often decried by modernizing colonialists, was to a large extent itself a colonial effect rather than an original feature. Haga, an advocate of self-rule, was among the first to acknowledge these problems.

The book is organized into two parts, respectively on the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. It is difficult to read straight through. Long sentences, an impression of legalistic hairsplitting, a level of detail that frequently overwhelms the argument, a tendency towards repetition, and of course the complexity of the material itself (a map would have helped) all make the text somewhat opaque. Yet this will no doubt be the definitive study on the self-governing lands. The index allows it to be used as a reference book. I suspect most readers will want to use it as an historical encyclopedia of local politics. A second volume to cover the years 1942-1950 is in preparation, perhaps in electronic form to reduce costs.

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Stewart, Pamela J. and Andrew Strathern, *Humors and substances; Ideas of the body in New Guinea*. Westport CT: Bergin and Garvey, 2001, xi + 148 pp. ISBN 0.89789.762.5. Price: USD 97.95 (hardback).

MICHAEL LIEBER

This is a study of the human body in relation to its social and physical environments as understood by peoples of Papua New Guinea and Irian Jaya. Stewart and Strathern's carefully crafted comparison begins with people of the Mt Hagen area of Papua New Guinea and from the Bird's Head of Irian Jaya, and later telescopes to New Guinea as a whole (with yet wider areal implications).

The comparative focus is bodily substances – humours (blood, semen, sweat, water, and other fluids), hard substance like bone, and mind. All four

authors focus on humours, which flow within and between bodies, from bodies to environment (for instance, soil) and vice versa. The authors demonstrate unambiguously the cultural principle that while people are in places, places are (literally) in people.

After introducing the concepts of 'substance', 'humour', and 'mind', and their relationships within the body and within the cosmos at a higher level, two ethnographic accounts of health, illness, curing, and their moral implications from the Bird's Head are presented to substantiate these generalities. Dianne van Oosterhout's account of skin as indicative of the state of one's relations with others, and thus of health or illness, concentrates on sweat and scent as markers of internal states (and ways of masking them). Ien Courtens presents a parallel example from the Bird's Head, a curing ritual for a victim of ancestor-caused illness. The ritual emphasis is on blood and its flow as the medium of health, illness, and cure. Both accounts share the idea that illness is a process of consumption of the victim by a witch or ancestor, necessitating cooked food as a substitute.

Stewart and Strathern compare the Bird's Head data with those from their research among the Mt Hagen groups, telescoping outwards to the New Guinea Highlands. Many relevant cultural features are found in both areas. Examples include the notion that sharing food is equivalent to sharing identity, marking relationships as rooted in places; the idea that the body surface changes with the changing relationships that promote and inhibit the flow of humours; the distinction between appropriate and inappropriate consumption; and the implied flow of substance in the larger cosmos between people and beings such as spirits.

The theme of flows of substance is manifest in New Guinea Highlands constructs of conception and foetal growth and nurturance, beginning with the importance of fertility and the rituals that promote it. A foetus is said to be nurtured by its mother, who is fed from the father's land, which is in turn nurtured by the 'grease' of the people buried in that land. The maintenance of this flow and the removal of any blockage that could disrupt it is described in the following chapter.

The longest chapter is devoted to the concept of 'mind substance'. The authors approach the subtleties of the distinctions between spirit and mind, mind and body, and spirit and body – all in relation to cosmos – in the most transparent possible manner. They present interviews with two informants, including the questions, and the generalizations inferred from the answers. Because the informants differ in age and experience, the authors' generalizations encompass both the variability and the patterning of these concepts. The transparency of the process of data collection, data comparison, and inductive generalization makes this an excellent teaching tool. The book concludes with a chapter summarizing the flow of substances.

This clearly written work is very important. After an eighty-year lapse, anthropologists are systematically addressing cultural constructs of conception, ontogeny, foetal growth, and inheritance in relation to perceived social and physical environments. This book is a model for approaching this nexus clearly, comparatively, and transparently.

Wu Xiao An, *Chinese business in the making of a Malay state, 1882-1941*. London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003, xvi + 239 pp. [Chinese Worlds.] ISBN 0.415.30176.9. Price: GBP 70.00 (hardback).

LOH WEI LENG

Wu Xiao An has chosen a very broad canvas, touching on a number of important themes of interest to scholars of Southeast Asian studies in general and Malaysian history in particular. He joins recent efforts to flesh out the role of Chinese business in Southeast Asian history, addressing issues which are currently major concerns of historical writing: state and ethnicity, migration, and the emergence of Southeast Asian capitalism.

In terms of time and space, Wu locates his study during an era of extensive socio-economic transformation, as the colonial state attempted to establish a firmer footing in the Malay Peninsula. The focus is on two northern states: Penang, which had been under British rule since 1786, and Kedah, which was under Malay rulers in the period under scrutiny (1882-1941) and at first fell partly within the jurisdiction of the Siamese state. To this extent, Wu's study transcends the borders of today's nation-states.

As Wu informs us, citing Anthony Reid's *Sojourners and settlers; Histories of Southeast Asia and the Chinese* (1996:ix), the role of the immigrant Chinese in nascent state formation and socio-economic change, processes concomitant with the imperial project in most parts of Southeast Asia, is 'among the most understudied aspects' of the history of the region. This makes Wu's book a welcome addition to the existing literature.

This study also joins other attempts to look beyond national boundaries which, as legacies of colonial rule, are after all recent creations, to focus on the 'much-neglected historical reality' (p. 2) of regional and transnational linkages. The region's present resurgence in the form of growth triangles takes cognizance of its natural advantages in today's drive towards greater competitiveness in a more globalized world. Hence nations would do well to be informed of the historical basis for a regional approach.

Turning to Chinese networks and their core economic activities, such as revenue and opium farming, rice trading, and pawnbroking, existing

writing is still relatively sparse. In other words, there is plenty of room for more studies on the topics that this book touches on in order to expand our understanding of Southeast Asian history. All the more so when the writer adopts relevant methodological approaches, such as that of situating Chinese business and networks within the wider society and looking beyond cultural explanations for business behaviour to relate the latter to the broader political and socio-economic context.

To my mind, it is this latter effort which can be deemed Wu's most valuable contribution to a more nuanced analysis of the changing fortunes of Chinese enterprise. He makes this contribution partly by examining the intersection of Chinese family businesses with the state – or rather, with states: British, Siamese, and Malay. He also traces historical processes of conflict and accommodation, both without and within the Chinese community, as Chinese entrepreneurs sought to sustain themselves in response to evolving circumstances. Wu documents this painstakingly through two historical phases: that before and after the Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1909, a watershed in political and many other respects (p. 15). The success of his approach reinforces his call for the study of the Southeast Asian Chinese to be placed 'in a larger context, looking at multi-faceted and multi-ethnic interactions rather than compartmentalizing Chinese in their own narrow community' (p. 4).

This is a solid piece of work, empirically rich, delving into an impressive range of English, Chinese and Malay primary sources. It is set to be on the 'must-read' list of many.

Mikihiro Moriyama, *Sundanese print culture and modernity in 19th-century West Java*. Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2005, xv + 287 pp. ISBN 9971.69.322.4. Price: USD 32.00 (paperback).

JULIAN MILLIE

This book was developed from the author's dissertation, completed in the Department of Southeast Asian Languages and Cultures at Leiden University. It reflects the tone and preoccupations of a significant body of work produced under the supervision of Henk Maier, including also the theses of Van der Putten (2001) and Van den Berge (1993). These works have a number of preoccupations in common. One is a conviction that cultural materials, especially writing, are important materials for the study of the social evolution of the Malay/Indonesian region. Another is a high methodological priority on giving close readings to textual materials in the light of the personal, political

and cultural encounters occasioned by the colonial project. A third is a critical attitude to the categories accepted in the literature concerning Indonesian cultures, approaching these as constructions reflecting the interests of the various parties involved in processes of cultural production. These themes were addressed by Maier in his own influential dissertation (1987).

Moriyama's book is concerned with a specific time-frame, starting with the Dutch 'discovery' of Sundanese in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and concluding with the commencement of the *Volkslectuur* publishing house in the early twentieth century. Moriyama addresses a number of themes concerning cultural and social developments in the Priangan region during this period. He traces how the Dutch engagement with Sundanese language and culture responded to the intellectual contours of Dutch society of the time. The steps by which Dutch scholars and the Indies government 'created Sundanese' are revealed as being underpinned by diverging philosophical outlooks, leading to disagreements and rivalries. The period also saw the development of a system of education for Sundanese pupils and the simultaneous canonizations that this required, especially in the selection and printing of educational materials. The commencement of mechanized publishing is described, along with its consequences for the most popular Sundanese genre of the time, the *wawacan* (long verse narrative).

The central character of the book is Moehamad Moesa (1826-1882), the highest-ranking religious official of the Limbangan Regency. His writings were among the first Sundanese works to appear in print. Moesa, treated by Moriyama as the first Sundanese 'author in the European sense' (p. 6), had a close friendship with Karel Frederik Holle, the tea planter, author, and adviser on Indies affairs. Moesa's most enduring work, *Wawacan Panji Wulung*, forms the basis for Moriyama's discussion of an incipient modernity in Sundanese literature. Moriyama's main argument is that the development of mechanized publishing and education altered the 'configuration' of Sundanese writing and contributed to the emergence of a modern, literate colonial subject.

For this reader, the book's greatest strength is one it shares with the other theses mentioned above; it portrays novel cultural practices and forms emerging out of self-interested collaborations between complementary sections of Indies society; on one hand the class of Dutch officials and entrepreneurs (in this case represented by K.F. Holle, who wore both of these hats) and on the other the indigenous elite (Moesa). In the second half of the nineteenth century, the establishment of schools for Sundanese pupils created a demand for 'suitable' reading materials in Sundanese. Moesa and Holle were on hand to meet this demand, composing, commissioning, and publishing works in Sundanese. They occupied privileged positions in colonial and indigenous society and had every reason to maintain the status quo. This is reflected in their literary output; their writings attempt to implement a modernity in

which nationalism played no part. Subsequent events, of course, doomed this project to be a short-lived one.

A further virtue of *Sundanese print culture and modernity* is that it provides a much-needed resource for students of Sundanese culture and history. This is no small achievement on the part of Moriyama; where secondary sources are concerned, students of Sundanese culture stare into an empty cabinet. Moriyama has addressed this dearth with a book crafted from detailed textual research and broad field experience, and his discussion of Moehamad Moesa complements Van den Berge's biography of Holle (1998). The availability of these two works means that a fascinating epoch of great importance to Sundanese culture and history has been expertly documented and analysed.

In his formulation of the book's central argument, Moriyama could not avoid a heavy reliance on metaphor. Sundanese writing has a 'configuration'. Genres and contexts can 'shift' and 'rise'. Schoolbooks and textbooks 'create' new types of readers. In the terrain addressed in the book, this mode of expression is unavoidable. Nevertheless, it can cause problems when the argument requires fleshing out through reference to specific people, texts and events. The transition from the central argument, flawless because of its metaphorical neatness, to situated realities can be a hazardous one. I felt this in Moriyama's reading of *Wawacan Panji Wulung*. The 'modernity' Moriyama interprets in this text is not altogether convincing. Loan words from Dutch, for example, are taken as signs of a 'modernizing current' (pp. 168-9). Well, maybe, but haven't literatures in Indonesian languages always introduced a constant stream of novelties to their readers/listeners? Does this in itself imply modernization? This dilemma is, however, endemic to a study like the one attempted by Moriyama; his is a useful book precisely because he is prepared to make a broad argument from a position of great familiarity with the subject matter. *Sundanese print culture and modernity* will be a first-order reference for researchers seeking both an introduction to Sundanese literary culture and a detailed inquiry into the cultural facets of the colonial/indigenous encounter.

Yunita T. Winarto, *Seeds of knowledge; The beginning of integrated pest management in Java*. New Haven CT: Yale University Southeast Asian Studies, 2004, xxi + 429 pp. [Yale Southeast Asian Studies Monograph 53.] ISBN 0.938692.81.X, price USD 28.00 (paperback); ISBN 0.938692.80.1, price USD 39.00 (hardback).

SIMON PLATTEN

This monograph concerns the mechanisms by which local knowledge is gained, adapted and transmitted. The context is the interplay between traditional ecological knowledge and modern scientific knowledge. The constructive combination of these knowledge systems has ramifications for appropriate and effective development. The contemporary trend, at least ideologically, is towards the maintenance of local bodies of (cultural) knowledge in conjunction with greater production and sustainability of agricultural systems. There have, however, been few ethnographic investigations as to how these bodies of knowledge interact, synthesize and proliferate. This ethnography is an exception. Winarto describes changes that occur within the 'local' knowledge system of rice farmers following their participation in a Farmer Field School (FFS).

Farmers in the district of Ciasem, West Java, cultivate irrigated rice. Local harvests had been subject to a devastating attack by the white rice stem borer (*Scirpophaga innotata*) during the dry season of 1990. Twenty-five local farmers from the village of Ciasem baru participated in an FFS to learn Integrated Pest Management (IPM) skills. Although the specific aims of the IPM school as envisioned by its organizers were not completely realized, effective changes in local knowledge of pest management occurred over the following years. Winarto documents how these changes took place, first by describing the context of local knowledge in Ciasem and by embedding these observations within our current conceptions of knowledge systems and of learning generally. This ethnography builds heavily upon ideas about situated learning and communities of practice. Local knowledge is held in its enactment. In the Ciasem context it is held in personal identities, in systems of land tenure and patterns of cultivation, and in social interaction between farmers. Early chapters emphasize the dynamism and flux of local knowledge constantly under negotiation in a community of actors.

At the farmer field school, participants were exposed to novel information and vocabulary about the white rice stem borer. As a conceptual linkage between adult and larval stages of the stem borer lifecycle entered farmers' conversations, Winarto describes the equivalent of a paradigm shift within local knowledge. Farmers' previous conceptions of risk avoidance had framed pests as illnesses, and pesticides as medicines – consistent, Winarto

concludes, with the construction of local knowledge in the light of the developmental history of irrigated rice cultivation in Indonesia. These perceptions came to be viewed as old-fashioned in the light of the 'new way of thinking'. Importantly, these changes had not been the result of the direct replacement of one knowledge system by another, but had been brought about by the assimilation of elements of modern scientific knowledge into local knowledge discourse and construction.

The overriding focus throughout the book is upon the manner in which local knowledge adapts and incorporates new information, reflecting the contemporary concerns and engagements of its actors. As Winarto herself claims, '[t]he stories of the "seeds", the farmers, presented in this book reveal how knowledge is constructed, transformed and transmitted through the everyday struggle of the "seeds" to stay alive' (p. 340). Certain elements of this metaphor ring true and resonate with themes presented earlier in the text. However, the present reviewer is left pondering whether the infectious nature of good ideas is somewhat overshadowed.

This book will appeal to those interested in systems of knowledge in agriculture, and to those involved in planning for effective development. Winarto provides us with an excellent ethnographic case study that complements existing literature on knowledge transmission and the nature of 'local' knowledge systems.

Jelle Miedema and Ger Reesink, *One head, many faces; New perspectives on the Bird's Head Peninsula of New Guinea*. Leiden: KITLV Press, 2004, xiv + 220 pp. [Verhandelingen 219.] ISBN 90.6718.229.X. Price: EUR 30.00 (paperback).

ANTON PLOEG

The anthropologist Miedema and the linguist Reesink were senior members of the ISIR project (Irian Jaya Studies; A Programme for Interdisciplinary Research) that ran from 1993 to 2000. Consisting of a sizeable number of research projects in the Bird's Head Peninsula of what is now called Papua or West Papua, it was the largest research programme carried out in the entire island at that time. Miedema and Reesink's book is a late outcome of this programme. It contains ten chapters, five of which were written by Miedema, three by Reesink, and two jointly. True to its title, the book focuses almost exclusively on the Bird's Head. References to the Raja Ampat islands, off the west coast of the peninsula, and to its east coast bordering on Cenderawasih Bay, are few.

When Flip van Helden interviewed the authors about their book for the

IIAS Newsletter, Reesink stated that, prior to ISIR, knowledge about the Bird's Head amounted to 'basically nothing!' (*IIAS Newsletter* 37, June 2005). This comment does not do justice to the work of quite a number of researchers, including Miedema himself, whose 1984 doctoral dissertation deals with the population of the Kebar in the northeast of the peninsula. Much of the earlier work was admittedly scattered and poorly accessible, but ISIR has improved this situation greatly by publishing a monumental series (18 volumes) of Irian Jaya Source Materials. Miedema was one of the main editors of this series. The research carried out under the auspices of ISIR has considerably advanced our knowledge of the Bird's Head. The back cover of *One head, many faces* states: 'In analysing the findings of the project, this book provides a systematic comparison with earlier studies'. The book does not, however, reflect the full extent of the advances made.

Explaining the organization of the book, Miedema writes (p. 6) that he and Reesink first discuss 'social structures and changes' and subsequently 'cognitive structures and changes'. But two pages further, Miedema writes that he and his co-author proceed from 'structure to process', which suggests a different composition. Moreover, both formulations fit Miedema's part of the text much more than Reesink's. The latter is the author of Chapter 2, in which he sketches the physical geography of the Bird's Head and the findings of the archaeologists Pasveer and Aplin. They appear to deal with long-term changes rather than with structures. In Chapter 3 Reesink deftly surveys the *Sprachbund* of just over 20 languages spoken on the peninsula. They are all non-Austronesian. He seems to exclude, however, the language spoken by the Biak-Numforese, migrants of long standing on the peninsula.

In Chapter 4, 'Kinship, exchange and change', Miedema follows the sequence from 'structure to process'. He first analyses kinship structures, specifically those resulting from exogamy and other marriage rules. In this analysis he gives much weight – in my view too much weight – to the kin terms applied to cousins. The long-term processes that he describes point to centuries of turmoil on the Bird's Head: raids by Moluccans; imports of foreign wealth items, notably cotton fabrics, with kidnapped people destined for the slave trade often forming the payment; large-scale migrations; marriage by bridewealth instead of by sister exchange; colonial incorporation; Christianization; and Indonesian transmigration. Given all these influences and changes, it seems hazardous to posit the continuance of any structures.

In the next chapter Miedema deals briefly, in nine pages, with changing valuations of land. He presents three case studies, each from a different area, one from the 1970s and two from the 1990s, both resulting from ISIR projects. They show an important contrast between Inanwatan (on the central part of the south coast) as studied by Van Oosterhout, and Teminabuan, further west, closer to Sorong, a centre of modern economic activities. For

Teminabuan, Visser and Timmer note a sharp conflict of interests between leaders keen to commercialize land and commoners who need it for subsistence. For Inanwatan, Van Oosterhout stresses the continuing concern with the sacred value of the land. This topic is of great importance and deserves a far longer discussion.

Then follow two outstanding chapters written by Miedema. In Chapter 6, 'Shifting clusters of mythemes across the peninsula', he again upgrades the analysis of myths that he has presented in several earlier publications, including the proceedings of the international conference that was part of ISIR (1998) and an article in the *Bijdragen* (2000). His analysis in the present book is based on an impressive total of 325 accounts of myths, most of them compiled in volumes of the Source Materials series. While in earlier analyses Miedema focused on differences between the myths, relating them to the different historical fortunes of the groups concerned, here he foregrounds similarities. In his own words, he deals with three themes: 'the emergence of mankind, the struggle between lethal and vital powers, and the emergence of human society' (p. 83). However, when I read this chapter I am just as impressed by the variety as by the similarity in how these themes appear. The 'shifts' which Miedema refers to in this chapter are above all differences from area to area.

Miedema continues his analysis in Chapter 7 by discussing 'Shifting notions of witchcraft and adat' (p. 119). The shifts referred to here occur both by area and over time. Throughout he makes skilful use of the findings of his co-researchers. The three topics of this and the previous chapter are interlinked in that witchcraft is one of the 'lethal powers' referred to above. Papuans accord the concept of *adat* a central place when defining and redefining their niche in the state of which they have become citizens. *Adat* can perform this role precisely because of its flexibility, its openness to re-interpretation. Timmer, quoted by Miedema (p. 138), rightly notes that this is reminiscent of Papua New Guinean *kastom*, custom (Timmer 2000:39).

Chapter 8, 'Language and identity', is written by Reesink. He documents the decreasing use of the vernacular languages, due to loss of 'communicative value' (p. 150), and the corresponding rise of New Guinea Malay and Indonesian. His argument that most of these vernacular languages are unlikely to survive sounds convincing. Chapter 9, 'Culture and identity', the anthropological counterpart to Chapter 8, is written by Miedema. He paints an intriguing picture of a situation in flux, with markers of identity to which people give shifting meanings. More than elsewhere he refers here to the analyses of his co-researchers, including those in other disciplines.

In the final chapter, Miedema and Reesink first summarize ISIR's main findings. They do so in three pages, listing thirteen items. One concerns pre-history, one linguistics, nine anthropology, one both anthropology and development, and one linguistics and anthropology. The authors do not credit

these findings to particular researchers. Hence the individual contributions of ISIR participants remain unclear. Demography and history do not seem to have yielded major findings. Anthropology clearly predominates, as it does in the book under review, and interdisciplinary findings are few.

Finally, the authors make recommendations for future research. In their view the focus should now move east, to the Bintuni Bay area, including the isthmus connecting the Bird's Head with the bulk of New Guinea, at or near the intersection of several culture areas: the southeast Bird's Head, the Cenderawasih Bay coast, and the Bomberai peninsula. An additional benefit of the move would be to do more research among Muslim Papuans. However, the political situation may not allow further field research. The authors also recommend further research into the relationships between vernaculars and languages of wider communication, such as Indonesian and New Guinea Malay. To these suggestions they could well have added a proposal for research making use of the wealth of documents that ISIR has brought together. And then there are the many pointers for research that Andrew Strathern presented in his keynote address at the international ISIR conference (Miedema, Odé and Dam 1998:3-14).

ISIR was set up as an interdisciplinary project. As such, it has not been a success and it is useful to reflect on this outcome. It is noteworthy that the social science research carried out in the highlands of Papua New Guinea was enriched by interdisciplinarity. Several circumstances contributed to this outcome. Firstly, the volume of research is far larger than in the Bird's Head. It has been sustained over decades, which has allowed researchers to reflect on their own and others' work and produce comparative analyses. It was boosted by several spectacular findings and controversial speculations. These concerned the antiquity of agriculture in the highlands, divergent paths of socio-cultural developments, and the late introduction of the sweet potato. Such findings and speculations provided links between different bodies of research results. These considerations so far apply much less to Bird's Head studies. ISIR has not added such links to what was already known, in part by chance. Had, for instance, Pasveer and Aplin uncovered caches of cowry shells and other likely wealth items in the caves they researched, Miedema would have had to take their findings into account in his analysis of marriage by bridewealth. But I surmise that the occurrence of such linking discoveries can also be promoted by the selection of research topics. If ISIR had assigned historians to research events unfolding mainly during the twentieth century, such as missionization and the extension of the colonial administration, the results might well have been relevant for researchers in other disciplines.

The book is a welcome addition to the ISIR results. However, it is not an overall analysis of these results. Nor does it make clear what the programme has added to what was already known. More could have been done in this

respect. With about 175 pages, text, maps and diagrams included, this is a short book. Hopefully the authors will write a sequel.

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Christopher R. Duncan (ed.), *Civilizing the margins; Southeast Asian government policies for the development of minorities*. Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 2004, 278 pp. ISBN 0.8014.8930.X, price USD 22.50 (paperback); ISBN 0.8014.4175.7, price USD 52.50 (hardback).

NATHAN PORATH

Civilizing the margins is an important book as it provides the reader with an update of recent developments in Southeast Asian state-minority relations. The articles were originally presented as part of a panel entitled 'Legislating Modernity among the Marginalized: Southeast Asian Government Programmes for Developing Minority Groups' at the 1998 annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association, held in Boston. The book covers all Southeast Asian countries except for Singapore and Brunei.

Although the book is about minority peoples, most of the groups discussed could under different political agendas be referred to as indigenous peoples, even though applying this term might often be theoretically problematic in the Southeast Asian context. Ovesen and Trankell also discuss Chinese, Vietnamese and Cham minorities in Cambodia. What the term

'indigenous' means in each country varies.

Endicott and Dentan's paper on Malaysia in many respects summarizes much of what these authors have written over the past twenty or so years. It provides a clear and concise historical overview of the Orang Asli situation in Malaysia. Indonesia created a catch-all category of political-cultural otherness for the forest-dwelling minority groups, who in the international arena could be considered to be indigenous. In fact, in one Indonesian province, that of Riau, the term *orang asli* was already used during the Soeharto period for local peoples (Orang Sakai, Bonai, Petalangan, Talang Mamaq) which the state defined as *suku terasing* ('estranged tribes'). As Duncan suggests, the post-Soeharto shift from *suku terasing* to *komunitas adat terpencil* might be just a shift in labelling. However, labels can take on a social life of their own in thought and policy, and it remains to be seen how future policies will be legislated with this term as a defining target. Duncan also mentions in passing the recent development of AMAN (Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara). Whereas in Indonesian the name refers to a *masyarakat adat* or 'customary society', in its international/English rendering this is changed to 'indigenous peoples'. What exactly 'customary society' means remains to be understood. Neither is it clear from the book whether the people involved in this new movement are from minority groups which were originally called *suku terasing*, or from ethnic groups which have undergone the Indonesian transformation or modernization and under *reformasi* are revitalizing 'custom' as an ideology in their struggle for rights to land while still utilizing some of the cultural baggage of the New Order era.

The article on Thailand (Gillogly) focuses on the 'Hill Tribes' of the north of the Kingdom. It is regrettable that this article does not also mention the various non-Thai peoples of the south of Thailand, such as the Meniqs of Pattalung/Trang/Satun, Yala and Narathiwat, and the Moken of the southern west coast. Having worked in the south, what Gillogly's piece makes clear to me is the particularity and diversity of the Thai nation-state's policies and conceptualizations with respect to minority peoples living in different reaches of the kingdom. Authors working in Thailand tend only to focus on the regions of their own fieldwork rather than generalizing to the level of the state as a whole, as is customary among those working in Indonesia (where I have also worked) or West Malaysia. Gillogly's paper does not explore the question of what we can understand about Thai-ness through the state's policies with specific reference to citizenship. Ovesan's paper, by contrast, does explore what the presence of minorities in Laos means for Lao identity. Lambrecht (Burma) and McElwee (Vietnam) provide informative data on the situation in these two nominally socialist countries. Finally, Eder and McKenna focus on the minority situation in the Philippines.

Although Duncan's introductory article does provide a good overview

of similarities in the various nation-states' relations to their minority peoples and in the responses of those peoples, the contents of the book reveal the political and cultural diversity on which the 'legislation of modernity' is based in each country. Remarkably, there is very little in the book about 'civilizing' as a political-cultural process, its effect on the minority culture, and the minority's cultural response to it. In fact, what is meant in this book by 'civilizing' is not clear. The original panel title ('Legislating Modernity among the Marginalized') which Duncan uses for his introductory essay would have been more appropriate as a title for the book.

Civilizing the margins is a highly informative book that provides readers unfamiliar with state/minority issues of particular Southeast Asian countries with accessible introductions to the relevant political processes and problems of national incorporation within each state. It is an important read not only for Southeast Asianists working on similar issues in their respective countries of fieldwork, but also for anyone working on issues of indigenous and minority rights on a global scale. Duncan's hope is to 'provide insights to academics working in the region and to officials who design and implement these often misguided policies' (p. 18). I believe his book will serve that hope well.

Rosario Mendoza Cortes, Celestina Puyal Boncan and Ricardo Trota Jose, *The Filipino saga; History as social change*. Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 2000, vi + 545 pp. ISBN 971.101.055.0. Price: USD 30.25 (paperback).

PORTIA L. REYES

It has been more than forty years since the publication of Teodoro Agoncillo's seminal *History of the Filipino people*. As a history text for fourth-year high school and first-year college students, this book has greatly moulded the Filipino historical imagination of self and nation. Historians have been reluctant to write further textbooks of a comparable character, fearing that their efforts would fall far short of Agoncillo's example. But now the team of Cortez, Boncan and Jose – historians at the University of the Philippines – have taken the risk. Their alternative textbook, *The Filipino saga*, has productively interwoven new research and thus provides an up-to-date look at the status of the country and its peoples. For Cortez, Boncan and Jose, Filipino history is 'essentially the history of a number of ethno-linguistic groups bonding into one national community over a period of more than three centuries' (p. 457) The volume's seventeen chapters take us on this course across time and space.

The Filipino saga can be divided into six segments. The first, comprising

the introductory chapter, tackles the archipelago's prehistory and establishes, for the authors, the matrix of Filipino culture: a conglomeration of geographical, archaeological, anthropological and religious factors. In this segment, new research is used to supplement standard data. Studies of Muslim *tarsilas* (genealogies) by the late scholar Cesar Majul, for instance, were engaged to deepen textbook knowledge of the arrival of Islam in the archipelago.

This kind of innovation also characterizes the second segment (Chapters 2 to 5), exploring what the authors perceive as the country's entrance into 'the historic period' (p. 29) of Christianization and Hispanization. This was when the native's 'primitive culture [was transformed] into a civilized state' (p. 52). While the Chinese readily served as tradesmen, others were not as pliant, opine the authors. For centuries, the Muslims of Mindanao resisted, and 'natives' of Luzon and Visayas revolted intermittently. Only after concluding wars with the British and the Dutch, which opened the islands to world trade, did the Spanish obtain peace. One principal outcome of this development, the authors expound, was the formation of an indigenous bourgeoisie.

The third segment (Chapters 6 to 10) covers this generation of elites and intellectuals (*ilustrados*) who first imagined the Philippine nation. Their campaigns for reform encouraged the masses, led by Andres Bonifacio of the Kataastaasang Kagalang-galangang Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan (Highest, Most Venerable Union of the Nation's Children), to take up arms against the Spaniards. Out of this the republic was born, although its blossoming was quickly quashed by the coming of the mighty American colonizers. Refreshingly, unlike the dominant historiographical practice of dwelling on the revolution, this segment treats the latter with proportional modesty.

Yet this proportional modesty is quickly betrayed by the authors' subsequent segment (Chapters 11 to 13) and their excessive exploration of the American colonial period. In extensive detail, *The Filipino saga* surveys this period's laws and acts, paving the way for the establishment of the Philippine Commonwealth. In 1941, this imperial-guided nationhood project was halted by Japan's devastating occupation of the islands, until the defeat of the Japanese by returning American forces. Meanwhile the occupation ravaged the country, leaving a ruined economy and impoverished society in its wake. For the authors, this is the situation inherited by the US-sanctioned 1946 Republic of the Philippines.

The fifth segment (Chapters 14 to 17) concentrates on the republic's struggle to overcome these problems, which threatened to undermine their right to self-rule. For Cortes, Boncan and Jose, one of these threats occurred when the independent, democratic government was overcome by the so-called constitutional authoritarianism of Ferdinand Marcos. From 1972 to 1986, Marcos and his cronies plundered the country's treasury and suppressed the people's freedoms. 'People power' then drove the Marcoses out, to be replaced

by Corazon Aquino, the widow of slain ex-senator Benigno Aquino. Since then, the republic has struggled to maintain its newly won democracy – surviving numerous military coups, energy crises, a regional fiscal meltdown, and an extravagantly expensive centennial celebration of nationhood.

The concluding chapter – the final segment – features informed discussion on the rise of such powerful religious groups as Iglesia ni Kristo and El Shaddai, the influence of labour movements, and the formation of the middle class. That these important themes are merely incorporated in the closing remarks, however, is unfortunate. Future texts may be improved by incorporating such relevant developments into the main narrative. Historians can also make better use of ample Filipino-language (written and oral) sources, which could introduce competing alternatives and multiple vantage points. Still, future scholars might be well served to follow where Cortes, Boncan and Jose leave off: revising the country's history and contributing in the process to the betterment of local history-writing.

Stephen Dobbs, *The Singapore River; A social history, 1819-2002*. Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2003, 177 pp. ISBN: 9971.69.277.5. Price: USD 25.00 (paperback).

VICTOR R. SAVAGE

Having lived by the middle reaches of the Singapore River during my whole childhood, reading Stephen Dobbs' book, *The Singapore River* brought back a wave of memories and a flood of nostalgic feelings about the River. Given the many roles the Singapore River played in the lives of so many Singaporeans, no book could encapsulate the richness of personal experiences, meanings, symbolisms and memories. This is after all the third book written about the River, and yet it is so different from the earlier renditions. While the two earlier books, Linda Berry's (1982) *Singapore River* and Joan Hon's (1987) *Tidal fortunes*, were more impressionistic descriptions of the River, *The Singapore River* is the first scholarly work to attempt a holistic portrayal of the River. Using the River as the main protagonist, the book weaves the story of Singapore's development covering 180 years, since the modern founding of the city-state by Sir Stamford Raffles in 1819 to the present. It also provides the current state of the River and its future prospects in the city-state's development. I applaud Dobbs' bold 'big picture' approach (p. 5) to the Singapore River's social history. Though the book is divided thematically into three parts, it does follow a broadly chronological perspective of Singapore's development as a colonial port and city. Part I and Part II deal with the early history of the

River from 1819 to 1969, whereas Part III deals with present-day aspects of the River and its future prospects.

Though the history of Singapore has been narrated many times by historians, this book adds two interesting dimensions to an understanding of Singapore's history. Firstly, unlike the general histories of Singapore that deal with elites, personalities and victors, this book looks at the masses that lie 'outside the lively, garrulous chronicles of history' (Braudel, 1975:xv). It provides an interesting insight into the half-forgotten stories of boatmen, coolies, lightermen, labourers, rickshaw pullers, and prostitutes, and their living environments as they experienced them. While acknowledging the problem of the 'scarce source materials' pertaining to such ordinary folk (p. 5), Dobbs has tried painstakingly to reconstruct their untold personal histories through archival records. But the book's profile of the Singapore River would have been better enhanced had he made more use of personal interviews with the dying breed of ordinary boat people. I suspect that locating such labourers and interviewing them was a daunting task. But it would not have been an insurmountable one.

