

Third Period of Salvation' was to unify the world's religious teachings. Werner translates here the 'New Code' (canonical laws) and three 'spirit messages' transmitted in 1926–7 by the 'Jade Emperor', the cult's highest deity (pp. 429–434).

The giants of modern Vietnam (Ho Chi Minh, Ngo Dinh Diem, Vo Nguyen Giap, Truong Chinh, Vo Van Kiet) are well represented. Other highlights include the 1945 Declaration of Independence (pp. 473–476) and General Tran Van Tra's analysis of the Tet offensive (pp. 463–473). The collection ends with Chu Van Tan on the founding of the People's Liberation Armed Forces (pp. 570–576) and Phan Doan Nam on "Aligning the strength of the nation with the power of the age" (pp. 579–585). By the early twenty-first century Vietnam was catching up economically with its more prosperous neighbours. Whilst the matter of independent statehood might have been resolved, other issues remained outstanding, such as democratic rights versus state control and Western culture versus Eastern (pp. 449–450).

The 'Vietnamese' have certainly never suffered from any lack of self-esteem. The Le regarded neighbouring peoples, such as Champa (conquered and dismembered in 1471), as 'outside civilisation' (p. 139). Subsequently, Burma and Siam were "far behind and inferior to our country" (p. 286); Europeans "we truly regard as barbarians and treat as such" (p. 276); Christianity was "this vicious religion" (pp. 327–328); French literature and art were 'decadent' (p. 528); conversely "There is no mountain we [Vietnamese] cannot move" (Phan Boi Chau, p. 367). Interestingly, however, the Minh Mang emperor blamed the Middle Kingdom for the first Anglo-Chinese war of 1839–42 (p. 276). The Western colonial threat to Vietnam itself was under-estimated (pp. 313–314).

A great deal of thought, organisation and hard work was put into *Sources of Vietnamese Tradition*, which is available in three formats (hardback, paperback, and electronic). Much compression was required; previous titles in the series had run to two volumes each. The anthology furnishes a good sense of the structure of 'Vietnamese' history and is sure to function both as a formidable work of reference and a sound base for further exploration of the subject. <avmhorton@hotmail.com>

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INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA: HISTORY AND SOCIETY IN THE EARLY MODERN WORLD.

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To Tomé Pires, the first colonial European to chronicle Malaysia, "whoever is lord of Malacca has his hand on the throat of Venice." (p. 3) Pires' *Suma Oriental* (1512–1515), written shortly after the Portuguese capture of the city in 1511, unabashedly delineates the economic importance of Southeast Asia to Europeans during the early modern period. However, attempts by successive waves of Portuguese, Dutch, French and British regimes to dominate this *entrepôt* of the global spice trade provided a vibrant forum for intercultural exchange between indigenous groups, non-European merchants and artisans, and varying European colonial interests. Between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, the intersection of these groups facilitated an "exchange of ideas, beliefs, and cultural commodities . . . mediated through the agency of all parties" (p. 11). The transference of religion, art, architecture, music, and medicinal and scientific knowledge allowed each group to define themselves in relation to the novel 'other', reformulate traditional power relations, and facilitate the growth of international commerce.

Intercultural Exchange in Southeast Asia explores the myriad avenues in which intercultural knowledge was transferred between these competing traditions, particularly focusing on religious power, conversion and adaptation. Local elites exercised a vast amount of individual agency through the manipulation of foreign religious interests. As Alan Strathern explores, local Indonesian rulers balanced their conversion to Islam, which brought significantly expanded trade networks and a “pre-assembled package of statehood”, with the religious traditions of their followers, creating a unique Islamic tradition which was scarcely recognisable to their Arab co-religionists (p. 30). Furthermore, within coastal Burma, where the peripheries of the Arakanese Kingdom and Portuguese *Estado da Índia* overlapped, Michael W. Charney demonstrates that “religious conversion and patronage . . . were often guided by political and economic considerations” (p. 79). Arakanese kings became patrons of both Buddhist and Catholic religious institutions to simultaneously control the local aristocracy and European merchant community, while mercenaries from the Portuguese diaspora, like Filipe de Brito (c. 1566–1613), formed the majority of their Catholic armies with local Buddhist contingents.

Even within converted populations, ancient feuds continued unabated. In Cochinchina and Tonkin, older Portuguese Jesuit-led indigenous communities rejected the Vatican’s decision to allow French missionaries to ordain native priests and consolidate “autonomous, local communities” under a centralised, French-controlled hierarchy (p. 99). As Tara Alberts illustrates, European inter-Catholic competition precipitated inter-indigenous physical and mob violence over opposing perceptions of sacral authority on “different sides of the street” within the same village (p. 105). Contemporaneously, native gender relations were rapidly restructured as new religious dogmas blended with indigenous artistic traditions, as Marya Rosenburg Leong investigates in her chapter on Filipino Marian art. In the Spanish Philippines, the comparatively advanced personal and sexual freedom of local animist women, which significantly declined with the introduction of Catholic gender hierarchies, nevertheless provided a unique merger of the Virgin Mary and local indigenous female depictions, combining the familiar archetypes of “powerful spiritual leader, queen and mother” into innovative artistic expressions (p. 129).

The dynamic intercultural bazaar of Southeast Asia further provided access to indigenous medicinal, botanical and taxonomical knowledge for the burgeoning field of European naturalists. High disease-based mortality rates amongst Europeans in the employ of the Dutch East India Company (VOC), spurred the companies funding of medical research into local herbal medicine. As Matthew Sargent illuminates, the oral traditions of local medicine meant that doctors like Jacobus Bontius (1592–1631) approached village shamans as intellectual equals, requiring their consent for the acquisition of indigenous knowledge. Moreover, VOC policy encouraging European male employees to marry local women, provided the West with the “specialized female knowledge” of household medicinal practices unobtainable without this intercultural mixing.

The structure and recruitment practices of the VOC also presented opportunities for non-colonial European agents, particularly from Germany and Scandinavia, to contribute to cultural interchange in the region. Swedish naturalist Clas Frederick Hornstedt, who Christina Skott examines, was hired by the VOC-funded Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences to conduct research throughout Java in 1783. Hornstedt’s “Dagbook”, and his vast collection of botanical, geological, ethnographical and taxonomical curios, applied Linnaen methodology in the tropics for the benefit of Swedish academia while simultaneously reinforcing the pseudo-scientific legitimacy of the VOC.

Likewise, as Katrina Gulliver observes, European interaction with Southeast Asia dramatically shaped the built environment. Overlapping Portuguese, Dutch and British colonial architectural traditions in Malacca, combined with local influences, were unified by Chinese artisans in the distinct “Straits Baroque” style, developing the urban space as an “Asian city under European jurisdiction and not a European city in Asia” (p. 243). Even the interchange of music “contributed to negotiations of power and the recognition or contesting of sovereignty” (p. 206). As D. R. M. Irving emphasises, the performance “tours” of European musicians like Thomas Forrest of the English East India Company

(1774–84) created goodwill between local groups which often encouraged more profitable trade relationships for both parties.

Although this volume offers detailed analysis of intercultural exchange from Burma to the Philippines, the only Southeast Asian nation to successfully resist later European colonial conquest is conspicuously lacking. The Ayutthaya Kingdom, and its successor state the Kingdom of Siam (modern Thailand), was particularly adept at exploiting intercultural knowledge for economic and political gain. Certainly, