



ASEASUK NEWS

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Subscribers outside the UK must send their sterling cheques drawn on a UK bank as Aseasuk will otherwise be liable for bank charges (£6). Cheques should be made out to ASEASUK, c/o Dr Justin Watkins, Centre of South East Asian Studies, Faculty of Language and Culture, SOAS, Thornhaugh St/Russell Sq, London WC1H 0XG

NEWS

UK Southeast Asianists

Professor Duncan McCargo (University of Leeds) is currently writing up fieldwork conducted in Pattani, Southern Thailand, from September 2005 to September 2006. Funded by an ESRC grant, this project examines the ongoing violent political conflict in Thailand's southern border provinces (see Recent publications). From July 2006 to June 2007, Duncan is a Visiting Senior Research Fellow at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore.

Duncan presented seven papers in 2006: keynote address – 'Rethinking Southeast Asian monarchy: Cambodia and Thailand compared' at the Center for Khmer Studies International Conference, Rethinking Mainland Southeast Asia: Comparing Social and Cultural Challenges, Siem Reap, Cambodia, 25–27 February; keynote address at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, 22–24 March on 'Cooptation and resistance in Thailand's Muslim South: the 2005 Islamic Council Elections', Unravelling of Civil Society: Religion in the Making and Unmaking of the Modern World; keynote address on 'Thailand's Southern conflict: media, discourse and politics' at the International Conference on Media, Politics, Development and Human Security, Department of International Communication, Macquarie University, Sydney, 28 April; 'The Thai media and the challenge of

reporting the South', Southern Regional Conference of the Political Science and Public Administration Association, Pattani, Thailand, 7–8 September; as an invited speaker at the EWCW-IDSS workshop in Pattani on Violence, Peace Constituencies and Justice in Southern Thailand – 'Explanations: a crisis of leadership in Malay Muslim society?', 30–31 October; on 'The politics of Thailand's 2005 Islamic Council elections' as an invited speaker at the Contemporary Islam in Thailand workshop, Lowy Institute, Sydney, 8–9 October; on 'Imagining national reconciliation: Thailand's southern crisis' as invited plenary speaker at the International Conference on International Studies, Universiti Utara Malaysia and Malaysian Strategic Research Centre, 5–6 December, Kuala Lumpur.

In February and March 2007 he delivered four papers: 'The uses of Patani history in Thailand's Southern violence', Moments in the Making of Southeast Asian Islam workshop, Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, 5–6 February; and 'Democracy in Thailand', East Asian Paths to Democratization and China's Political Development Conference, East Asian Institute, National University of Singapore, 9–10 February; 'The politics of Buddhist identity in Thailand's Deep South', Association for Asian Studies Annual Meeting, Boston, 22–25 March (also panel organiser) and 'Security failures and the Southern Thai conflict', Southeast Asia Program Mini-Symposium on Contemporary Issues in

Thai Politics, Cornell University, Ithaca, 27 March.

Dr Gregg Huff (University of Glasgow) is researching globalization and market integration in Asia; the terms of trade and growth in pre-World War II Southeast Asia, and the economics of the Second World War in Southeast Asia.

Dr Peter Carey's (Trinity College, Oxford) current research is on the oral history of the Indonesian Occupation of East Timor (1975-99) for a publication with Steve Cox to be entitled, 'Survivors: East Timorese Experiences of the Indonesian Occupation'. Peter was awarded East Timorese Independence Medal by the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste (April 2005) and appointed Grand Official of the Order of Prince Henry the Navigator (Ordem do Infante Dom Henrique) by President of Portugal, Jorge Sampaio, on 30 January 2006 for work on East Timor. Peter delivered a paper on 'Third tide of blood: The origins of East Timor's sectarian violence' at the Asian Studies Centre, St Antony's College, Oxford, Southeast Asia series seminar, March 2007. He was also co-organiser of the conference on Civil Disobedience and Power Politics, St Antony's College, Oxford, 15-18 March 2007 and chaired the panel on the People Power Revolution in the Philippines.

Dr Alexandra Winkel recently joined the School of Development Studies at the **University of East Anglia** as a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow. She is currently working on a trajectory

study examining the vulnerability of coffee growing migrants in Vietnam over a five-year period (2000-2005). The research finds that migration activities are never free from risks and new challenges have been created through the rapid population growth in Vietnam's coffee producing areas. The collapse of international coffee prices, widespread environmental degradation, and social conflict between migrants and local inhabitants means that many migrants find themselves in worse off conditions than before migrating. This longitudinal study of migrant coffee farmers provides an important contribution to understanding the risks migrants and their families are exposed to and the various coping mechanisms they employ in response. It also examines the role of migration activities in creating these risks and vulnerabilities.

Between January and May 2007 **Dr Nick Ford (Exeter University)** has been oscillating between working on 'Youth sexual lifestyles and health vulnerabilities in Central Java' (Wellcome Trust) with the Faculty of Public Health, Diponegoro University, 'Thailand's national survey on risk behaviours and HIV/AIDS' (UNAIDS) with IPSR, Mahidol University, Thailand, and surfing in Bali. Nick presented four papers in 2006 and two in early 2007: 'Sexual lifestyles and interaction of young people in Central Java in the era of HIV/AIDS' (published in Abstract book, CD-Rom and Conference Website of International AIDS 2006 Conference in Toronto,

August 2006 (CDD0297); 'The understanding of Javanese youth sexual culture and its implications for sexual and reproductive health education needs in Central Java, Indonesia', International Congress of Public Health, in Rio de Janeiro, August 2006; 'Youth sexuality in Central Java', Department of Social Medicine, University of São Paulo, August 2006; 'Breaking the boundaries: the provisions of reproductive and sexual health services for young people in Central Java, Indonesia', poster presentation, International Public Health Conference, Rio de Janeiro, August 2006; 'Youth behaviour in Central Java: How to protect them from the growing threat of HIV/AIDS in Indonesia', 3rd National AIDS Congress, Surabaya, Indonesia, January 2007; and 'Understanding youth sexual lifestyles in Central Java', Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University, Thailand, March 2007.

Dr Annabel Teh Gallop (British Library) presented the following papers in 2006: 'Piagam Serampas: Malay documents from highland Jambi' at a conference on archaeology and ethnohistory in the highlands of Sumatra, 21-23 September 2006, Free University, Berlin; 'Fakes or fancies? Some "problematic" Malay manuscripts' at the ASEASUK conference, 15-17 September 2006, St Antony's College, Oxford (she also convened the panel on Indonesian/Malay Manuscript Studies at the conference; 'The earliest dated Malay Qur'an manuscript?' at the

Southeast Asia Department Workshop, 7 June 2006, SOAS; and 'Golden words from Johor: a royal letter from Temenggung Daing Ibrahim to Emperor Napoleon III of France' at an international seminar on Malay Manuscripts, National Archives of Malaysia & National Library of Malaysia, 10-11 July 2006, Kuala Lumpur.

Dr Monica Janowski (University of Greenwich) visited the Kelabit Highlands twice last year, in May and August, the first time with Graeme Barker, Huw Barton, Lindsay Lloyd-Smith and Kevin Lane on a visit funded through the ASEASUK Research Committee preparatory to the submission of an application to the AHRC for a three-year research grant, 'The Cultured Rainforest'. As the funding application was successful, the project starts in April 2007. Investigators on the project include Monica, Graeme Barker (Cambridge), Huw Barton (Leicester), Chris Hunt (Queens Belfast) and Chris Gosden (Oxford). Collaborators also include the Universiti Malaysia Sarawak and the Sarawak Museum. The aim is to bring together anthropological, environmental science and archaeological methods to create as accurate an understanding as possible both of present and past interactions between humans and the natural environment in the southern Kelabit Highlands. The group will be mounting exhibitions at the Pitt-Rivers Museum and the Sarawak Museum at the end of the project, using interactive 'virtual visit' computer-based methods

developed by Monica in conjunction with radio series she worked on recently. The group will also produce a radio series for local broadcast in Sarawak and a community-authored book, both focusing on local stories and myths about the rainforest and mountains of the Kelabit Highlands.

Monica completed work with Fiona Kerlogue on the book they have co-edited, *Food and kinship in Southeast Asia*, published by NIAS Press, in late 2006. Monica wrote the introduction and one other chapter, on the Kelabit.

In late 2006, Monica set up a UK-registered charity, the Pa' Dalih Forest and Water Trust, which is raising money to install a new water pipe for the community of Pa' Dalih in the Kelabit Highlands, her main field site. This pipe will mean that the catchment from which it will run, the Pa' Diit, will be preserved from logging and will be available to the people of Pa' Dalih for hunting and gathering.

Dr Margaret Coldiron (Durham University) performed *Topeng Dalem Arsa Wijaya* (traditional Balinese masked dance solo) with Lila Cita Gamelan at LSO St Luke's, London, on 23 March 2007.

Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, SOAS

Dr David Smyth has recently completed the *20th century South East Asian prose fiction writers*, a volume in the US Dictionary of Literary Biography series, consisting of substantial entries on 62

writers from the region. David is also finalising a volume including translations of M.R. Nimitmongkol Navarat's *Khwam Fan Kho'ng Nak Udomkhati* and *Chiwit Haeng Kan Kabot So'ng Khrang* to be in time for the author's centennial in 2008. David was also keynote speaker at the conference on Thai Language and Literature, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University, November 2006.

On the move

Professor Peter Riddell (London School of Theology) is moving back to Australia in August to establish a Centre for the Study of Islam and World Religions at Bible College of Victoria, Australian College of Theology.

Dr Tim Huxley (International Institute for Strategic Studies) has been appointed Executive Director of IISS Asia as of 1 April 2007 and is now permanently based in Singapore. Tim's contact details: IISS Asia, 9 Raffles Place, Level 57 Republic Plaza, Singapore 048619; tel: +65 68231451, email: huxley@iiss.org

PhDs

The following candidates successfully defended their theses: **Zahroh Shaluhiah (Exeter University)** on 'Sexual lifestyles and inter-personal relationships of university students in Central Java, Indonesia and their implications for sexual and reproductive health' (medical geography; supervisor: Dr Nick Ford); **Maurice Simmons**

(MPhil, SOAS) on 'Literary historiography and the history of the Thai novel' (supervisor: Dr David Smyth); **Patricia May Jurilla (SOAS)** 'Tagalog bestsellers and the history of the book in the Philippines' (supervisor: Dr David Smyth); **Kim Soyeum** (King's College London) on 'Japanese ODA and Philippine environmental projects' (supervisor: Dr Raymond Bryant).

ASEASUK RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Research grants

The Committee invites applications to support advanced post-doctoral (or equivalent) research in the humanities and social sciences on Southeast Asia (Brunei, Cambodia, East Timor, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam) although applications will also be considered for research that focuses on Southeast Asia within the wider Asian region. Grants are made either for individual research or for collaborative projects: they are not made to support doctoral research. The Committee welcomes applications for workshop support. Grants offered are normally in the range of £1,000 to £5,000 for a 12-month period. Requests for additional funding and extensions of grant for a further 12 months are considered on submission of a satisfactory progress report. Applicants must be ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom.

Closing dates for applications: 31

December 2007. Further details and application forms can be obtained from: <http://www.britac.ac.uk/institutes/cseas/index.html> or
Dr Tim Harper: tnh1000@cam.ac.uk

CALL FOR PAPERS

24th Aseasuk conference
Liverpool John Moores University
21-22 June 2008

Please email Dr Ben Murtagh at bm10@soas.ac.uk if you are interested in convening a panel or in presenting a paper in the following proposed panels contact the panel convenors.

Dr Gerard Clarke
(G.Clarke@swansea.ac.uk)
Civil society in Southeast Asia: new themes

Civil society has been a significant locus of concern in the field of Southeast Asian studies for almost two decades now and this panel will consider recent research which makes a theoretical or empirical contribution to this evolving literature. The panel organiser welcomes papers that look at civil society from one or more of the following perspectives, loosely interpreted:

- *Macro*: the changing nature of civil society across the Southeast Asian region and the political, economic and social consequences that arise, for instance in the context of

globalisation, economic integration, or political mobilisation;

- *Meso*: the (changing) nature or structure of civil society in individual Southeast Asian nations, including the political, economic or social drivers behind any reported change;
- *Micro*: the activities of individual civil society organisations (CSOs) or groups of CSOs and their political, economic or social implications.

Dr James Warren

(jameswarren23@googlemail.com)

Sinful pleasures: attitudes towards and depictions of vices in Southeast Asia

Humans have long indulged in activities and substances that while stimulating and pleasurable also have detrimental effects upon the participant or user, especially if done to excess. These activities and substances include commonplace habits such as gambling, smoking, and drinking alcohol; they are often addictive and in the West are collectively grouped together as 'vices'. Most religions have injunctions against some or all of these forms of behaviour. Their dichotomous nature means secular attitudes towards these vices are diverse and often contradictory; ranging from tolerance, and sometimes even encouragement, to condemnation and criminalisation. In turn, these differing responses are conditioned by political, economic and cultural factors that change over time. Crucially, because of the potential for contradictory attitudes, vices frequently become areas of

contestation between, for example, the state and its citizens or the colonisers and the colonised. Studies of attitudes and policies towards vices can thus reveal much about the society or culture in which they occur. Southeast Asia is no different in this regard but to date this topic remains a little explored area. This panel seeks papers dealing with any aspect, past or present, of attitudes to and portrayals of vices in Southeast Asia.

Prof Terry King

(V.T.King@leeds.ac.uk)

The middle class in Southeast Asia: consumption, lifestyles and identities

With the rapid economic development and modernisation in Southeast Asia, transformations in occupational structures and the increasing access to education and training, the new middle class is appearing ever more frequently on social science research agendas. The comparative research coordinated by Michael Hsiao on 'the middle classes' in East and Southeast Asia has provided us with a range of useful issues for investigation, including boundaries; social characteristics; lifestyles and identities; and political views and activities. An interesting dimension is that significant elements of the middle class are of relatively recent origin and from modest backgrounds. How do they express their middle classness? What are the worldviews, identities and lifestyles of young middle class people and the second generation middle class? Can we talk of a middle class or

'multiple middle classes'? Are there differences between the middle class in different Southeast Asian countries, particularly with the emergence of consumerism and the influence of the market and globalisation in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos?

The focus of the panel is on consumption practices, lifestyles and identities and also seeks to develop certain of the themes raised by Richard Robison and David Goodman in their work on 'the new rich' and Joel Kahn's work on culturalisation and Southeast Asian identities.

Dr Annabel Gallop
(Annabel.Gallop@bl.uk)
Indonesian/Malay manuscript studies

Papers are welcomed on all aspects of the study of the writing traditions of maritime Southeast Asia. Of particular interest would be contributions on manuscript illumination and the art of book; documents and chancery practice in the courts of the archipelago; Islamic manuscripts from the southern Philippines and the majority-Buddhist states of mainland Southeast Asia; and previously undescribed manuscript collections.

Dr Matthew Isaac Cohen & Dr Laura Noszlopy
(Matthew.Cohen@rhul.ac.uk)
Southeast Asian arts in transnational perspective

Studies of the performing arts and visual cultures of Southeast Asia have until recently emphasised local origins and significance over international links and cross-cultural flows. This academic focus is at odds with the region's long history of intercultural exchange, and the interest of many Southeast Asian arts workers in situating their practice in relation to extra-local configurations. This panel examines the arts of Southeast Asia and their dynamics of movement and exchange across national boundaries, with an emphasis on the period of World War II to the present. Possible topics include: cultural diplomacy, intercultural collaboration, local artistic practice in relation to the global arts market, performance and art for tourism, diasporic arts, the international circulation of mediated performance (via the internet, VCD etc), ASEAN art projects and teaching Southeast Asian arts outside the region.

**SEMINARS, WORKSHOPS &
CONFERENCES**

Britain and the Malay world
Royal Asiatic Society, London
17 and 18 May 2007

For further information contact Dr Ben
Murtagh at bm10@soas.ac.uk

**Objects, images and imaginings:
New perspectives on the material and
visual culture of the Andaman and
Nicobar islands**
Brighton Museum & Art Gallery
18 May 2007

Hosted by James Green Centre for
World Art and the University of Sussex.
For further information contact Claire
Wintle at C.Wintle@sussex.ac.uk

**Syncretism in South and Southeast
Asia: adoption and adaptation**
Mahidol University
Bangkok
24-27 May 2007

For further information and online pre-
registration contact:
Dr Sophana Srichampa
Chair, Organising Committee
2nd SSEASR Conference 2007
www.sseasr.org
Email: conf2007@sseasr.org or
sseasr@gmail.com

**Narrating the nation: Thirty years of
'A history of Singapore'**
Asian Studies Centre
St Antony's College
Oxford
9 June 2007

For more information email:
singapore30@gmail.com
Organisers are Emma Reisz (Queen's
University Belfast) and
P.J. Thum (Hertford College, Oxford).

ICAS 5
Sharing a future in Asia
Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre
5 – 7 August 2007

The 5th International Convention of
Asian Scholars is hosted by the Institute
of Occidental Studies (IKON) and the
Institute of Malay World and
Civilisation (ATMA) of Universiti
Kebangsaan Malaysia. For further
information check
<http://www.icas5kl.com/>

Euroseas
University of Naples L'Orientale
Palazzo del Mediterraneo
12-15 September 2007

For more information please check the
Euroseas website
[http://www.euroseas.org/2007/indexe
.php](http://www.euroseas.org/2007/indexe.php)

**Grappling with independence:
Burmese culture, media, and daily life
in the U Nu Period, 1948-1962**

SOAS workshop
14 September 2007

For further information contact:
Dr Michael W. Charney at
mc62@soas.ac.uk

**3rd International Malaysia-Thailand
Conference on Southeast Asian Studies
Defining harmony in Southeast Asia:
Competing discourses, challenges and
interpretations**

Mahidol University International
College (MUIC)
Salaya Campus
Nakhon Pathom, Thailand
29 November – 1 December 2007

Jointly organised by Mahidol University
International College, Thailand
& Faculty of Social Sciences and
Humanities, Universiti Kebangsaan
Malaysia

24th Aseasuk conference
Liverpool John Moores University
21-22 June 2008

See Call for papers (p. 5).

RECENT PUBLICATIONS



BRYANT, R.L.

- (forthcoming) Burma and the politics of teak: dissecting a resource curse. In Peter Boomgaard and Greg Bankoff (eds), *A history of natural resources in Asia: The wealth of nature*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, September 2007.

CAREY, PETER

- (Forthcoming) The power of prophecy: Prince Dipanagara and the end of an old order in Java, 1785-1855. Leiden: KITLV Press, November 2007.

COHEN, MATTHEW ISAAC

- (with Alessandra Lopez y Royo & Laura Noszlopy, eds). Indonesia performing arts across borders. Special issue. *Indonesia and the Malay World* 35, no. 101 (2007): 1-7.
- Dancing the subject of 'Java': international modernism and traditional performance, 1899-1952, *Indonesia and the Malay World* 35, no. 101 (2007): 9-29.

COLDIRON, MARGARET

- *Sendratari Yunani*: Negotiating the languages of intercultural performance in an Indonesian-style Greek tragedy. *Indonesia and the Malay World* 35, no. 101 (2007): 129-40.

- The image of the ideal king: making the *Dalem* mask. *Seleh Notes* 14, no. 2 (2007): 6-10.

FORD, NICHOLAS J

- (with Z. Shaluhayah and A. Suryoputro) A rather benign sexual culture: Socio-sexual lifestyles of youth in urban Central Java. *Population, Space and Place* 13, no. 1 (2007): 59-78.
- (with A. Suryoputro and Z. Shaluhayah) Breaking the boundaries: The provision of sexual and reproductive health services for youth in central Java. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Public Health* (2007).
- (with A. Suryoputro and Z. Shaluhayah). Influences upon the sexual health of youth in Central Java: Implications for sexual and reproductive health policy and services. *Makara Health Series Journal: University of Indonesia* 10, no. 1 (2007): 29-40 [in Indonesian].
- (with A. Suryoputro and Z. Shaluhayah). Determinants of youth sexual behaviour and its implications for reproductive and sexual health policies in central Java. *Indonesian Journal of Health Promotion* 1, no. 2 (2007): 60-71.

GALLOP, ANNABEL TEH

- (ed.) *A cabinet of Oriental curiosities: an album for Graham Shaw from his colleagues*. London: British Library, 2006.
- Malay documents in the Melaka Records in the British Library. *Itinerario* 30, no. 2 (2006): 54-77.

HITCHCOCK, MICHAEL

- Ecotourism in Indonesia: Negotiating business and conservation. *Garuda* (December 2006): 70-71.
- The future. In Retno Sulistianingsih and John Miksic (eds), *Icons of art*. Jakarta: BAB, 2006, pp. 287-99.
- The evolution of batik. In Joop Ave (ed.), *Grand batik interiors*. Jakarta: BAB, 2007, pp. 23-31.
- (with I Nyoman Darma Putra) *Tourism, development and terrorism in Bali*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007. 199 pp.

HOBART, MARK

- Rethinking Balinese dance. *Indonesia and the Malay World* 35, no. 101 (2007): 107-28.

HUFF, WG

- Globalization, natural resources and foreign investment: A view from the resource rich tropics. *Oxford Economic Papers* 59, no. 5 (2007).
- (with G. Caggiano) Globalization, immigration and Lewisian Elastic Labor in pre-World War II Southeast. *Asia Journal of Economic History* 67, no. 1 (2007): 33-68.
- Financial transition in pre-World War II Japan and Southeast Asia. *Financial History Review* 14, no. 2 (2007).
- Monetization and financial development in Southeast Asia before the Second World War. *Economic History Review* 56, no. 2 (2003): 300-45.
- Currency boards and Chinese banks in Malaya and the Philippines before

the Second World War. *Australian Economic History Review* 43, no. 2 (2003): 125-39 [translated into Bulgarian and published in *Journal of Finance and Financial Policy*].

KERSHAW, ROGER

- (with Eva Maria Kershaw) The mundane and the mystic: constructions of human relations with the animal world in Brunei-Dusun and other Bornean folk-tales. *Indonesia and the Malay World* 34, no. 99 (2006): 151-95.
- Islam in the Netherlands – and Indonesia: what kind of a ‘pillar of society’? *Contemporary Review* 288, no. 1682 (2006): 324-38.

KING, VT

- Southeast Asia: Personal reflections on a region. In Cynthia Chou and Vincent Houben (eds), *Southeast Asian Studies: Debates and new directions*. Singapore: ISEAS; Leiden: IAS, 2006, pp. 23-44.
- (with Phuong An Nguyen and Nguyen Huu Minh). Professional middle class youth in post-reform Vietnam: identity, continuity and change. *Modern Asian Studies* (2007): 1-31; doi: 10.1017/S0026749X06002551.

LOPEZ Y ROYO, ALESSANDRA

- (with Matthew Isaac Cohen & Laura Noszlopy, eds). Indonesia performing arts across borders. Special issue. *Indonesia and the Malay World* 35, no. 101 (2007): 1-7.
- *The Prince of the Pagodas, Gong and Tabuh-tabuhan*: Balinese music and dance, classical ballet and Euro-

American composers and choreographers. *Indonesia and the Malay World* 35, no. 101 (2007): 49-61.

McCARGO, DUNCAN

- (ed.) *Rethinking Thailand's southern violence*. Singapore: NUS Press, 2007. 225 pp.
- *ibid.* Introduction. Behind the slogans: unpacking Patani Merdeka, pp. 3-102.
- *ibid.* Thaksin and the resurgence of violence in the Thai South, pp. 35-68.
- *ibid.* Postscript: No end in sight? pp. 165-73.
- [Review article] A hollow crown. *New Left Review*, Jan–Feb (2007): 135–44.
- Communicating Thailand's southern conflict: media alternatives. *Journal of International Communication* 12, no. 2 (2006): 19–34.
- (ed.) Patani Merdeka: Thailand's southern fire. Special issue. *Critical Asian Studies* 38, no. 1 (March 2006).
- *ibid.* Introduction: Rethinking Thailand's southern violence, pp. 3-9.
- *ibid.* Thaksin and the resurgence of violence in the Thai South: network monarchy strikes back? pp. 39-71.
- Buddhism, democracy and identity in Thailand. In John Anderson (ed.) *Religion, democracy and democratization*. London: Routledge, 2006, pp. 155–70.
- Rethinking Southeast Asian politics. In Cynthia Chou and Vincent Houben (eds), *Southeast Asian Studies: Debates and new directions*. Singapore: ISEAS, 2006, pp. 102-22.
- Cambodia: getting away with

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BOOK REVIEWS



ANTHONY REID (ed.)
*Verandah of violence: The background to the
Aceh problem*
Singapore: NUS Publishing; Seattle:
University of Washington Press, 2006,
456 pp. ISBN: 9971-69-331-3 (pb £17.99);
<http://www.nus.edu.sg/sup/>

Reviewer: Andrew Rosser
University of Adelaide, Australia

There has been increased scholarly interest in Aceh since the tsunami that struck the territory in December 2004. The devastation wrought by the tsunami, the introduction of a massive reconstruction programme in its wake, and the signing of an historic peace agreement between the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the Indonesian government in August 2005 have

dramatically changed the territory and generated considerable debate about its future prospects. This new scholarly interest stands in marked contrast to earlier periods in the territory's history. As Anthony Reid notes in his introduction to *Verandah of violence*, instability and violence in Aceh over the past century or so has discouraged scholars from doing fieldwork in the territory, dramatically reducing the scope for serious academic analyses of its history, society, politics and development. After Snouck Hurgronje's and J. Kreemer's detailed ethnographies of Aceh around the turn of the 20th century, he notes, only a few scholars had the opportunity to do sustained research in the territory before the tsunami.

In this connection, *Verandah of violence* is a welcome addition to the literature. It represents the first serious attempt in English to trace Aceh's history from pre-colonial times up to the tsunami and peace deal and to analyse in detail the causes and consequences of the civil war that afflicted the territory for three decades from the mid-1970s. It brings together the leading experts on Aceh's history and its politics. In addition to Reid himself, E. Edwards McKinnon, Peter Riddell, Lee Kam Hing, Teuku Ibrahim Alfian, the late M. Isa Sulaiman, Ed Aspinall, William Nessen, Damien Kingsbury, Lesley McCulloch, Kirsten Schulze, Aleksius Jemadu, Michelle Ann Miller, and Rodd McGibbon – a veritable who's who of Aceh experts – contributed to the book.

The book's examination of Aceh's history and civil war begins with an introductory chapter by Reid that provides a general overview of Aceh's history, geology, demography, languages, religions, and culture. Thereafter, the book proceeds in two main parts. The first provides a detailed history of Aceh from pre-colonial times until the end of the colonial period and consists of chapters on Indian and Indonesian influences on early North Sumatra (McKinnon), the development of Acehnese identity in the 16th and 17th centuries (Riddell), the Acehnese sultanate's view of its place in the world prior to the start of the Dutch-Aceh War in 1873 (Reid), Aceh at the time of the 1824 treaty between Britain and the Netherlands (Lee), the effects of Dutch colonialism on Aceh (Reid), and the Islamic doctrine of 'holy war' and its role in Aceh's various conflicts (Alfian). The second part of the book examines the origins and dynamics of the civil war in Aceh since the mid-1970s. The chapters in this part focus, among other things, on the role of military business in the civil war (Kingsbury and McCulloch), the differential effects of violence on identity formation in Aceh in the 1950s and since the mid-1970s (Aspinall), the effects of democratisation on the civil war (Jemadu), the military and diplomatic strategies of GAM and the Indonesian state (Schulze), and the role of local leadership in the conflict (McGibbon).

To some extent, the two main parts of the book sit uncomfortably beside one another. The broad theme of the first

part of the book is that Aceh emerged from the colonial period with a distinct identity and 'an unparalleled determination to resist outside domination' (back cover). Some of the chapters from the second part of the book, however – most notably McGibbon's and Aspinall's – suggest that simple Aceh vs. Jakarta understandings of the civil war ignore the role of intervening variables in shaping the conflict, such as the capacities and interests of local elites or the way in which the specific political and historical context shaped Acehnese responses to military violence. Despite this awkward fit, these chapters collectively provide an invaluable backgrounder to Aceh's contemporary challenges. Not only do they provide the reader with the details of Aceh's historical development and the civil war in particular but they also provide a snapshot of key debates in the literature on Aceh.

Despite its strengths, the book has at least one important weakness. Recent years have seen the emergence of a sizeable literature on the origins, duration, and intensity of civil wars, much of it centred on the relative merits of greed and grievance-based explanations. Yet this literature barely rates a mention in *Verandah of violence*. This is problematic in so far as it means that the book gives little attention to hypotheses concerning the origins of civil war that could potentially shed light on the causes of the civil war in Aceh. Most notable in this respect are those that emphasise the role of natural

resources. A number of contributors to the book note that many Acehnese resented Jakarta's appropriation of Aceh's natural resource wealth and that this fuelled separatist sentiment. But they give little if any attention to the other variables that the civil war literature suggests link natural resource wealth with civil war outcomes – for instance, the 'lootability' of a territory's natural resources, the institutional context, and the geographic location of the resources. The lack of attention to these variables reduces the potential utility of the book in policy terms.

However, despite this concern, *Verandah of violence* is a timely and important book. It should be kept readily at hand by anyone with an interest in Aceh's development.

MARIEKE BLOEMBERGEN

Colonial spectacles: The Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies at the world exhibitions, 1880-1931

Translated by Beverley Jackson.

Singapore: NUS Publishing, 2006. 478

pp. ISBN 9971-69-3305 (hb US\$36);

<http://www.nus.edu.sg/npu>

Reviewer: Matthew Isaac Cohen
Royal Holloway, University of London

World exhibitions, or world's fairs as they are also sometimes called, have garnered much attention from historians of public culture in recent decades. These events have been interpreted

variously as instrumental sites in inculcating consumerism, defining national identities and cosmopolitanism, propagating colonial and imperial projects, sparking the desire for progress and 'the world of tomorrow,' confirming or challenging racial hierarchies. Bloembergen's book on the exhibition of the Dutch East Indies at world exhibitions in 1883, 1889, 1900, 1910 and 1931 argues that these representations were less authentic representations of the diverse cultures of colonial Indonesia than sites of contestation for Dutch national identity and defining moments for relations between the colonising metropole and the colonised periphery.

The 1883 exhibition in Amsterdam was the first and only world exhibition held in The Netherlands. It is noteworthy as the first time that an exotic village, with replica houses and inhabitants from country of origin, was constructed as part of a European exhibition. The 1883 'kampong' featured 10 traditional-style houses constructed in Indonesia out of bamboo and wood and 38 inhabitants from Java and Sumatra who went about their daily business, interacted with visitors and gave occasional gamelan concerts. Bloembergen credits this initiative to the civil engineer Daniël Veth (1850-1885), son of Leiden indologist P.J. Veth. It was intended to provide visitors with direct ethnological experience that demonstrated the backwardness of the colonised peoples of Indonesia and thereby justified the paternalistic attitude that viewed colonialism as a way to bring civilisation

to non-Europeans. The kampong seemed to have been consumed, however, as a form of popular entertainment, and sparked a vogue for virtual travel of this sort that continued in the context of world exhibitions and stand-alone events such as the 1884-85 Japanese 'colony' in Knightsbridge (the direct inspiration for Gilbert and Sullivan's operetta, *The Mikado*).

The *village Javanais* constructed for the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1889 proved even more popular than the 1883 kampong. The Paris environmental display featured regular dance and music concerts by a gamelan ensemble from the West Javanese tea plantation Parakan Salak and four young female dancers named Damina, Wakiem, Sariem and Soekia. The dancers were said to be provided by Mangkunagara V (r. 1881-96), and achieved some notoriety in Parisian high society. The kampong attracted 875,000 over six months, and was instrumental in popularising non-European dance and music. Critics worried about the 'dejavatisation' of the dancers and their economic exploitation.

The organising committees turned their backs on live entertainment for the exhibitions in Paris in 1900 and Brussels in 1910. The Dutch organisers of the 1900 exhibition privileged Hindu-Javanese monumental temple relics as a tip of the hat to Dutch historical and archaeological scholarship and a display of the glory of the ancient past. The highlight of the 1910 exhibition was a modified Javanese *pendopo* where ten

Javanese artisans demonstrated batik making and wood carving. This was intended to show the benefits of vocational education for the natives and perk an interest in Javanese crafts in Europe. (Europe did indeed develop an interest in batik subsequently.) Some visitors seemed more interested in practicing their Malay with the demonstrators, however. The 1931 exhibition was a reversion to live entertainment in the form of the Gunung Sari troupe of dancers and musicians from Peliatan, Bali. The Dutch pavilion burned down due to what was likely an electrical accident (though some thought it might have been arson by anti-colonialists), and its timely rebuilding with donations from the state and private individuals and companies was a cause for Dutch national pride. The 1931 exhibition marked the first a Balinese ensemble had performed abroad. As Bloembergen demonstrates in an epilogue, Paris 1931 remains a watershed date in Balinese imagination, even if it uncertain which set of musical instruments was brought to Paris.

Bloembergen's primary concerns are the internal politics that inform what was selected for display and the relation between exhibition displays and colonial policy. She has a masterful understanding of the secondary literature on Dutch colonialism and imperialism, and ably draws upon an endless supply of internal documents which have never before been examined. Her analysis is also well-informed theoretically, and serves as a

useful amendment to Said on Orientalism and Anderson on national imaginaries.

She is weaker in her knowledge of Indonesian cultural history and performance, however. One will have to look elsewhere (e.g., Savarese 1992 and Fauser 2005) for detailed performance analyses. While R.T.A. Achmed Djajadiningrat, Noto Soeroto, Cokorda Gede Raka Sukawati and a few other Javanese and Balinese elites and artists appear in passing, one does not get as much insight into Indonesian cooperation and resistance to these colonial displays as one might hope. Accounts by Indonesians of world exhibitions are admittedly harder to come by, but they do exist (see, e.g., Salmon 1997). Very few Indonesian language items appear in the bibliography, and the Balinese ethnography at the book's end contain some significant misrepresentations. For example, a relative of the Peliatan troupe's leader described the 1931 Exposition Coloniale Internationale as a *pesta seni*, which Bloembergen and Jackson awkwardly translate as 'art party' (p. 340). A much better translation would be 'arts festival,' a translation which recognises that the Paris exhibition is figured as a precedent for the annual *pesta seni* in Denpasar.

Bloembergen briefly notes a relation between the international exhibitions and industrial fairs held in Batavia in 1829, 1853, 1865 and 1893 with the 1910 Brussels exhibition (p. 249), but more attention could have been paid to how

exhibitions and fairs held in the Dutch Indies articulated with international displays. One can productively compare, for example, the 1906 Surabaya trade fair and exhibition with the Dutch pavilion at the 1910 Brussels world exhibition. The 1937 Bali Congress sponsored by the Java Institute is related to the 1931 Exposition Coloniale Internationale. Bloembergen's study also scarcely mentions the Dutch Indies displays at Chicago's World's Columbian Exhibition (1893), New York's World's Fair (1939-40) or San Francisco's Golden Gate International Exposition (1939-40) or other colonial exhibitions outside Europe.

For all these shortcomings, *Colonial spectacles* is a significant contribution to Indonesian public culture that sheds real light into the vexed negotiations involved in a critical mode of representation of Southeast Asia. The translation by Beverley Jackson is very serviceable, and the book will be of real use to scholars of imperialism and colonialism. It is to be hoped that the book's companion volume, a compilation of source materials about the display of Indonesia at the French and Dutch colonial exhibitions (Bloembergen 2004), will also one day be translated into English.

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MIKAELA NYMAN

Democratising Indonesia: The challenges of civil society in the era of reformasi

Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2006. 258 pp.

ISBN 87-91114-82-9 (pb £13.99, US\$25);

<http://www.niaspress.dk/>

Reviewer: V.T. King
University of Leeds

Nyman's book is a very worthy and thoughtful addition to the literature on post-Suharto Indonesia and specifically on civil society and the processes of democratisation which were set in motion in the few years prior to the economic and political crisis of 1997-98 and which gathered pace after Suharto's resignation in May 1998. She takes her research up to the Indonesian national elections of 2004, but, in the penultimate and concluding chapters she also speculates on likely social trends and the prospects for political change beyond 2004. For her the post-2004 period may lead to a 'second wave' of reformation and democratisation or to a partial reversion to more authoritarian

forms of rule; the range of evidence points to both possibilities (p. 2). Nyman focuses on three important strands of civil society (these comprise social movements among students, labour and women) to both demonstrate its complexities as well as the problems which activists experience in sustaining and directing a democratic transition. Her rationale for the book is that in the new flush of political openness following Suharto's welcome departure and the weakening of the military's repressive grip on the Indonesian state 'the debate about civil society is not only alive, but is crucial for Indonesia's future democratisation process' (p. vii). Based primarily on an examination of the published literature, including newspaper reports, the analysis is enhanced by the use of written sources from Indonesian social movements and a set of interviews and formal and informal discussions conducted in January-February 2002 in Jakarta, Yogyakarta and Bali with some of those engaged in civil society activity.

Nyman is fully aware of the conceptual and analytical difficulties in addressing the character and trajectories of civil society and non-state movements. She briefly discusses several relevant concepts: of course, the concept of civil society itself (its indeterminateness and its relationships to the state, as well as the Indonesia-specific dimensions of civil society); mass social movements (and the context of their emergence and development); political opportunities; state, government and regime; and democracy, democratisation and demo-

cratic transition. Perhaps a more sustained discussion of social class and its relationship to social movements would also have been appropriate here, though Nyman does consider briefly the problematical notion of 'the middle class' and the issue of class consciousness or rather the lack of it in Indonesian society (pp. 16-17, 89-90, 94, 109, 122).

Two very clear themes emerge from this book, which are perhaps not entirely unexpected. Firstly, it is amply confirmed that social movements within civil society are diverse and fragmented with different agendas, interests and perspectives. They ebb and flow, and often crystallise in opposition to a particular issue rather than unifying around a positive cause; social movements also find it difficult to sustain unity and a common platform once they have achieved their objectives. By the same token it makes it difficult to trace the interconnections not only within the three focus groups chosen but also across them and to determine relative contributions to democratisation in terms of leadership and mobilisation. Generalisations about the relationships between civil society and democratic processes are therefore often difficult to make and there is still much dispute about the relative contributions of middle class elements, students, women, workers, peasants and the urban poor to the Indonesian pro-democracy movements of the 1990s. Nyman proposes that students were important in the early stages but have since run out of steam and 'imploded'

(p. 207); although women's contributions were 'largely invisible', they did play a coordinating and strategic role in the liberating processes of the late 1990s (p. 17); whilst labour, divided and marginalised, was largely excluded or excluded itself from the movements for reformation and democracy, though there was also evidence of urban-based middle class activism among organised labour-oriented NGOs (pp. 93, 103-5). Secondly, the success of a movement depends on the formation of cross-class and cross-group alliances. This should also be seen in the context of the interaction between elements of civil society and the representatives of the state in that divisions and elements within the political elite or ruling class, and factional conflict can provide spaces for manoeuvre, alliances and support for non-state social activists. Nyman also makes reference to the importance of class alliances and the crucial role of the middle class in relation to civil society formation, a very familiar theme in the recent political economy literature on Southeast Asia. Middle class involvement in all three social movements has been evident.

Nyman has provided us with new and interesting material for discussion and debate, and there is certainly the need for more detailed studies of civil society activity in Indonesia, given that it is one of the most significant elements in post-New Order social, cultural and political life. Nyman has indicated an agenda for future research, particularly with reference to the religious and ethnic dimensions of social movements, and

she has neatly placed her work in a broader Indonesian political and historical context. Although we have quite naturally been preoccupied with recent civil society activity in Indonesia and the volatile and sometimes violent situation there, Nyman does examine earlier non-state expressions of resistance and support for human rights going back to the colonial period and through the period of the presidencies of both Sukarno and Suharto. She also refers to some of the relevant literature on democratisation in such neighbouring countries as the Philippines and Thailand and the authoritarian strains in Malaysia and Singapore. On this final note more attention to the comparative dimensions of social and political transformation in Southeast Asia would have been useful.

STEFAN EKLÖF

Pirates in paradise: A modern history of Southeast Asia's maritime marauders

Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2006. 160 pp.
ISBN 8791114365 (hb £40); 8791114373
(pb £15.99); <http://www.niaspress.dk/>

Reviewer: Laura Noszlopy, London

Stefan Eklöf warns us from the outset of this book that there will be very limited swashbuckling in his study of modern-day piracy in Maritime Southeast Asia – and indeed *Pirates of the Caribbean* it is not. Instead, this is a short and well-researched survey of maritime crime in

Southeast Asian waters over the past quarter century.

Piracy in the region appears to have undergone a revival since the early 1980s, and far overshadows similar activities elsewhere in the world in frequency. The historian Marcus Rediker estimated that during 1716-26, the last wave of the 'golden age' of Atlantic piracy, pirates captured and plundered an average of 218 vessels a year. Eklöf notes, by contrast, that between 2000 and 2004, 920 attacks were reported in Southeast Asian waters by the International Maritime Bureau (IMB), from a total of 1,944 worldwide. Moreover, the IMB believes that this figure represents a mere half of the actual number of attacks (p. 2).

These figures are telling; the subject-matter does not lend itself to easy or in-depth research because so few attacks are actually reported. Eklöf also notes that reports from terrorised victims are subjective and often self-censored for fear of violent repercussions and costly delays in connection with police investigations. The legal material held by police forces, navies and coastguards are either classified or otherwise inaccessible. And obviously, reports from pirates themselves are very rare. Nonetheless, he states that a 'comprehensive – if perhaps not definite – account can be pieced together from what available evidence there is' (p. 3). My assessment is that he has indeed achieved this goal, albeit without some of the 'ethnographic' depth that might have been attained through further

pursuit of interviews and ethnographic context.

His main source, the Kuala Lumpur-based Piracy Reporting Centre (operated by the IMB) has since 1992 been responsible both for assisting victims in the shipping industry and analysing and disseminating information to the world's media.

Following a brief introduction to the long history of piracy in the region (the first historical reference to piracy in the region is from Faxian who noted that the sea between Ceylon and Java 'is infested with pirates, to meet whom is death'), the book is divided into chapters that each discuss quite distinct piracies in different Southeast Asian waters.

First of these is the distressing story of the attacks on small fishing vessels trafficking Indochinese refugees across the Gulf of Thailand between the mid-1970s and early 1990s. Eklöf notes that an earlier spate of attacks seems to have been made opportunistically by Thai fishermen-turned-pirates, whereas in the latter part of the 1970s, the piracy took a much more sinister turn, with organised attacks made by heavily armed gangs who raped and beat the refugees, as well as stealing life's savings, which were often being transported in the search for refuge in Thailand and elsewhere in the region.

He then examines more examples of 'opportunistic piracy' – each with its own distinct cultural forms – in various

parts of the region, including the Sulu Sea around the southern Philippines, the waters of the Riau archipelago between Sumatra and Batam and the notorious Straits of Malacca. It is in this chapter, particularly in reference to the pirates of Riau from the perspective of one Syaiful Rozi bin Kahar (boat taxi-driver turned pirate turned media interviewee), that Eklöf provides a more 'human' face to the phenomena, gleaned though it is from the work of journalists.

When looking at crime against larger ships, the material becomes more statistical once more. It is interesting that the impact made on these large vessels with their massive cargoes is often deemed not relevant enough to pursue the cases in the courts. The phenomena of 'phantom ships', hijacked by pirate gangs and brought into new docks under a new name and fake papers has led many to contend that the authorities in some countries must be at best compliant with such organised crime. Eklöf disclaims this stance.

Chapter 6 continues in this vein, looking at the costs of piracy to the international shipping trade. Here, Eklöf points out that although there is clearly a significant problem in the region, it by no means warrants its recent classification as 'high-risk' (basically, a war-zone) by the Joint War Committee of Lloyds of London (p. 99).

Chapter 7 offers a topical assessment of the threat of maritime 'terrorism'. This is a useful section, which grapples with the distinction between politically and

religiously motivated actions ('piracy in the name of God') and attacks with more purely economic goals. The site of this analysis is the southern Philippines and the area around Sabah.

Eklöf's suggestions for how piracy might be combated are balanced and slightly self-evident. Many of the states worst-hit by pirates are those least equipped and least able to afford to fight it. The international community (with the notable exception of Japan) seem reluctant to invest in training and capacity, as many of the large shipping companies judge their losses to be negligible compared with the costs of a full-scale anti-piracy campaign and piracy is rarely deemed to be an important security objective by governments. Eklöf concludes that far from being a cultural continuity from the original *orang laut* (sea nomads) indigenous to the region, today's 'pirates in paradise' are mainly opportunists, taking advantage of this apathy.

Although there has been a flurry of writing about piracy worldwide in recent years, relatively little has focused on this region or attempted to examine the phenomena in its cultural context (see Johnson and Valencia 2005, for an exception). Despite the necessarily limited detail of his case studies, this book is a very competent and succinct attempt at a full historical survey of the field, of the different types and modes of piratical attack and maritime marauding in the region.

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Johnson, Derek and Valencia, Mark (eds). *Piracy in Southeast Asia. Status, issues and responses*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2005.

KATHLEEN M. ADAMS

Art as politics: Re-crafting identities, tourism, and power in Tana Toraja, Indonesia

Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press. 286 pp. ISBN 978-0-8248-2999-5 (hb), 978-0-8248-3072-4 (pk US\$25); www.uhpress.hawaii.edu/

Reviewer: V.T. King

Kathleen Adams occupies an important place in the anthropology of tourism both within Southeast Asia and more widely. She has produced an impressive array of published papers on key issues in tourism studies, but particularly in the fields of identity and representation, ethnic and domestic tourism, material culture, cultural change and commoditisation, and globalisation. She first set foot in Tana Toraja in 1984 and has returned several times since in the 1980s and 1990s; this extended contact gives her the advantage of being able to trace the considerable transformations in South Sulawesi over a relatively long period of time and to engage in mature reflection on these. She has also kept in close contact with her adoptive family and her close friends in Ke'te' Kesu', a

Sa'dan Toraja community which has an established reputation as a focus of tourism interest and activity. She has also maintained contact with a large number of scholars of Indonesian and specifically Torajan culture, many of whom have commented on various drafts or sections of her present book. *Art as politics* is the culmination of this long and intimate connection with the Sa'dan Toraja. We should note here that the book is about certain communities among the Sa'dan Toraja where tourism has been especially important, and it is not about all Toraja. Of course, 'not all Toraja have extended contact with tourists or the tourism industry' (p.219).

What is especially attractive about the book is not just that it is written in a very engaging and absorbing way (anthropology monographs have a tendency to dullness), but that Adams takes us on her journey of personal discovery from when she first encountered the Toraja living and working in the provincial capital, Makassar, and on her first long bus journey into the highlands, to the cassette tape message from her adopted brother, Ambe' Landang, and his news in 2001 that his and Adams's village, Ke'te Kesu', had been registered for candidacy as a World Heritage Site. Her account of her evening tutorials with her adoptive father, Ne' Duma (a pseudonym), gives an intriguing insight into the nature of anthropological research. One more recent dimension of anthropological work which Adams explores is the ways in which an anthropologist, as a recognised expert

on culture, is drawn into the politics of identity and in local processes of status and power competition, particularly in the context of tourism interest and the desire to enhance the position, authenticity and antiquity of one's one family and community in the eyes of tourists. 'The Toraja... study the anthropological images of themselves ... [and these images] and the stereotypes surrounding our professional concerns are invariably consumed, digested and reworked, and at times rejected by those whose lives we strive to understand' (pp. 19, 20; and see pp. 132-35, 207, 210-11). This personal narrative and close social and cultural engagement enable the reader to tackle the more theoretically oriented parts of the book with renewed vigour and ambition as Adams weaves the stories of her personal fieldwork experiences into her reflections on concepts and analysis.

What I also find interesting in this book is the discussion of anthropology's engagement with tourism. 'Both tourism and anthropology thrive on exotic imagery' (p. 20). Not only have the Toraja been exposed to mass tourism since the 1970s, and are second only to the Balinese in their touristic profile in Indonesia but, in part because of this exposure, they have also been subject to what one might call 'mass anthropology'. Tourists and anthropologists tend to end up in the same out-of-the-way places. The Toraja have been the subject of major studies by, among many others, Elizabeth Coville, Eric Crystal, Jeannine Koubi, Hetty Nooy-Palm, Toby Volkman, Roxanna

Waterson and Shinji Yamashita. So intense has this interest been that it has also evoked a very positive response on the part of local scholars who have provided detailed ethnographic material on their own culture. This is in addition to a massive outpouring of popular and semi-popular tourist-oriented literature and imagery produced both by the Toraja and outsiders; these highland people have been depicted as 'touristic *primadonas*' and 'heavenly kings' living in an Indonesian Eden, 'in harmony with nature'. What is more this imagery began to be created from the early years of the 20th century when the Toraja were already being 'museumised' by outsiders and their arts 'showcased' (p. 78).

Following the formal establishment of Dutch rule in Tana Toraja in 1906, Christian missions were soon established, and the successful conversion of the majority of Toraja to Christianity was to provide an increasingly important element in their identity. It also provided the opportunity for sustained Dutch scholarly work, particularly undertaken by missionaries, so that, unlike many other outer island populations, the Toraja were very well documented prior to their encounter with anthropologists and tourists. The outstanding work of N. Adriani and Albert Kruyt, Th. van den End and H. van der Veen immediately comes to mind. So is there more to be done? Adams tells us that the study of the relationships between identity politics and artistic imagery has been relatively neglected up to now,

specifically the interconnections between multiple Toraja identities (rank, class, ethnic, religious, national, transnational, but not, interestingly, gender, which deserves a book of its own [p.223]). These identities are drawn from their own history, traditional religion and family heritage, and from Christianity, as well as from the Toraja encounter with other Indonesians, government representatives and international tourists.

Adams demonstrates convincingly that artistic creations and their associated narratives and meanings are used to express, affirm, debate, negotiate, contest, control, rethink, reframe and transform these different dimensions of identity, and to 'navigate' Toraja relationships with others (particularly the lowland Muslim Bugis and Makassarese, the representatives of the national and provincial government and foreign tourists). She argues further that Toraja art is often 'enmeshed', in particular, in interpersonal relationships based primarily on social inequality or hierarchy. She therefore focuses on 'how art objects can constitute sites for the articulation and negotiation of various hierarchical identities and relations' (p.9). These objects provide an extraordinarily flexible medium for dispute and struggle because of 'their very ability to maintain ambiguity and carry multiple meanings' (ibid.).

Adams's focus is on the primary elements of Toraja art and culture, which are the targets of tourism promotion as well: the elaborately

embellished ancestral homes (*tongkonan*) as microcosms of the universe, and the carved wooden effigies of the dead (*tau-tau*) placed in dramatic cliff-side graves. She also examines the elaborate funeral rituals involving animal sacrifice, and new or revised symbols of identity which relate the local to the national (a song-writing festival, Christian sermons, decorated gateway arches, banners, museum displays, and other carvings and artistic productions). Traditionally the *tongkonan* and *tau-tau* were reserved for the Toraja elite but, under the influence of tourism, they have become national and global icons of Toraja culture, and symbols of a pan-Toraja identity which is accessible to those outside the elite rank. Although Adams also refers to the process of what Michel Picard has referred to in a Balinese context as the 'touristification' of a culture, it seems that the cultural transformations in Toraja have been much more complex and multi-dimensional than those in Bali. However, it is clear that some of the effects of tourism on the Toraja, as among the Balinese, are broadly the same. As tourism brings Toraja culture into the international spotlight it acts to generate pride in those who carry and express it; it produces positive self-recognition of ethnic, cultural and personal worth whilst bringing in much-needed income; and, importantly it serves to bring impetus and new energy to artistic production and cultural performance.

The downside of tourism among the Toraja has been, among others, the trade

in and theft of traditional artefacts, especially the mortuary effigies, which have become aesthetic objects of commercial value; Adams discovered some of these from her own fieldwork area in an up-market Seattle antique gallery. More worrying has been the loss of local control over items, symbols and performances which are then appropriated and hybridised as 'cultural pastiches' by others for commercial purposes, and the 'troubling images' of the loss of Toraja cultural authenticity (p. 70). However, Adams also demonstrates amply that the Toraja are not passive victims in this encounter with outsiders but that they have drawn on them, 'in efforts to enhance their own local authority, prestige, or power' (p. 23). Not only are many Toraja 'active strategists and ingenious cultural politicians', but artists have also adapted and transformed various elements of Toraja material culture to meet the needs of tourism and to negotiate, challenge and restate their shifting conceptions of themselves in a modernising and globalising world and in one in which the pressures and influence of the Indonesian state are ever present.

An area which I have argued merits much more attention than it has hitherto in the anthropology of tourism, is the role of individuals or agents in the initiation, development and display of culture for tourism purposes. Adams through her case-material of such actors as the late Ne' Duma, and his artistic son Ambe' Landang, and the skilled carvers Ne' Lindo and Lolo,

demonstrates admirably what an important contribution individual initiative brings to cultural tourism. In the context of globalisation especially it is important to address and understand 'the extent to which individuals have possibilities for altering their worlds' (p. 28). Adams shows us what motivated, intelligent and enterprising people can achieve in a changing and uncertain political and economic environment.

Overall the Sa'dan Toraja come to life in this sympathetic, richly painted, and authoritative portrait, which is enhanced by some beautifully reproduced colour plates, including the striking and realistic *tau-tau* image on the front cover of the book. Adams's study makes a major contribution to the anthropology of tourism and to the understanding of cultural politics in Southeast Asia. More than this it adds significantly to that body of work, now well-represented in Indonesia, on cultural flows and transformations among minority populations at the margins and border-zones of the Javanese-dominated nation-state.

SOMCHAI PHATHARATHANUNTH

Civil society and democratization: Social movements in Northeast Thailand

Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2006. 251 pp.

ISBN: 8791114381 (hb £42), 8791114853

(pb £16.99); <http://www.niaspress.dk/>

Reviewer: Gerard Clarke

University of Wales (Swansea)

Analysis of Southeast Asian politics remains alarmingly state-centric and this volume offers a valuable corrective with a significant exploration of two of the most important social movements in Southeast Asia over the last two decades. Spatially, the book focuses on the distinctive *Phak Isan* (Isan region) in Northeast Thailand, with Somchai explaining the contested nature of this geographical construct. To young educated urban Thais, in particular, the term 'Isan' captures the increasingly Thai identity of the region as its Lao character diminishes while to social activists and 'progressive' farmers it captures the distinct ethnic character of the region and the social marginalisation of the region's poor in the context of a highly centralised Thai state. Organisationally, it focuses on the Small-Scale Farmers Assembly of Isan (SSFAI), a social movement established in 1992 and which by 1995 had become 'the most powerful farmers' movement in Thailand', and the Assembly of the Poor (AOP), founded in 1995 as a breakaway, in many respects, from the SSFAI and designed to incorporate the urban and non-Isan poor. Although the

book focuses on the SSFAI, it devotes significant attention to the formation of the AOP and to the controversy surrounding the competing organisational forms and political strategies of both.

The book offers a worm's eye, rather than a bird's eye, view of this organisational terrain, with a detailed account of tactical debates and personality clashes within a particular segment of the Thai left. As such it will appeal primarily to readers with detailed interests in Thai politics, including relations between Bangkok and the Isan region and between political parties, social movements and the myriad of non-governmental organisations that have stepped onto the political stage since the early 1990s. Readers with broader interests in Southeast Asian politics, however, will also be interested in Somchai's argument that the consolidation of electoral democracy in Thailand (and by extension, elsewhere in Southeast Asia) has opened up relatively restricted channels of broad-based political participation, stimulating the proliferation of social movements that organise and mobilise social groups long marginalised from effective political participation.

Readers with comparative interests, however, will also be interested in Somchai's account of the distinctive dynamics of Thai social movements, especially the political debates that shape their organisational characters and their political strategies. Somchai,

for instance, examines the conflict between the advocates of the 'community culture' and 'political economy' approaches to mobilising social movements in support of the poor, a valuable supplement to the debate between Jonathan Rigg and Kevin Hewison in *World Development* in the early 1990s. According to Somchai, 'community culture' is a populist, anti-capitalist and anti-western approach that disputes the centrality of class in defining and mobilising the Thai poor, advocating instead classless 'communities' of rural peasants devoted to small-scale and self-reliant agricultural production. Significantly, it advocates that farmer organisations refrain from participating in electoral politics, for instance by forming alliances with political parties or supporting particular candidates for electoral office. The political economy approach, in contrast rejects as utopian the idea of a subsistence economy isolated from the market economy and the forces of contemporary capitalism. It argues that poor farmers should organise their own political party or at least that they should directly participate in electoral contests, engaging with contending political parties or politicians and with elected governments.

'Community culture' and 'political economy' are used as ciphers to explain the evolution of the SSFAI and the AOP. Between 1993 and 1995, for instance, Somchai argues, SSFAI achieved enormous success following its successful opposition to *Kho Jo Ko*, the

government's plans to commercialise and intensify agricultural production in degraded forest reserves, displacing subsistence farmers with insecure titles. During this period, advocates of the 'community culture' and 'political economy' approaches worked in harmony but from 1995, the SSFAI was consumed by conflict and splits, and weakened further by the formation of the AOP. SSFAI, Somchai argues, was riven by cross-cutting cleavages, between advocates of compromise and confrontation with the government, between advocates of improved land rights or enhanced income for farmers and between advocates of a democratic and decentralised coalition and of a coherent organisation with strong central leadership. These conflicts and splits had their peculiar origins in the dynamics of Thai politics but they speak eloquently of the dilemmas of social movements in other parts of Southeast Asia, including Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines. Despite the splits and conflicts, Somchai argues, SSFAI was enormously successful in expanding opportunities for farmers and farmer organisations to participate in politics through multiple routes, an argument that provides valuable insights for activists and academics concerned with the potential of civil society as an arena of political empowerment and social inclusion.

SAW SWEE-HOCK & JOHN WONG (eds)
Southeast Asian studies in China
 Singapore: ISEAS, and East Asian
 Institute, National University of
 Singapore, 2007; 204 pp (hb US\$29.90);
 ISBN-13: 978-981-230-404-9; ISBN-10: 981-
 230-404-5; <http://www.iseas.edu.sg/>

Reviewer: AVM Horton
Bordesley, Worcestershire

This collection of ten essays arose out of a bilingual (Mandarin and English) conference held in Singapore on 12-14 January 2006 with the theme 'Southeast Asian Studies in China: Challenges and Prospects'. Organised jointly by the ISEAS and the East Asian Institute, the colloquium was designed to promote 'a better understanding' between the inhabitants of ASEAN and the PRC. *Southeast Asian studies in China* comprises revised versions of the English-language papers presented at the symposium.

The scene is set by Professor Saw Swee-Hock, whose 'review' (pp 1-7) summarises the ground to be covered at greater length in the chapters that follow. His co-editor, Professor John Wong, in a piece jointly-written with Dr Lai Hongyi, then analyses 'Changing academic challenges of the South-East Asian Studies field in China' (pp. 8-29).

The profession has been shaped by two overriding factors: firstly, China's relations with South-East Asia and, secondly, the domestic political and

academic environment within the Middle Kingdom itself (pp. 2, 9).

Modern Chinese scholarly engagement with Southeast Asia dates back to the early 20th century when university courses on overseas Chinese and the history of *Asia Tenggara* were taught for the first time. Since the establishment of the communist regime in 1949 Southeast Asian Studies (SEAS) has suffered fluctuating fortunes, but is currently enjoying an upswing. In the 1950s and early 1960s, coinciding with the era of the Bandung Conference (1955) when excellent relations subsisted between the PRC and Indonesia in particular, four institutes relating to Southeast Asia were established, two in Guangzhou and one in both Xiamen and Kunming. Policy-related research units were associated with the central government in Beijing and the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. Paralysis ensued during the Cultural Revolution. Rebuilding took place following the rise to power of Deng Xiaoping in the late 1970s and the fostering of better ties with the *Nanyang*. Rapid development eventuated in the 1990s, as the PRC's links with Southeast Asia improved yet further. 'Professionalisation' and 'diversification' have been the watchwords throughout the present decade.

What are the challenges? They are manifold and would include a lack of library resources (the CSEAS at Xiamen University has only 52,000 items, barely a tenth of the holding at ISEAS in Singapore); deficient funding (which inhibits field work, attendance at

conferences overseas, and academic exchanges); a dearth of talent (the best thinkers tend to give priority to the United States, Europe, and Japan rather than to Southeast Asia); and poor ability in indigenous Southeast Asian languages (most Chinese SEAS publications carry few citations in such tongues). Since much of the output is written in Chinese, moreover, it remains unread by the outside world; it is 'important', therefore, for the PRC's Southeast Asianists to publish in English (p. 41); but this, in turn, would entail the danger of infection with an 'Anglo-Saxon bias' (p. 70). It is also felt that there is a 'lack of academic rigour' and that researchers need to increase their 'theoretical depth and empirical width'. A large proportion of emerging scholars have 'very limited training' in social sciences; alas, 'most of them have only the skills and mentality for doing history' (p. 69).

A particular drawback is the PRC's undemocratic political system. For many years scholars there were 'shackled' by 'Soviet research methodology', 'Marxist orthodoxy', and the need to 'toe the official government line' (pp. 13, 14). Even today there are 'some forbidden areas for research' (p. 86). Freedom of expression remains circumscribed to some extent: 'no views opposite to the government position', for example, 'are allowed in ... South China Sea studies', i.e. concerning the Paracel and Spratly disputes (p. 187).

What are the prospects? Opportunities for improvement abound and, overall, there are grounds for optimism. By 2004

ASEAN had become the PRC's fourth-largest trading partner. A Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) was reached between the two parties in 2002 for implementation by 2010. Furthermore, the number of Chinese tourists to ASEAN more than doubled between 1995 and 2000 (p. 15). Such intensified ties have served to stimulate a rapid expansion of curiosity among PRC scholars about Southeast Asia (p. 13).

The research focus has changed, however. An analysis of articles published in two leading PRC journals between 1992 and 2004 revealed that intellectuals are becoming more attracted by ASEAN as a unit rather than its component parts. Other topics of concern were 'ties of China with Southeast Asia', 'Overseas Chinese', and 'Southeast Asian Studies'. Of individual countries, Indonesia has enticed most attention, followed by Vietnam, Singapore, and Malaysia. Singapore is a particular inspiration for the Chinese elite: 'if Singapore can do it, why can't we?' (p. 71, n10). At the opposite pole, Cambodia, Laos, and Brunei were deemed to be of little import. With regard to disciplines, attention to economic matters has been sharply declining, whilst politics, society, history, and overseas Chinese have all risen in importance. With the advance of China as an economic power, it is likely that more attention will be given to studies of this area. Political control over research is being relaxed somewhat and academic standards are rising (p. 26). Dr Tang Shiping and Dr Zhang Jie (chapter 4) are especially bullish: 'We can see only

good times ahead for SEAS in China' (p. 69).

The compendium under review covers a wide range of subject matter. The fourth chapter, for example, attempts to grasp 'how and why China's SEAS has been shaped by the overall institutional environment' (p. 54). Chapter 5 deals with curriculum development and summarises the progress made in the past two decades (p. 75), whilst chapter 6 argues that the dominant approach in SEAS has slowly become less Sino-centric and more orientated towards the social sciences (p. 98). The seventh chapter looks at the achievements, challenges, and outlook of SEAS in Yunnan, which borders Myanmar, Laos, and Vietnam. Chapter 8 compares SEAS in the PRC and Taiwan, whilst the long ninth chapter (pp. 134-71) examines 'themes and evolving approaches' to the Overseas Chinese. The final chapter discusses the legal and political issues surrounding international claims to contested archipelagoes in the South China Sea.

In sum *Southeast Asian studies in China* is intended as a follow-up to *ASEAN-China relations: Realities and prospects* (ISEAS, 2005), edited by Saw Swee-Hock, Sheng Lijun, and Chin Kin-Wah, and might also be regarded as a companion volume to *Southeast Asian studies: Debates and new directions* (ISEAS, 2006), edited by Cynthia Chou and Vincent Houben. Although there are some infelicities, the book provides a clear and wide-ranging picture of the history and structure of Southeast Asian studies in China.

CYNTHIA CHOU & VINCENT HOUBEN (eds)

Southeast Asian studies: Debates and new directions

Leiden: IIAS; Singapore: ISEAS, 2006. 206 pp. ISBN-13: 978-981-230-385-1, ISBN-10 981-230-385-5, (hb US\$29.90). ISBN-13: 978-981-230-384-4, ISBN-10 981-230-384-7, (pb, US\$19.90); <http://bookshop.iseas.edu.sg>

Reviewer: AVM Horton

This helpful collection of nine splendid essays, plus the editors' introduction, is based on the proceedings of a conference staged at Singapore in 2003. The symposium brings together the distinct perspectives of leading anthropologists, historians, political scientists, and linguists from a broad range of countries. Some contributors adopt an extra-disciplinary approach, whilst others prefer to focus on the applicability to Southeast Asia of theoretical developments within their own speciality (p. 17).

Scholars of Southeast Asia have given many concepts to the academy, such as 'galactic polity', 'geobody', and 'thick description' (p. 1); yet there persists an aura of marginalisation, whether institutional, linguistic, geographical, or disciplinary. This book raises delicate issues about the definition of Southeast Asia, the validity of area studies (particularly in an age of globalisation), the theory and practice of any particular discipline, and the future of academic centres. Other concerns include the lack

of student demand for the product, the importance of an extra-regional comparative approach, and 'pure research' versus 'taking the government's shilling'. The authors also reflect upon who might have the right to study Southeast Asia (and where), who deserves to rank as a 'credible' social scientist, and what might be the 'minimum requirements' for becoming a Southeast Asianist. The sense of optimism in Southeast Asia itself is contrasted with western gloom.

All of the chapters are committed, lively, and well-written; the result, on balance, is an impressive, thoughtful, and at times passionate forum on the future of Southeast Asian studies, both in the region and in the wider world. On the other hand, the tone is normative and didactic (not to say dictatorial) in places. The law is laid down on the 'essential' research agenda and what is the 'right' approach. Anyone might be driven to wonder when the election took place.

Several writers are preoccupied with status. Senior Fellow Robert Cribb offers an eloquent analysis of 'domains of power', 'circles of esteem', and 'strength in numbers'. Professor VT King is envious of the resources held by institutes in Southeast Asia itself and foresees that western scholars are likely to decline in significance as those in the region proper come to dominate the profession (he has no objection to the latter trend); whilst Professor Duncan McCargo frets about how to keep up with mainstream theory and local knowledge based on fieldwork, and at the same time

being required to meet teaching, administrative, and family commitments.

The concept of 'Southeast Asia' (*Tonan Ajia*) was already being used in Japan prior to World War I, long before South-East Asia Command (1943-46) and the exigencies of the Cold War gave it currency in the west. (It might be observed here, perhaps, that SEAC did not coincide with what would be regarded as 'South-East Asia' nowadays; Borneo and the Philippines, for example, came under the aegis of South-West Pacific Command). The subsequent rise of ASEAN has served 'to give some kind of separate identity and inter-connectedness to the region' (p. 33). The Siamese and Malay languages were being taught in Tokyo as early as 1911. Yet the Japanese contribution to the field has been overlooked because of Anglophone monolingualism: 'the flow of information and knowledge is in large part one-directional where Japanese language scholarship consumes much information without corresponding output to the non-Japanese audience' (p. 72). In consequence, Professor Yoko Hayami (chapter 4) would like to see much more 'multi-laterality' in Southeast Asian studies.

Research Fellow Martin Platt (chapter 5) urges that a 'vital and productive approach to Southeast Asian Studies can only be based on an appreciation for the fundamental importance of language, including foreign language ability' (p. 98); Associate Professor Chou (chapter 7) advocates a 'heuristic approach'; Professor Houben (chapter 8) appeals for

more 'history at the interstices' (p. 152); whilst the volume concludes with a fascinating paper by Associate Professor Timothy P. Barnard, in which he seeks to show how P. Ramlee (1929-73) was 'influenced by, and was an active participant in, the vibrant social and political context of his time' (p. 167).

Finally, it might be tentatively advanced that researchers inclined to accept the agenda prescribed by this book risk finding themselves marooned sooner or later; for a different bandwagon, undetected thus far, might already be rolling. After all, if there are 'new directions', the implication must surely be that somebody has abandoned the old ones. Far better, then, for scholars to work out their own way forward.

Meanwhile, this monograph certainly leaves the reader with much to ponder; and all the contributors should be thanked for that.

SUDHIR DEVARE

India & Southeast Asia. Towards security convergence

Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2006.

253 pp. ISBN 981 230 344 8 (pb

US\$19.90); ISBN 981 230 345 6 (hb

US\$39.90); <http://www.iseas.edu.sg/>

Reviewer: Alexey D. Muraviev
Curtin University of Technology
Australia

It is an old cliché to describe international politics as a grand chess game. Much has changed in the past 17 years. Some key figures were lost or moved to the periphery; others that were of secondary significance are rapidly assuming commanding roles. Even the global board itself is experiencing a steady transformation: the dynamics of the Asia-Pacific-Indian Ocean region (APIOR) often overshadow the Euro-Atlantic zone.

Stating that APIOR is undergoing a major strategic transformation is an understatement. The area that encompasses more than half of the world's population and considerable natural resources, the area that commands vital arteries and sees the rise of major international giants, the area that is so vast geographically, and yet is so tight geo-strategically, has turned into a litmus paper, which determines who is going to play leading roles in the grand game of the 21st century.

Southeast Asia, the gate keeper of the crossroads between the Pacific and the Indian oceans, whilst demonstrating greater autonomy and strategic intent of its own, is becoming an arena of a power competition of the 'old guard' represented by the traditional power brokers of the region (United States and Russia) and the 'new guard' made of major Asian giants, notably China and India. Devare's monograph provides an invaluable professional insight into India's Southeast Asian agenda and factors that bring the two geo-political entities close to each other.

With the eyes of the Asia-Pacific and the larger international community being fixed on the growing strength of China, India as another Asian power tower has been underlooked. India's regional rivalry with neighbouring Pakistan in the shadow of China and concern about domestic problems, and recognition of the growing importance of the nation's remarkable economic growth at the same time, created conflicting analysis about its future role in regional and global politics. For example, back in 1998, one of Europe's leading geopolitical experts, Alpo Rusi (1998: 72), gave a cautious prognosis about India's future, especially in relation to the Chinese power ambitions:

India is politically weak – conflicts between national groups, religions and castes are a major structural problem. A weak India will remain isolated, a more assertive one risks running into conflict with China. India should perhaps

aim for a regional role in South Asia compatible with China's design.

This perception of India as the South Asia-only super player has often led to an under-appreciation of the dynamic changes that will be affecting this nation and its strategic approach in the foreseeable future. By offering the reader a good blend of empirical evidence and careful analysis Devare uncovers a long transition of India's political mindset from being 'Pakistan-centric' to endorsing the Look East policy.

The author takes time explaining the rationale for the development of a strategic partnership between India and the Southeast Asian community. This analysis is of particular relevance as the author draws comparisons with similar developments between the region and China. India's growing appeal as the booming economic giant of Asia and the prospects of mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of science and technology, investment and trade, common security agendas, including the need to develop a comprehensive energy security strategy, the importance of presence of Indian ethnic communities in a number of Southeast Asian nations, all these contributing factors suggest that India has bright prospects and a strong role to play in regional politics.

When it comes to analysing international security developments in APIOR, the examination of the evolving

post-September 11 (2001) security environment is a must. Consequently, it is no surprise that Devare offers thorough investigation of common security challenges to both India and Southeast Asian communities, and what his country has to offer to the region. The problems with the Afghanistan-Pakistan security nexus as a continuous major terrorist front and one of the key centres of the Islamic terror web in Asia, threats to regional security and stability of local regimes from separatists and Islamic extremists, natural disaster management for regional partners (the problem of which arose soon after the devastating 2003 tsunami disaster), are all addressed in the monograph.

A separate issue is the problem of maritime security in the Indian Ocean and around archipelagic zones. The strategic significance of the Indian Ocean as a vital transit route of energy supplies and other critical commodities, as a rich resource centre, the critical importance of Southeast Asian choke points and focal areas (such as Singapore, for example), make the analysis of regional maritime security highly relevant. The problems of naval activity, especially growing Chinese interests in the Bay of Bengal area, security of sea lines of communications, asymmetric threats at sea such as piracy and maritime terrorism, naval cooperation to address these challenges, and India's contribution to the region's efforts, are all discussed in the book.

Finally, the book examines existing intra-state mechanisms responsible for

confidence building and security improving dialogues, commerce and trade, both first and second tier, ways on how India contributes to this communication framework, as well as India's interactions with global players – United States, China and Russia – in the context of its Look East policy.

This book should be of great interest to scholars and students of South Asian, Southeast Asian and Pacific studies, professional analysts and policy advisors as well as the general public wanting to be better informed about contemporary international politics. This is a timely publication that helps to reassess India as the emerging great power, its growing place in APIOR affairs, the pragmatism of Indian contemporary political thinking and the need to reassess the role this nation will play in regional and global politics in the next 50 years.

Reference

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JEAN MICHAUD

Historical dictionary of the peoples of the Southeast Asian massif

Lanham MD: Scarecrow Press, 2006. 408 pp. ISBN: 081085466X (hb US\$85); <http://www.scarecrowpress.com/>

**Reviewer: Monica Janowski,
University of Greenwich**

This is the fourth book in the series on Historical Dictionaries of Peoples and Cultures published by the Scarecrow Press. It appears to be aimed at a hybrid market including the general public as well as academics who may be looking for an overview of the area or for references on specific topics. The book includes a fairly lengthy reference section, although it has certain unexpected omissions; to take one example, Hanks' book *Rice and Man*, published originally in 1972, is not included.

A chronology of events pertinent to the area covered, and maps of the area, are included at the beginning of the dictionary. These are followed by an introduction. Here, the scope of the dictionary is presented, an overview of the history of the area including migrations into the area is provided, and outline characteristics of the peoples living in the area are discussed.

The area covered by the dictionary includes southern and western Sichuan, all of Guizhou and Yunnan, western and northern Guangxi, western

Guangdong, most of northern Burma and a small part of India, the north and west of Thailand, most of Laos above the Mekong valley, northern and central Vietnam along the Annam Cordillera and the north and east fringes of Cambodia. It does not cover the areas inhabited by 'scheduled tribes' in Assam, Manipur, Mizoram and Nagaland, in India, or the 'Nagas' living in Burma; Tibet; or the highland parts of peninsular Malaysia.

Entries in the dictionary are of many different types, including ethnonyms; institutions; details of prominent local leaders; and topics ranging from 'messianic movements' to 'land tenure' and 'health and healing'. Cross references are provided between entries. Of necessity, the entries are relatively brief and little detailed discussion can be provided. However, there is interesting discussion within some of the entries.

The author is to be commended for undertaking a task which is challenging, since he has undertaken to cover a vast area, a long time scale, and a very broad sweep of topics within a very limited space. He has provided a useful compendium of information about the highland societies of Southeast Asia – covering a staggering 80 million people.

MIKAEL GRAVERS (ed.)

Exploring ethnic diversity in Burma

Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2007. 304 pp.

ISBN 8791114969 (pb) £16.99;

<http://www.niaspress.dk/>

Reviewer: Robert H. Taylor, London

This book is the product of a stimulating panel held at the international Myanmar/Burma Studies conference in Gothenburg, Sweden, in September 2002. Mikael Gravers, who convened the original panel and edited this volume, is to be thanked for undertaking what was clearly a significant task. The volume is to be welcomed as few topics are more important for trying to understand contemporary Myanmar's politics than ethnicity and its changing consequences for maintaining peace and stability in a society which has been torn by armed conflict for more than 50 years. The variety of papers presented in this volume, and their differing approaches to the topic, are indicative of the difficulties which arise in trying to understand ethnicity in the Myanmar setting. Both empirically and conceptually, comprehending what is happening on the ground and in people's heads in any part of such a diverse country is extremely problematic.

Editor Gravers opens the volume with a lengthy discussion of current developments along the Thai-Myanmar border and the historical background to

the situation. This reveals the complexities of the topic rather well and he provides some interesting insights. However, his approach also makes clear the difficulty of understanding what is going on because claims and counterclaims are being made in a highly charged propaganda war which has in many ways replaced the hot war in the jungles. For example, he suggests that the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army which split from the Karen National Union (KNU) in 1994 would be likely to cooperate with the KNU in future, but there is no evidence that that is the case. Conceptually, he misconstrues J.S. Furnivall's theory of the plural society in British Burma as applying to the indigenous ethnic mix rather than, as Furnivall intended, to the consequences of colonially induced immigration and resulting religious and cultural diversity. The map provided on the ethnic groups of Burma (p. xx) is also highly misleading as it is impossible in such a projection to show the great ethnic mix which exists in many areas of the country. There are other points in his introduction which this reviewer would dispute, but the author does provide some useful data, some of which was new to me.

Mandy Sadan's very thorough and thoughtful essay on the category 'Kachin' in colonial and post-colonial Burma is a model of careful analysis and reasoning. She shows how difficult it is to essentialise ethnic categories in Myanmar and supports her argument with solid research, correcting errors made by others including this reviewer.

Her discussion is based on linguistic expertise which sets a high standard for other scholars. Unlike much popular and scholarly discourse on politics and ethnicity in Myanmar, her essay is refreshingly free of extraneous distorting debates and issues. The same can be said for the next essay by Sandra Dudley on the 'reshaping of Karenniness in exile'. Carefully constrained to the evidence base she could access among Karenni living in a refugee camp in Thailand, Dudley examines the multiple motives and sometimes unexpected results from the educational experiences of Karenni refugees as they plan for their varied futures.

These two high quality essays are rounded off by a useful summary and reminder of the issues involved in the development of ethnicity theories in Myanmar and elsewhere in Southeast Asia. Professor Chris Lehman, its author, uses primarily evidence drawn from his own research on Karenni (Kayah) and Kachin to illustrate his points. Lehman was an early pioneer in developing cognitive theory to inform debates about the meaning of ethnicity in social and political action and the literature has been greatly enriched by his work. Sadan and Dudley clearly drawn on his work. Lehman's contribution to this volume was solicited late in the process of its preparation and in what is perhaps a unique occurrence, he extols the virtues of the book in a blurb on the back cover.

Karin Dean's contribution, 'Mapping the Kachin political landscape:

constructing, contesting and crossing borders', uses language rather as the late Jackson Pollock used a paint brush. There is perhaps a place for post-modernist geography, but I am uncertain what it is. Whereas the earlier and all but one of the following essays in this volume are careful in their use of language and evidence, definitions and terms, Dean is rather all over the place. Sadan's careful delineation of the problems involved with essentialising the term Kachin is largely ignored in Dean's discussion of Kachin from Yunnan to Myanmar. Ashley South, who has written extensively on the politics of the Mon and other ethnic groups in Myanmar, continues his analysis in this volume with an examination of the consequences of the ceasefire agreement between the Mon New State Party and the military government in Naypyitaw. The social space the ceasefire agreement created, and the consequent armed peace, has allowed the emergence of an incipient civil society in the form of new organisations and actors among the Mon and other groups. While this has yet to result in political reconciliation, one can but hope that time will allow for the establishment of the trust that is required to bring that about.

Takantani Michio, a Japanese authority on the Shan whose work is not as well known in the west as it deserves to be, has contributed a careful discussion of social, cultural and religious change among the Shan from colonialism through to the present. He detects two major changes. One is that the varieties

of practices that previously existed within and between Shan communities have become increasingly homogenised and standardised. A second is that what is seen as essentially Shan practice has been increasingly influenced by Bamar styles, tastes and practices. While the agency of that change may sometimes be the government, there are clearly larger social processes at work which lead to such changes. This is an essay which repays close examination.

The final two essays sit uneasily with most of what went before. Lian H. Sakhong's 'Christianity and Chin identity' lacks the empirical grounding and theoretical rigour of Sadan, Dudley, Lehman, South and Michio. He may well be correct in arguing that Christianity has made a Chin identity from the linguistically diverse and spatially distant people in India and Myanmar that British and American missionaries called Chins. Certainly the argument by Michio on the Shan would suggest that this is possible. However, the evidence for such a claim is lacking and as the General Secretary of the China National League for Democracy (Exile) and of the United Nationalities League for Democracy (Liberated Areas), one rather suspects there is a degree of wishful thinking in his account. The difficulty in defining with any precision what is a Chin is ignored by Sakhong as is any discussion of evidence which runs contrary to his thesis.

The final chapter by Gravers is on the Karen. He discusses the question of the conversion of about 15 to 20 per cent of

the Karen population to Christianity and the impact this has had on Karen ethnic identity in Myanmar. Gravers has written extensively on this topic in the past and adds new data in this essay. The extrapolation that the Karen are the Christian Karen, or the 'mode of homogenizing categorization caused many problems during the independence negotiations in 1947', is unarguable as the best of this collection of essays make clear. Indeed, both before and long after 1947, that point could have been made. While most academic theorising and historical analysis on the role in ethnicity in Myanmar's politics and society now takes that into account, politicians and generals, both Myanmar and foreign, have yet to understand the point.

DONALD M. SEEKINS

Burma and Japan since 1940: From 'co-prosperity' to 'quiet dialogue'

Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2007. 224 pp. ISBN 978-8791114960; 8791114985 (pb £14.99); <http://www.niaspress.dk/>

Reviewer: Robert H. Taylor

This brief book reviews Japan's relations with Burma/Myanmar from just prior to the Second World War until 2006 in six chapters. Two concentrate on the War period, two on post-1988 Japanese attitudes toward military-governed Myanmar, with a discussion in the middle of Japan's 37 years of providing

'war reparations' and economic aid to U Nu's and U Ne Win's governments. The slight final 'Conclusions' adds little to what comes before. The volume is useful to have as the author, who is a professor of Southeast Asian Studies at Meio University in Okinawa, has access to Japanese sources which are unavailable to most western scholars.

In a volume of fewer than 160 pages of text, any author would have to be selective in his or her account of 66 years of military and diplomatic history. However, Seekins' summary of Myanmar's politics during and after the Second World War is curiously distorted by his ignoring important aspects of that vital period. For example, the relationship between colonial Burma's last elected Premier, U Saw, and his Japanese backers is completely ignored in this account. Saw's contact with the Japanese at Lisbon in 1942, resulting in his spending the war years in a British prison in Uganda, surely deserves a mention in as much as Saw's initial rise to power was so greatly assisted by Japanese financial support. Similarly, ignoring the role of the Burma Communist Party in organising the anti-fascist Japanese resistance during the war and its subsequent involvement in the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League distorts the complex dynamics of Burmese politics during a crucial period. Consequently, the absence of the socialist and Communist political forces allows the author to overstate the importance of the army in shaping Yangon politics prior to 1962.

Furthermore, the author misreads the wartime head of state's memoir, Dr Ba Maw's *Breakthrough in Burma* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), resulting in a further distortion of history. Ba Maw on page 130 on his text does not mean that the Thirty Comrades, as Seekins claims on page 24, the group of young Burmese whom the Japanese trained as the core of the incipient Burma Independence Army (BIA), were chosen from one faction of the nationalist Do Bama Asi-ayon, but that the one faction of the Do Bama Asi-ayon which was affiliated with him in the pre-war Freedom Bloc *attempted* to recruit them from their own leftist faction. As Ba Maw makes clear, members of the Do Bama Asi-ayon from both the Ba Sein and Kodaw Hmaing factions arrived in Hainan for training. Ba Maw then goes on to lament how factionalism of this kind has plagued Burmese politics up to the time of his writing.

Seekins' strength is in his use of Japanese materials, allowing English readers an insight into how different Japanese view the role of their country in Burma's wartime politics. This is a helpful balance, though the author does not share the Japanese view that the BIA and other nationalist and leftist political forces unleashed by the war resulted in the country's liberation from colonialism. Rather, he sees the consequence of the Japanese support for Burmese nationalists as contributing to the rise of the military to power in Burma. The author makes his own personal attitudes towards con-temporary

Myanmar and its military government known through a number of *obiter dicta* throughout the text. One wonders, however, whether this has not rather distorted his picture of the complexities of Burmese politics. He is clearly in error when he suggests that there is no body of Burmese literature reflecting on the war and its meaning as there is in Japanese. There are a number of volumes of memoirs and novels as well as historical treatises on the war years written in Myanmar since 1945. Most of them point largely to the suffering that the people faced as a result of the country being fought over twice by two imperialist armies and the consequent economic destruction and administrative chaos that so badly affected people's lives.

The central chapter on Japanese reparations and aid is a subject that Seekins and others, particularly David Steinberg, have written on before. That Japan became Burma's largest aid donor and a major financial prop for Ne Win's Burmese Road to Socialism is impossible to dispute. Whether that aid benefited Japanese companies more than Burma is more difficult to appraise. Seekins' discussion of Japanese policy towards Myanmar since 1988, which he describes as 'Quiet Diplomacy', reveals the contradictory domestic political pressures within Japan on whether the country should follow the United States in applying economic sanctions to attempt to remove the current military government or whether aid and trade should be used to induce that government to change its behaviour.

The result is a degree of inconsistency in Japanese policy, but whether that inconsistency is any greater than that of any other country in dealing with the military regime in Naypyitaw is arguable.

SUSAN CONWAY

The Shan: Culture, art and crafts

Bangkok: River Books, 2006. 212 pp.

ISBN 974 9863 06 2 (hb US\$50/£35);

<http://www.riverbooksbk.com>

Reviewer: Fiona Kerlogue
Horniman Museum, London

This richly illustrated book contains a wealth of information about the material culture of the Shan. The main focus is on the 19th century and the strength of the book is the placement of the material in its social and political context.

The first section provides contextual information on the origins and geographical context of Shan life, drawing on data from the Shan chronicles. It goes on to describe the complicated social and political organisation of the Shan in the 19th century. An important factor in this period was the system of tribute and political allegiance which applied in relation to powers such as China and Burma. Some of the Shan states had significant relationships with Lan Na and Siam, while the influence of the French and the British also played a part.

The book's main focus is on dress. Male dress is considered at a variety of levels, from villagers to princes, revealing how it varied according to ethnic and political affiliation. In those states owing their loyalty to Burma or China, court dress was allocated to Shan princes either by the Burmese kings or the Governor of Yunnan acting under orders from Peking, so that the costume of Shan men, especially those of higher rank, became an important way of expressing allegiance as well as ethnicity and hierarchy. A section on tattooing and its magical significance is included here. Conway goes on to examine female dress, where migration and trade relations meant that some items of dress crossed ethnic and class lines. Ethnic distinctions can be drawn, however, and this section is largely organised by ethnic group.

The form and functioning of the Shan palaces is detailed, as well as the styles in which they were decorated. There are examples of royal seals, illustrations of furniture and furnishings and evidence from historical sources as to the regal paraphernalia and their uses. As the position of political powers altered, so did the social and political context in which artisans worked. Particular attention is given to aspects of textile crafts, including materials and their sources, techniques and equipment, but there are also sections on metalwork, lacquer and other crafts.

The focus of the final chapter is on trade, showing how certain ethnic groups specialised in the production of items from particular materials, trade

patterns within and beyond the Shan states, and how external relations affected local production as prices of raw materials rose and fell or as cheap imported goods became available.

The text is supported by a multitude of photographs, many illustrating examples of Shan costume, lacquerware, metalwork and other crafts, both archive and modern taken in the field. There are several useful maps, including some 19th century Shan examples, which provide insights into local perceptions of geography. One of the appendices, showing genealogies of some of the ruling families, is particularly illuminating. Others include one on local dyestuffs, one providing details of each of the Shan states in 19th century, another a short but useful glossary. Closer attention to the editing by the publisher would have enabled a tighter integration of text and visuals, but the abundance of illustration is one of the joys of the book.

Overall this is a fascinating book, which will be of great interest to museum curators, scholars and students of the material culture of Burma.

WILLIAM LANG DESSAINT AND AVOUNADO
NGWĀMA

*Parlons lissou. Introduction à une
civilisation tibéto-birmane*

Paris: L'Harmattan, 2006. 556 pp.

ISBN: 2-296-00141-6

Reviewer: Steve Daviau
Université Laval, Québec, Canada

For many years now, L'Harmattan has published a series of basic language skills manuals on minority languages which now runs over a hundred. The current book focuses on learning Lisu, a Sino-Tibetan language among the hundreds of ethnic minorities located in the Southeast Asian highlands (totalling over 80 million people).

The book is divided into three parts, followed by an appendix and a French-Lisu lexicon of more than 3,000 words. At the beginning of the book, under 'Phonologie et transcription', the authors reject the hieratic script and refer to the phonetical transcription system developed by Protestant missionaries and Chinese linguists (obviously unknown to the Lisu). They propose their own romanised transcription to facilitate the pronunciation for a French readership.

In the first part of the book which is divided into seven chapters and entitled 'La société et la culture lissou', they argue that the Lisu remained 'almost untouched' (p. 35) until the 1950s, and this isolation allowed the preservation

of their culture. The authors seem to ignore the fact that according to Chinese historiography, the Lisu area (Lijiang prefecture in Yunnan province) fell under Yuan administration from the 12th century onwards. For the authors, the Lisu (until recently isolated and fiercely independent) first appear in modern historiography with Guibault and Liotard's 'clandestine' (i.e. unofficial) scientific exploration in 1936 – from whom they borrow a phenotypical description fashionable at the time. The general tone of this introduction is Eurocentric in line with the colonial tradition of the French 'Grand Explorateurs' of whom Dessaint has been a member since 1997.

According to the authors the Lisu are found in areas stretching from Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Thailand to China which gives just a rather vague description of the location of the communities. The demographic data provided (India 1981, China 1990 and Thailand 1995) despite the fact that the book was published in 2006, suggest that the manuscript remained on the shelves without being updated prior to publication. The authors mention the various Lisu categories in the nation states where they are found – 'minority nationalities' in China, 'nationalities' in Myanmar, 'scheduled tribe' in India and 'mountainous tribes' in Thailand – but without referring to local terminology. This lack of accuracy suggests a disconnected image of the group and the reader is never made aware of the demographic weight of the Lisu, some 700,000 people.

The chapter with a title borrowed from P. Gourou's 'La civilisation du végétal' (1948), comprises an overview of natural resource use and then considers material culture, clothing and the housing characteristics of the group. Chapter 3 is on subsistence economy and Lisu livelihood: production system, hunting and gathering, trade patterns, and so on. Chapter 4 focuses on the clan and lineage system providing an analysis of the social organisation based on three institutions: household, clan and community; fundamental but unstable units that are further described in chapter 5. Chapters 6 and 7 entitled 'Religion of nature' and 'Join the ancestors' end the first part of the book.

In the second part (chapter 8) the authors finally analyse the grammatical structure of Lisu language which is relatively homogenous within the Sino-Tibetan language family; and an inventory is presented. Chapters 9 to 14 concisely present Lisu grammatical structure: sentences, names, adverbs, adjectives, etc. The third part of the book (chapters 15 to 21) presents oral material and a range of recurrent themes in the Lisu oral tradition: myths, stories, proverbs, poetry, and finally conversations in the form of contextualised dialogues. The appendix in the second part of the book records diverse notions: measures, kinship terminology, terms borrowed from other languages, numbers, and so on.

Parlons lissou is more than a standard linguistic manual because it offers ethnographic details. It is a valuable

introduction on the Lisu to a readership unfamiliar with ethnography. Nevertheless, it is a pity that *Parlons lissou* is much more modest than Dessaint's previous book entitled, *Au Sud des nuages* (1994) which was much more substantial and filled a gap in the literature on the Lisu making it an important contribution to the study of Sino-Tibetan speaking people.

This brings us back to the *raison d'être* of the book: learning the Lisu language. *Parlons lissou* does not pretend to be a pedagogical manual: the authors do not claim to help the reader acquire basic skills in the Lisu language. The book is presented in a format not meant for travellers but does address the interest of those who want to know more about Lisu culture. The authors succeed in drawing attention to this fragment of the cultural mosaic of the Southeast Asian highlands that they have been travelling through for more than three decades.

ANN L. APPLETON

Acts of integration, expressions of faith: Madness, death and ritual in Melanau ontology

Phillips ME: Borneo Research Council, 2006. 361 pp. ISBN 1-929900-06-6 (pb US \$45); [http://](http://www.borneoresearchcouncil.org/)

www.borneoresearchcouncil.org/

Reviewer: V.T. King

In the best traditions of comparative anthropology Ann Appleton explores certain of the ideas, values and practices of another culture to shed light on western societies, specifically with regard to the social and cultural experience of mental illness, and the relationships between identity, health and illness. She poses the question why psychopathological experiences, particularly schizophrenia, in a 'traditional' or developing society are so much more benign and transitory with a better prognosis than those more chronic conditions which occur commonly in developed, western societies (pp. 15-37). The explanations, she proposes, are rooted in cultural differences, given that these experiences, she argues, are 'culturally constructed artifacts' (p. xix). She argues convincingly that notions of madness, normality and abnormality are cultural constructions and derive their meaning from socio-cultural contexts. She also draws attention to the therapeutic importance of ritual 'as a protective factor against specific types of psychological pathology', as a means of

addressing, mediating and reconciling these pathological states, and maintaining and restoring equilibrium by holding in check the contradictions and oppositions occasioned by these experiences (pp. 3, 9-10).

Following an earlier study of schizophrenia in New Zealand, Appleton undertook two years of research on mental illness among the Melanau of the Mukah area of coastal Sarawak from January 2000. Fortunately she could rely on the solid baseline research of Stephen Morris whose work on the Oya Melanau provides her with a historical and sociological context for her own study (see, for example, chapter 3). Despite the conversion of the coastal Melanau to Islam and Christianity, with only a minority still holding to their traditional folk religion, the preoccupations with spirits, ghosts, dreams and omens are still widespread, and recourse to traditional healers common. In this syncretic religious environment Appleton provides us with details of the backgrounds of four healers, their initiation into professional practice, their perceptions of this process and their calling, and their different styles of healing (ranging from the use of cleansing baths, massage, herbs, plants, ritual paraphernalia, prayers, trance and spirit helpers). She demonstrates the very common characteristic of 'liminality' and ambiguity in the institution of traditional healing, the initiation into the calling through dreams, illness and suffering, and notes that 'illness and health derive from the

same source' (p. 128). The occurrences of psychotic states involved in initiation and in healing practices are very familiar ones in the anthropological literature.

In attempting to understand and analyse these phenomena Appleton embarks on an interesting and well argued excursion into the work of Victor Turner, his primary concepts of liminality and 'communitas', his demonstration of both the expressive and the instrumental or transformative dimensions of ritual, and his observations on the connections between the liminal condition and mental illness, especially psychosis. She also interweaves Turner with Jung's notion of 'image' and 'shadow' (for her the 'cultural shadow'), and Heidegger's and Merleau-Ponty's existentialist phenomenology and the importance of understanding individual experience as 'being-in-the-world'. In this regard 'mind' is seen not in opposition to 'body' but emerges from everyday lived experience and from interaction with others, and there is an intimate interrelationship between feeling and thinking.

For those who are familiar with the literature on indigenous concepts of health and illness in non-western societies, Appleton's study does not need to persuade us of the vital importance of the social and cultural dimensions of what has been referred to as 'folk' or 'popular' medicine. There was indeed a very early interest in anthropology in such fields as biological

and social evolution, comparative anatomy, social psychology, personality, disease and diet among ethnographers who often had medical backgrounds. Furthermore, in the early anthropological research on witchcraft and magic, particularly in Africa, and explorations of the therapies associated with shamanism, spirit possession, trance and exorcism, the importance of the maintenance of balance and order in the relationships within society and between humans and their wider natural and spiritual world in order to ensure health and well-being have been amply demonstrated. I am sure that we readily accept Appleton's emphasis on 'the primacy of relationship', family and community, and that one has to understand pathologies not as individually generated, located and bounded but as part of socially and culturally meaningful everyday experience (pp. 6, 18-19). In pursuit of the social and cultural context of health and disease, medical anthropology made great strides in the 1970s with the appearance of key edited volumes by among others, Charles Leslie and J.B. Loudon and their advice that patients may respond better to therapy if they are treated as social and cultural beings rather than as diseased and malfunctioning organisms.

We should also remember the path-breaking work of Byron Good, his thought-provoking re-evaluation of the concepts of belief and knowledge in medical anthropology, his claim that illness is a culturally constituted reality and that modern biomedicine is itself a

symbolic system which constructs such categories as persons, patients, sickness, disease and human physiology. These contributions, some of which Appleton might usefully have reviewed (though she does make frequent reference to, among others, Kleinman's and Barrett's important cross-cultural psychiatric work), contained a major criticism of western biomedicine and its ignorance and derogation of Asian and other medical systems and proposed ways in which traditional healers might contribute positively to the development of integrated health care systems in developing countries. There has also been an extensive body of research on traditional healers undertaken in Borneo cultures.

Appleton has important messages for us; her handling of the theoretical materials is adept and intriguing, particularly her integration and evaluation of various concepts to do with the nature of ritual, personhood and experience, the relationship between concepts of death and psychological states, and those between transitional or liminal states and malady and misfortune. She also provides some very valuable new ethnographic information on the Melanau to build on Morris's observations from the late 1940s, and keeps the reader's interest by interweaving her own personal experiences into her narrative. I for one am convinced of her argument and conclusions, but strangely the case-load for demonstrating her thesis is comparatively light. To be sure there is much detailed ethnography packed into

over 300 pages of text, but the case-study material on schizophrenia, for example, is small, and there is not a great deal more on mental health problems more generally, nor ethnographic records of the success or otherwise of traditional therapies in relation to a range of specific cases of treatment of mental illness. Appleton rightly emphasises the problems of translating mental illness into western diagnostic categories, but we really only have a few solid cases of what we might term postnatal depression, and ambiguous gender identities and depression. There are three more detailed cases: Hayati's infatuation with a boyfriend (and its range of psychological symptoms), Katun's condition and treatment as a diagnosed schizophrenic, and Aishah's social and mental withdrawal following her rejection by a suitor. Aishah's condition was apparently not remedied, and Katun regularly returned unwell to the hospital.

In her conclusions Appleton leaves us with an important observation. She states that the question raised by her study 'is not whether we can usefully incorporate aspects of Melanau ontology into our own lives, but whether it can prompt us to consider how we see ourselves being-in-the-world and how it relates to the way we *experience* our world, in particular as it applies to mental illness and the way it is both perceived and experienced' (p. 306). An important message indeed, which sensitises us to the issues involved in addressing mental illness, but sadly

there are no specific recommendations about how these findings can provide us with some practical ways in which mental health issues might be addressed in western therapies, other than by implication. Still these observations should not distract us from the importance of Appleton's study and what she has achieved. Overall there was much of interest, written in a fluent, very readable and thought-provoking way.

A. BAER

Vital signs. Health in Borneo's Sarawak
Phillips ME: Borneo Research Council,
Occasional Paper no. 3, 2006, xii, 129pp,
ISBN 1-929900-08-2;
<http://www.borneoresearchcouncil.org>

Reviewer: V.T. King

This is a very useful overview of health and health services provision in the Malaysian Borneo state of Sarawak. The study does not pretend to be comprehensive or detailed, and it is 'less formal' than most accounts of health (p. xi). Adela Baer, with her first-hand experience of health-related matters in rural Malaysia, both in Peninsular Malaysia among the Orang Asli, which dates back to the early 1970s, and more recently among the Bidayuh and Iban of Sarawak since the mid-1990s, hopes that her study 'will help to harmonize the perceptual worlds of clinicians, scientists of various stripes, and

Sarawak communities' (p. ix). She has a practical goal in mind to foster 'mutual communication' and to attract interest in health and disease from those outside the medical profession so that together with medical practitioners they will hopefully effect improvements in the health of Sarawak's population. Baer is a human biologist by training with an interest in anthropology, or in her own words, 'a medical-anthropological ecologist' and she therefore situates disease and malady in a social and cultural context and in relation to demographic and ecological patterns and processes (pp. 2, 40, 97-104).

On the basis of the statistical and other data currently available the general health situation of Sarawak's population has clearly improved steadily since independence within Malaysia, and state-funded health services have been developed and extended, including importantly primary health care and health education. Baer concludes her study with the remark that 'human health in Sarawak is changing, largely for the better' (p.104). However, this disguises the very uneven provision of health care facilities and particularly such services as dentistry, and the continuing problems which the more isolated interior communities experience, as well as gender inequalities in health. Baer provides us with a chapter on female health and illness, which is an under-researched field in Sarawak and in Malaysia more generally (chapter 5). Despite obvious improvements in human well-being in Sarawak, Baer's survey of the incidence

of common diseases in the state still makes relatively depressing reading: vivax and falciparum malaria, dengue, filariasis, typhus, schistosomiasis, tuberculosis, gastroenteritis, cholera, hepatitis, intestinal parasites, anaemia, and goitre, among others all continue to conspire to make the life of Sarawak's population in general rather difficult.

Baer also draws attention to a familiar theme in the literature on modernisation and development, and that is the contradictory character of processes of change. On the one hand, there have been improvements in the technology of health care and treatment (in immunisation, vaccination, vector control) and considerable progress has been made in levels of hygiene, housing, water supply, and sewage disposal; in this regard Baer points to the success of immunisation campaigns against diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus, the positive results of vaccination against measles, and the eradication of smallpox. On the other hand there have been adverse effects on people's health as a result of environmental change, particularly commercial logging, and other negative impacts on the rainforests and on long-established human ecologies. Baer examines the increase in the incidence of malaria and dengue in certain areas because of the encouragement of new breeding grounds for vectors; the undermining of variety in the diet with the destruction of animal and fish breeding ground and habitats; the decrease in the availability of forest fruits and vegetables, and the problems faced by some rural

communities in sustaining rice farming, market gardening, and animal husbandry. In this connection Baer devotes some attention to the importance of diet and nutrition in promoting health, especially for infants, children and child-bearing women (chapter 3). In addition, the more general influence of modernisation and globalisation on lifestyles, economic activities, and gender relations has seen an increase in social diseases such as sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS, various cancers, respiratory problems, and obesity- and nutrition-related illnesses, including circulatory problems, heart disease and hypertension.

We can all agree fulsomely with Baer that we shall never adequately address issues to do with health, disease and human well-being without contextualising them in studies of lifestyles, values and perceptions, social class, occupation, and education. Baer notes, for example, that 'malaria has been described as being more of a social problem than a clinical disease', and 'the medical arts are now recognized as only one aspect, albeit a vital one, of human health' (p. ix). In pursuit of this social, economic and cultural context Baer might have made reference to some of the pioneers who addressed health-related issues and who argued early on for the importance of primary health care in Borneo, such as the well-travelled Dutch pharmacist Hendrik Tillema, and indeed the medic, A. W. Nieuwenhuis. In my view, Baer's study would have benefited from a brief

historical treatment of contributions to the understanding of the patterns and incidence of health and disease from the colonial period onwards.

Perhaps more advantage could also have been taken of the substantial anthropological literature on indigenous beliefs and practices to do with health and curing, and local concepts of the body and its relations to the cosmos; as well as attempts to integrate 'traditional practitioners' such as village midwives into 'modern' medical provision, and the debates about the efficacy or otherwise of herbal and other local pharmaceutical remedies (though see pp. 78-81). Baer does, however, present a brief and interesting section on mental illness and the engagement of traditional healers in addressing social balance and harmony in relation to 'human psyches' (p. 91). Interestingly Ann Appleton's recently published study by the Borneo Research Council on mental illness and traditional therapies among the Melanau of coastal Sarawak (2006) examines a range of issues central to our understanding of the complexities of psychological disorders and their treatment.

Overall Baer has undertaken a most worthy task in bringing diverse material together on health and disease in Sarawak. Nevertheless, as she herself admits, she has barely scratched the surface. We do not arrive at anything like a systematic understanding of the variables which affect the incidence of disease, the patterns of pathology, and the diversity of disease ecologies in

Sarawak. But Baer has begun this important task, she provides us with some interesting case material, insights and interpretation, and she draws attention, in broad terms at least, to what future research needs to be done.

JOSÉ RIZAL (1861-1896)

Noli Me Tangere / Touch me not

New York: Penguin, 2006 [1887]. 444 pp;
ISBN 0-14-30.3969-5 (£12.99)

Reviewer: AVM Horton

Readers of might be interested to know that Penguin Classics has re-issued *Noli Me Tangere* (otherwise known as *The lost Eden* or *The social cancer*), Dr José Rizal's sparkling satirical novel set towards the end of Spanish rule in the Philippines. The new translation, in a stylish paperback edition is by Harold Augenbraum, executive director of the National Book Foundation, who (in line with the usual Penguin format) also provides an excellent introduction, along with a 'guide to further reading' and endnotes.

In 1890 Rizal stated that his aim in *Noli* had been to awaken the Philippine people 'from their profound lethargy' and that 'whoever wants to awaken does not do so with soft and light sounds, but with explosions, blows' (p. xviii). 'Rizal had an agenda', Augenbraum remarks: 'art in the service of politics' (ibid.).

As a sidelight, it is interesting to note, not only that Rizal's biographers include 'the German writer' (*sic*, p. 429) Professor Ferdinand Blumentritt,* but also that the biography was translated by Howard W. Bray (Singapore: Kelly and Walsh, 1898), who will be known to some readers from his Labuan/Brunei connections. It seems that Bray was a much more substantial figure than might be supposed from a perusal of the Colonial Office and Foreign Office files.

It is to be hoped that Penguin will now proceed to publish new editions of *El Filibusterismo* (1891) [The reign of greed or subversion] and other writings by the legendary Filipino.

* According to the ABC Clio historical encyclopaedia of South-East Asia (2004) Blumentritt was actually an Austrian expert on Philippine history and ethnography, who won Rizal's friendship (vol. 3, p. 1150).

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