Despite its social historical orientation, there is no attempt in this book to frame the social history of the Singapore River within any conceptual or theoretical perspective. One would have thought that Dobbs would have tried to underscore his social narrative in the context of other subaltern historical studies. While the book documents inter-ethnic economic competition, it does not develop the subject of ethnic and colonial tensions within a broader contextual historical framework like that of James Warren's (1986) *Rickshaw coolie* or Brenda Yeoh's (1996) *Contesting space*. Despite Yeoh's treatment of contestations over space between the British colonialists and the native population, I am often puzzled as to why the economic disparities in colonial Singapore did not elicit a more dramatic response from the poorer class of peoples. Former members of the River's poor Chinese coolie and lighterman community have provided me with several explanations for their subdued submission. Firstly, there were always examples of people who rose from among their ranks and became rich. Their exceptional stories offered hope to others. Several of Singapore's well-known Chinese millionaires came from the River community. Secondly, many Chinese coolies and labourers saw their Singapore 'residence' as a working sojourn and anticipated a return to China. Thirdly, the clan and triad groups operating within the River's Chinese community provided a form of 'protection' and 'social welfare' service. Dobbs provides a fourth reason: the patron-client relationships between lightermen and lighter owners, which underscored clan and dialect ties (Hokkeins and Teochews) and were based on trust and reciprocity (pp. 70-3).

The narrative of *The Singapore River* is a tour de force because it uses a physical ecosystem to tell the history of the British colony, the dynamic

trade, the marine and river transport systems, and the people involved in the river port. If the River could talk, there probably would be a thousand more interesting stories that the River witnessed and history has bypassed. Since the British colonization of Singapore, the Singapore River went hand in hand with the colony's development as the major trading port in the region. Strategic location helped Singapore to transform itself from a pirates' nest to a port of international repute. The River was for many decades the hub of Singapore's commercial and trading activities. Even after the Singapore port shifted from the River to the New Harbour (Keppel Harbour) in the 1860s (pp. 9-14), the River continued to play a pivotal role in the cargo trade of Singapore. It not only served as a port, but also as a major bunkering service area, a trans-shipment zone, a trading and commercial hub, a warehouse location, a transportation node for both land and sea movements, and an active site of cottage industries. As Dobbs rightly points out, Singapore and the Singapore River was a successful commercial centre because it tapped the vast Southeast Asian hinterland through its maritime linkages.

The Singapore River is well researched and documented in terms of statistical data, historical events and dates, landmark sites, and pertinent social and political developments. *The Singapore River* reads as good descriptive history, but lacks a more critical appraisal of the peoples and events that shaped the River's development and in turn Singapore's history. It is evident that Singapore's history as the entrepot of the region was so intimately intertwined with the River's historical development.

Given Singapore's role as a major trading and commercial hub, the colony attracted a diverse community of people of different cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious affiliations. The book rightly pays attention to the hyperdiversity of cultures and religions embedded along the River's landscape in Chinese, Indian, Malay, and European businesses, dwellings, leisure/recreational sites, and sacred places. In a relatively space-bound society, the River and its vicinity remained the magnet of the city's population right up to the 1960s. The high density of population was located under slum conditions in the ubiquitous shophouses and squatter settlements along the river banks. *The Singapore River* provides a holistic insight into the trade and commercial activities along the Singapore River, but it is almost silent on the changing nature of the area's cottage and processing industries.

The River's morphology of shophouses, godowns, and cottage factories remained *in situ*, but there was always dynamic ethnic and economic competition for these prime places. They recall a process encapsulated in Derwent Whittlesey's concept of 'sequent occupance'. Dobbs also overlooks the importance of the River as a means of racial segregation by the British. This legacy of the Raffles Plan still remains in modern Singapore, with the 'colonial city' located on the north side of the River and the ethnic hub of Chinatown on

the south side. In contextualizing the Singapore River landscape, much more could have been discussed using the landscape concepts of J.B. Jackson, Yi-Fu Tuan, David Lowenthal, Pierce Lewis, and Donald Meinig.

It seems ironic that the changing face of the Singapore River has in a way come with independence and the state's global city status. While Raffles defined the Singapore River as the British colony's trading centre, the Prime Minister of independent Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew, saw the River as the centre of Singapore's global city status. He challenged his civil servants to clean up the River. In 1987, the clean-up operation was completed. As promised, Lee gave the civil servants responsible for the clean-up gold medals. The Singapore River became a new symbol of how the government was able to manage effectively its clean and green urban campaign. The extension of this massive clean-up operation underscored the government's long-term plan to make the River a reservoir by using a barrage at the entrance of the new marina adjoining the River. Through a process of conservation, heritage, and cultural development, the Singapore River has today become a tourist attraction, an up-market residential zone (condominiums, and a recreational area, instead of a centre of trading and port activities. *The Singapore River* does not give sufficient analysis of the Singapore Tourism Board's attempt to make the River a major tourism district and attraction, or of the Urban Redevelopment Authority's decision to turn the Riverscape (between Kim Seng Bridge and Robertson Quay) into a high-class residential zone. Specifically, it does not give sufficient discussion to developments at Boat Quay, Robertson Quay, and Clarke Quay.

In his macro-treatment of the River's history, Dobbs could have provided more analytical insights into the two different phases of Singapore's development under planned conditions. The colonial phase, under the Raffles Plan, although based on ethnic segregation, was also marked by laissez-faire, economically driven competition for River frontage. The phase of Singapore's independence is marked by more stringent planning conditions in the River Zone, a product of the Development Guide Plan (DGP), the Concept Plan, the Green Plan, and the Singapore Tourism Board's thematic zones, which has meant a more top-down approach to the River's development. These new developments demonstrate that the Singapore River remains an area of multiple uses, activities, and symbolisms in the history of Singapore. But without a local resident population on its waterfront, one wonders whether a new generation of Singaporeans will feel a similar attachment to the River as past generations.

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HENK SCHULTE NORDHOLT

After Soeharto stepped down in May 1998, the official historiography which had been established during his New Order regime came under attack. Various groups demanded, for instance, a revision of Soeharto's portrayed role in the Revolution, more openness about the killings of 1965-1966, and a reduction in emphasis on the military in textbooks. Some people argued that certain aspects of Indonesian history need to be straightened out; others maintained that only a fundamental decolonization of Indonesia's historiography could open up new perspectives on the past and on the role of history in contemporary Indonesia.

In this context, Michael Wood's book on official historiography under the New Order offers a solid review of the main themes elaborated by New Order historians who created a history that served the interests of the regime. After an introduction briefly discussing the ideas of Bernard Lewis on different forms of history, the next three chapters summarize the main themes of New Order historiography. Chapter 2 shows how colonial historiography on Majapahit was continued by New Order scholars to the extent that Majapahit came to resemble a bureaucratic military state promoting order and develop-

ment. Chapter 3 shows first how the New Order 'neutralized' the representation of the revolution by transforming an image of war and conflict into a story of a well-designed military-led process towards independence. Then it shows how New Order historian Nugroho Notosusanto erased the killings of 1965 from the official public memory, while presenting instead a victorious army rescuing the nation from oblivion. Finally, in Chapter 4, attention is paid to 'histories in waiting'. This chapter basically revolves around a single publication from 1992 concerning the role of Islam, and especially the arrival of Islam in the archipelago at an earlier date than has been accepted so far. The last chapter summarizes the previous chapters.

Wood, who has also done research on Egyptian history, claims that he is the first to pay attention to the construction of an official past by the New Order (p. 6). This is clearly not true: others, including Klooster (1985) and Dengel (1994), have also written substantial studies on the topic, and a recent doctoral thesis by McGregor (2003) deals extensively with the role of Nugroho. McGregor also analyses how the New Order version of the past was propagated through films and museums, media that are by and large ignored by Wood.

Another point of criticism is that Wood does not actually offer new insights, as he mainly summarizes studies by other people. However, as a summary the book is certainly not without value. One disappointment is that Wood ignores the role of Pramoedya Ananta Toer, who almost single-handedly created a monumental alternative 'history in waiting'. Wood mentions Pramoedya only once, as an author of fiction (p. 8). Also lacking is a wider comparative framework (Malaysia, Philippines, Egypt?) which could have revealed themes that historiographies under postcolonial regimes have in common. With his background in Egyptian historiography Wood was in a position to offer new perspectives, but unfortunately he has failed to do so.

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Claudio O. Delang (ed.), *Living at the edge of Thai society; The Karen in the highlands of northern Thailand*, 2003. xvi + 244 pp. London: RoutledgeCurzon. [Rethinking Southeast Asia 6.] ISBN 0.415.32331.2. Price: GBP 70.00 (hardback).

NICHOLAS TAPP

As Delang's preface notes (p. x), the Karen may be the most widely studied of the northern Thai minorities, yet no book had been devoted exclusively to them since Keyes' 1979 work. Most contributors to this excellent collection stress the shifting nature of constructions of Karen identity over a historical period which saw the British colonization of Burma, the emergence of modern nationalism linked with racist ideologies, and increasing restrictions on the use of forest land for cultivation. All contributors address urgent topical issues, such as the disappearance of Karen traditions under the impact of missionary Christianity, and their involvement as activists in NGOs under a situation of increasing resource scarcity and conflict. Renard's introductory chapter provides a learned historical account of what might well be called 'Karen Studies' (p. 14), noting 'almost no references to Karen' before the nineteenth century (p. 1), and that the term was originally a Mon-Burmese one referring to various 'forest peoples' often at war with each other. There is uncertainty about which language family Karen belongs to (p. 7) and even (given the situation in Burma) about their actual numbers. So various 'fanciful representations' (p. 7) of them were constructed, which Renard considers, besides the work since the 1960s of social scientists (Renard provides a useful list, p. 11), new trends which emerged in the 1980s with environmentalism, focusing on the importance of indigenous Karen knowledge to the preservation of biodiversity, and writings by Karen themselves (pp. 12-3).

Part I (each part is prefaced by a useful two- to three-page introduction) deals with negotiations of ethnicity. Pinkaew traces in detail the changes in external representations of the Karen as part of a process of 'constructing marginality'; from a traditional 'autonomy' and 'fluidity', under modern nationalism the Karen came to be seen as 'wild' people of the forest (*khon pa*, p. 26), following a period in which they were not so peripheral, but respected as 'guardians of the forest' (p. 26). In the latter half of the twentieth century they came to be seen as *chao khao*, or problematic 'hilltribes' (p. 28). Ethnic distinctions became 'politicized' with changing notions of space and borders (p. 31), and (p. 37) 'perceptions of the Karen as docile and innocent country bumpkins' led to an image of them as living in harmony with nature and the forest – an image which they currently 'play up' (p. 38) to avoid state interventions and perpetuate their right to co-exist with forests.

Several contributors stress the opposition between the 'benign' Karen and

the 'malign' Hmong (Pinkaew, p. 36) in current environmentalist discourse. Pinkaew shows a healthy scepticism about the image of the Karen as 'conservationist', remarking that nearly half the Karen members of the Northern Farmers' Network engage in 'non-rotational cash-cropping of flowers, carrots, and potatoes' (p. 38). At the end of this lucid exposition, she calls (p. 39) for a 'deeper and more radical struggle' to define the Karen more dynamically, stressing that images of 'harmony with nature' may actively disadvantage the Karen in the long run, and points out (pp. 39-40) that of the 'three myths' generally applied to the hillpeople (insurgent, opium producer, and forest destroyer) it is definitely the third which is the most salient today.

Buergin deals with the Karen in the Thung Yai Naresuan Wildlife Sanctuary, reciting a history of forced relocations and atrocities, and drawing attention to the conflicting objectives of all actors, particularly tensions between commercial and conservationist interests (p. 45). This is a very good description of changing forestry policy and the impact of the 1989 ban on logging; again (p. 55) we hear that of the three 'problem areas' (above), it is the question of forest destruction which has proved the most acute. Buergin also notes the huge migration of Thai farmers into the hills as a major part of this problem. Dealing with critiques by Andrew Walker and others (in *Asian Ethnicity* 5-2, 2004) of the new conservationist 'reframing' of Karen identity, Buergin argues that neither is this a case of the 'rural poor craving [...] modernization' (p. 60).

McKinnon, who has worked in the region for several decades, gives a fascinating account of his involvement in a participatory mapping exercise, and talks frankly of how he has witnessed a change from the 'silent subaltern' Karen of the past, and the 'deep sense of alienation and loss' which a century of subordination had led to (p. 65). It is almost as if the Karen had adapted an image of themselves from 'who they are to outsiders' (p. 67), and (p. 69) as villages develop it makes less sense to identify them as Karen. He wonders (p. 70) if culture must necessarily be reinvented, divorced from its economic base, once the agriculture with which it was intertwined has changed (p. 70). Dealing (respectfully) with a well-known Karen activist and leader, he remarks on how he draws predominantly on 'the esoteric capital of ethnicity' (p. 77). And he points out how the new confidence derived from recent activism and revisions of culture provide the 'moral stuff on which resistance can be built' (p. 81), warning against being seduced by ideals of 'indigenous spirituality and closeness to nature' which are strategic in nature and would, if taken literally, assign the Karen to a 'category of quaintness' (p. 82).

The contributors are divided, then, like the Karen themselves, between wishing to demonstrate the value of Karen culture and its interconnections with their traditional livelihood, and a fear that over-painting this may lead to their further marginalization. These debates take place in a context where conservationist (no longer commercial) interests are pitted against those of

the romantics – but these are romantics of people, not of nature!

Part II of the book draws our attention to the value of this Karen culture, dealing particularly with courting and marriage customs. Fink provides an intriguing report on the world of teenage Karen romance, which takes place particularly at funerals, noting serious changes to traditional Karen gender ‘complementarity’ and the urgency of research on rapidly disappearing courtship songs. Hayami, whose ethnography of the Karen, *Between hills and plains* (Kyoto University Press, 2004), has since been published, examines the image of the ‘sexually prim Karen’ (p. 113), with an amusing account (pp. 118-9) of how she had to be ‘married’ to conform to village mores, and asks (with reference to the growth in sex work and AIDS) whether Karen women are becoming free of their traditional morals, or whether the traditional moral basis is itself becoming diversified (p. 128). It is not so much that individualizing choices are opening up for women, she suggests, as that ‘women are choosing one form of constraint [...] rather than another’ (p. 128). Mischung provides an analysis of traditional verses (*lita*) in an article resonating well with the two previous ones, noting ‘parallelism’ as a general feature of such Southeast Asian verses and calling for further research on them. This is indeed an under-researched subject, and there are Hmong parallels to several of the features he mentions.

Part III, which seems to follow more from the articles in Part I than from Part II, deals with social and economic adaptations to government policies. Here Delang inquires into what he sees as the continuing ‘subsistence orientation’ (p. 168) of the Karen; the approach is interesting, since he is looking at cash and subsistence ‘orientations’ within single village clusters, and the argument is highly logical, yet the distinctions he draws (following Benjamin) between ‘indigeny’ and ‘exogeny’ are too sharply made, I think – the list of contrasts between ‘modern’ and ‘traditional’ forms of social organization provided on page 161 takes no account of how the traditional may actually be constructed by the modern, while references to the ‘indigenous, inward-looking outlook of the Karen’ (p. 165) perhaps go too far. Nor am I sure that the old distinction between ‘single-stranded’ and what Gluckman called ‘multiplex’ social relations is as useful as he seems to find it, although the ethnographic data and much of the analysis is certainly very fine and useful.

Puginier’s is a general but enlightening paper on the development of forestry and resource conflicts affecting the Karen and what Lohmann called the effective ‘criminalization’ of an entire mode of production – a useful summary of changing policies and conflicts of interest at various levels, and their effects on people’s livelihoods. The ‘fear of land confiscation’ which he remarks on (p. 199) is very real, and the participatory mapping project he describes was clearly useful in empowering villagers in the transformation of local agricultural systems.

In a masterly Afterword ('The politics of 'Karen-ness' in Thailand') Keyes, one of the pioneers of Karen studies, states roundly that 'The Karen are an invention of the modern world' (p. 211) and notes that their sense of 'rootedness in place' is actually very common in the region (I would say the Hmong too have it). He traces with exemplary clarity the way in which the 'rubric' Karen first emerged in Burma under Christian influence as a kind of supra-village form of identity, and the very different history it has had, particularly since the 1960s, in Thailand. Here a sense that Karen could not really be 'Thai' contributed to their identification with the problematic 'hilltribe' (*chao khao*) label, which has now become a contested term (p. 216) as an 'alternative identity as (Thai) Karen' is embraced, as shown in Karen conversions to Buddhism.

Certainly the Karen have enjoyed a unique status with regard to the Thai state for several centuries; the chapters in this book take our understanding of this historical involvement a step further, speaking directly to and from the situation of cultural politics and environmentalist struggle in which new forms of Karen identity are forged. Highly recommended.

Andrew C. Willford and Kenneth M. George (eds), *Spirited politics: Religion and public life in contemporary Southeast Asia*, 2005, 210 pp. Ithaca NY: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University. [Studies in Southeast Asia 38.] ISBN 0.87727.737.0. Price: USD 18.00 (paperback).

BRYAN S. TURNER

Two assumptions about the relationship between the religious and the political have characterized Western social science: the separation of politics and religion, and the division between private and public domains. These dichotomies found their classic expression in Max Weber's political liberalism, namely in the concept of 'caesaropapism', which dominated his sociology of religion, and orchestrated much of the subsequent Orientalism of the twentieth century. This volume of essays demonstrates just how misleading these assumptions are as frameworks for understanding religion and public life outside the European context. The notion of 'spirited politics' is intended to underline the fact that in many Southeast Asian cultures the religious constitutes the political, or at the very least is deeply woven into its institutional fabric. Modernization has not brought about a concomitant secularization and indeed, with the decline of nationalism, religion has played a more dominant role, leading many sociologists to talk about the 're-sacralization' of modern society.

Statecraft and the fashioning of citizenship identities typically result in

exclusionary practices such as the 'demonization' of minorities. Andrew Abalahin on 'Confucianism and the negotiation of Indonesian-Chinese identity' documents how the Indonesian state ceased recognizing Confucianism as a religion and outlawed public expressions of Chinese culture with the result that marriages solemnized by Confucian rituals did not count as legitimate unions. In 'Malaysian Hinduism and the way of prayers', Andrew Willford draws attention to similar processes in Mahathir's Malaysia, where Hinduism was labelled as a primitive or pre-modern psychic threat to the Muslim Malay citizen. Cultural marginalization only serves to emphasize the significance of religious beliefs and symbols in constituting hegemonic national cultures. Fenella Cannell on the 'idolatry' of lowland Philippines demonstrates how the Protestant assumptions of colonial administrators helped to stigmatize lowlanders as people without authentic culture. Notions of idolatry and mimicry disguised an underlying anxiety of the colonial regime that lowlanders had never been fully converted to the American values.

Several chapters demonstrate how the status of politicians is enhanced by contact with the sacred. Thamora Fishel shows how Thai politicians routinely attend funerals in a complex system of symbolic exchange in which religious merit sustains their secular credibility. Smita Lahiri, on 'enunciating Filipino cultural nationalism through Mt Banahaw', explores how, after the overthrow of Ferdinand Marcos, Mount Banahaw become a popular religious site of national self-realization outside the metropolitan centres. These ethnographic case studies illustrate how religious discourses and objects are deployed constantly to structure political realities

Another theme in these ethnographic accounts is the complex relation of the state to both official and popular religious phenomena. Nowhere is this complexity more evident than in the Thai case. Erick White explores how at different historical junctures the Thai state has attempted to suppress spirit possession, but in modern, more prosperous times the state has withdrawn from prohibiting such popular practices as wealthy Thais have engaged spirit mediums. At the same time, the reformist Buddhist monk Phra Payom has attempted to mobilize public opinion against fraudulent and corrupt practices. Buddhist reformism has found its counterpart in Indonesia, where fundamentalists sought to change the status of Islam in the public sphere. In this case, religious aesthetics can become a conduit of social and cultural change, as Kenneth George demonstrates through the evolution of the Acehnese painter A.D. Pirous. Religious and educational reforms have also had a major impact on gender divisions. Whereas Islamic reformism has been seen by many to involve the retreat of women into the private sphere, Suzanne Brenner shows how many Muslim women have maintained an active connection with the public domain. In the New Order period (1965-1998), the regime attempted to depoliticize gender issues. The Soeharto regime treated

the family as crucial to its own political control, and yet the consequences were often paradoxical, with more young women entering into higher education, and accepting family planning to regulate reproduction. The resurgence of global Islam after the Iranian revolution had conservative consequences in Indonesia, but Muslim women have often successfully resisted exclusion from the public sphere.

Although these essays are diverse in subject matter and methodologies, as a whole they provide a remarkably coherent view of complex contemporary interpenetrations of the religious and the political, the private and the public.

Hans Straver, Chris van Fraassen and Jan van der Putten (eds), *Ridjali: Historie van Hitu; Een Ambonse geschiedenis uit de zeventiende eeuw*. Utrecht: Landelijk Steunpunt Educatie Molukkers, 2004, 224 pp. ISBN 90.76729.37.9. Price: EUR 27.50 (hardback).

Z.J. Manusama, *Historie en sociale structuur van Hitu tot het midden der zeventiende eeuw*; ingeleid door Chris F. van Fraassen. Utrecht: Moluks Landelijk Steunpunt Educatie Molukkers, 2004, 98 pp. ISBN 90.76729.36.0. Price: EUR 9.00 (paperback).

EDWIN WIERINGA

In 1977, Zacharias Josef Manusama (1921-2001) was awarded his PhD by Leiden University for his study on the *Hikayat Tanah Hitu*, a historical text written in literary Malay during the seventeenth century by Imam Rijali. Despite the fact that it was frequently quoted among specialists in Moluccan studies, Manusama's work was never published, being available only in the form of photocopies. Thanks to an initiative by the Moluccan Historical Museum in Utrecht, this important source can now be appreciated by new generations of students and scholars. Based on Manusama's pioneer work, Hans Straver, Chris van Fraassen, and Jan van der Putten have presented a new text edition and (Dutch) translation of the *Hikayat Tanah Hitu*, offering a wealth of details on the wider context concerning historical and philological matters. Additionally, Annabel Teh Gallop has provided vignettes of seventeenth-century Moluccan seals (p. 24) and a seventeenth-century copy of the Quran from Manipa (pp. 26-7). In a separate booklet Manusama's commentary on the historical and social background of seventeenth-century Hitu has also been published, preceded by a rather lengthy biographical portrait of Manusama by Chris van Fraassen.

The rather idiosyncratic orthography and the fair share of loan-words from different languages (Ternatan, Portuguese, Dutch, and Arabic) make the text of

the *Hikayat Tanah Hitu* at times rather difficult for modern-day readers to understand. The editors give the example of *fitnah*, which generally means ‘slander’ in Malay, but which is mostly used by Rijali in its original Arabic meaning of ‘riot, dissension, civil strife’ (p. 30). The latter use of *fitnah* occurs on pages 92, 98, 104, 112, 142, 146, 154, 162, 164, 166, 168, and 180 of the edition, whereas I noted *fitnah* in the sense of ‘slander’ in only three instances: ‘*maka orang membawah fitnah kepada gurendur itu, demikian katanya*’ (p. 168); ‘*Tellah demikian itu orang membawah fitna kepada jeneral dan gurendur, demikian katanya*’ (p. 178); and ‘*Sebab itulah Kapitan Hitu menengar fitnah daripada orang itu*’ (p. 190).

In connection with the Arabic component of Rijali’s Malay, I would like to discuss the rather curious expression ‘*suatupun tiada hisab*’ (and its variants) which is omitted in the dictionaries, and occurs no less than five times in the text. The occurrences are quoted below together with Dutch translations, underlining the *crux interpretum*:

1. ‘[*Tatkala perdana Pati Tuban ia datang dari tanah Jawa itu, lalu negeri Hitu pun masuk iman kepada Allah dan nabbi Muhammad serta agama rasul allah s.a.w.*] *Maka suatupun tiada hisab melainkan memerintahkan tanahnya serta agama Allah dan agama nabi Muhammad s.a.w [...]*’ (Straver, Van Fraassen and Van der Putten 2004:104). Translation by Manusama (1977:88): ‘[Hierna vertel ik, zoals het is overgeleverd door de verteller dat toen perdana Pati Tuban van Java terugkwam, de negerei Hitu overging naar het geloof van de gezant Gods en van de profeet Mohamad en naar de godsdienst van de gezant Gods, God zegene Hem en geve Hem heil.] En niets was waardevoller dan het land te regeren volgens de godsdienst van Allah en de godsdienst van de profeet Mohamad, God zegene Hem en geve Hem heil [...]’. Translation by Straver, Van Fraassen and Van der Putten (2004:105): ‘[Nadat perdana Patih Tuban uit Java was gekomen, ging de negorij Hitu over tot het geloof in God en de profeet Muhammad en volgde de godsdienst van de gezant Gods – God zegene hem en schenke hem vrede.] Er was geen enkel beletsel om het land te regeren overeenkomstig het geloof in God en de godsdienst van de profeet Muhammad – God zegene hem en schenke hem vrede [...]’.
2. ‘*Apabila Islam mati parang [sic] sabil, maka dalam akhirat suatupun tiada hisab kepadanya melainkan masuk syurga*’ (Straver, Van Fraassen and Van der Putten 2004:114). Translation by Manusama (1977:94): ‘Indien een Muslim in de heilige strijd sneuvelt, dan wordt hem in het hiernamaals niets toegerekend, integendeel hij komt in de hemel’. Translation by Straver, Van Fraassen and Van der Putten (2004:115): ‘[Maar] indien een moslim in de heilige oorlog sneuvelt, dan wordt hem in het hiernamaals niets in de weg gelegd om de hemel in te gaan’.
3. ‘[*Daripada itulah negeri Nusanirwe ia pinda datang ke negeri Hitu.*] *Suatupun tiada dengan hisab [...]*’ (Straver, Van Fraassen and Van der Putten 2004:120-

- 121). Translation by Manusama (1977:98): '[Daarom verhuisde negeri Nusaniwe en kwam bij negeri Hitu.] Met alles werd rekening gehouden [...]'. Translation by Straver, Van Fraassen and Van der Putten (2004:121): '[Vandaar dat de negorij Nusaniwe zich verplaatste naar de negorij Hitu.] Er was hiertoe geen enkel beletsel [...]']'.
4. '*Alkissah peri mengatakan tatkala Herman Aspel ia akan gurendur itu, maka kedua kaum muafakat serta bersakutu [sic] bandar Wolanda dan Inggeris itu, maka suatupun tiada hisab lagi. Hatta berapa lamanya serta dengan kehendak Allah taala datang suatu bala Allah'* (Straver, Van Fraassen and Van der Putten 2004:142). Translation by Manusama (1977:112): 'Ik vertel, dat toen Herman van Speult gouverneur was, de twee volken overlegden en de Nederlandse en de Engelse handel in dezelfde vesting gehuisvest werden en er niets tussenbeide kwam.' Translation by Straver, Van Fraassen and Van der Putten (2004:141): 'Toen Herman van Speult gouverneur werd, pleegden de beide naties overleg en de Hollandse en Engelse compagnieën gingen een samenwerking aan. Er was toen geen enkel probleem meer. Na verloop van tijd kregen ze echter – overeenkomstig de wil van de verheven God – te lijden onder een goddelijke beproeving'.
5. '[...] *karena riwayat pandita dalam syarah Sunusi [sic], dua perkara orang masuk syurga tiada dengan hisab lagi, suatu perkara tarekad dunia, kedua perkara parang [sic] sabil Allah'* (Straver, Van Fraassen and Van der Putten 2004:174). Translation by Manusama (1977:132): '[...] omdat naar het verhaal van de geleerde in de commentaren van Sanusi de mens om twee redenen in de hemel komt zonder dat hem rekenschap wordt gevraagd: ten eerste door op deze wereld de weg der waarheid te volgen en ten tweede door deelname aan de heilige krijg.' Translation by Straver, Van Fraassen and Van der Putten (2004:173): 'Want volgens de overlevering der theologen in de exegese van Sanusi zijn er twee zaken waardoor de mens in de hemel komt zonder dat hem iets in de weg wordt gelegd: ten eerste de mystieke weg op aarde en ten tweede de heilige oorlog'.

Manusama's translations of the phrase '*suatupun tiada hisab*' and its variants betray *ad hoc* solutions, whereas I cannot support the hypothesis put forward by Straver, Van Fraassen and Van der Putten that *hijab* instead of *hisab* should be meant here (from Arabic *ḥiḡāb* or 'veil; barrier', hence 'to obscure; to hamper, hinder, impede'). Intriguingly, in one place the text does have '*suatupun tiada hijab*': '*Maka suatupun tiada hijab pada mereka itu melakukan kehendaknya*' (p. 92), which is translated by Manusama (1977:81) as: 'Niets hinderde hen te handelen overeenkomstig hun wil', and similarly by Straver, Van Fraassen and Van der Putten (2004:93) as: 'Niets belette hen om te doen wat hen liefdede'. In my opinion, however, in the five instances quoted above there is no need for emendation in interpreting *hisab* as *hijab*.

In two cases (examples 2 and 5) the term *hisab* is clearly used in the theological sense of 'account to be rendered to God'. The idea that man will be made to give account of his acts is found repeatedly in the Quran. The 'Day of Resurrection' or 'Day of Judgement' is also called the 'Day of the Rendering of Accounts' or simply the 'Day of Reckoning' (*yaum al-hisab*, sura 38:15, 25, 53; 40:28). The eschatological *hisab* is to be given to God alone (for further details see entry *hisab* in the second edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. III, pp. 465-6). Therefore, in the two statements concerning the people who will enter Paradise (examples 2 and 5), the expression *suatupun tiada hisab* or *tiada dengan hisab (lagi)* means 'without any reckoning; without rendering an account'. In the other three examples *hisab* has the more general meaning of 'counting' or 'reckoning', that is, 'to take into account; to pay attention to; to reckon with' (note the comparable 'counting' or 'reckoning' words *mempertimbangkan/dipertimbangkan* and *memperhitungkan/dipertimbangkan* from the same semantic field). A possible (literal) translation of *suatupun tiada hisab* would be 'nothing else was to be reckoned with/taken into account'.

I hasten to add, however, that this quibble should not distract from the fact that the editors have achieved very high standards, resulting in an excellent text edition. There seem to exist plans to translate or adapt this text edition into an English version, which would be most welcome indeed.

Edwin Jurriëns, *Cultural travel and migrancy; The artistic representation of globalization in the electronic media of West Java*. Leiden: KITLV Press, 2004, xi + 213 pp. [Verhandelingen 216.] ISBN: 90.6718.222.2. Price: EUR 25.00 (paperback).

TIM WINTER

Recent decades have witnessed ongoing intellectual debates over the value and merits of post-modern theory. In an attempt to either move away from or resolve such disputes, authors have often chosen to recognize the strengths of both camps, settling for a non-contentious middle ground. In such a post-postmodern age of self-reflexive neutrality, it is refreshing to see an author bold enough to unambiguously declare an ontological position. By firmly situating his analysis of electronic media in West Java in the late twentieth century within an array of post-modern, post-structuralist theory, Edwin Jurriëns does just this.

For this reason alone, *Cultural travel and migrancy* will not be to everyone's taste. In essence, the book centres on the idea that cultural productions across various forms of electronic media both reflect and form part of a globaliza-

tion process. To support such arguments the author introduces the idea that media productions represent a process of migrancy – a concept defined in terms of travel, movement, and cultural multiplicity. In doing so, Jurriëns dedicates a considerable amount of time to differentiating between presentation and representation in order to suggest how localized cultural interactions act as forms of virtual travel. Readers might feel that such extensive cultural theorizing comes at the expense of a more rigorous treatment of areas such as post-colonial politics and other contextual factors.

Those less than convinced by the merits of Jurriëns' analytical perspectives will undoubtedly find his lengthy discussions of hyper-realism, pastiche, and re/presentation frustrating. To lose patience with the book would be a shame, however, as it offers some valuable insights into the ways in which forms of electronic media in Indonesia are situated within their broader social, cultural, and political contexts. Particular attention is given to the television series *Inohong di Bojongsrangkong*, to the musical genre of *pop Sunda*, and to the long-running radio programme *Dongeng Plesetan* over two decades spanning both Soeharto and post-Soeharto periods. Complemented by excellent illustrations, the text also features interesting discussions of topics like piracy and the social context of news production.

Given its focus, the book makes a noteworthy contribution to the field of Indonesian studies and sits neatly within a growing repertoire of much-needed texts adopting a cultural studies perspective on the country. Other recent books in this category include *Beginning to remember; The past in the Indonesian present* (edited by Mary Zurbuchen, Singapore University Press, 2004) and *Performing the nation; Cultural politics in New Order Indonesia* (edited by Jürgen Hellman, NIAS Press, 2003).

Based on the author's PhD thesis, *Cultural travel and migrancy* clearly benefits from extensive and detailed fieldwork. The first half reviews relevant literatures and sets the scene, followed by three chapters dedicated respectively to television, music, and radio. This structure allows readers to dip in and out of the text in accordance with their interests, whether theoretical or empirical. In clearly defining his parameters and theoretical approach, Jurriëns will have both his supporters and his critics. Transcending such debates might be more important, however, if we are to see the valuable contribution this book makes to our understanding of the socio-cultural dynamics underpinning media industries in Indonesia, and across Southeast Asia, today.
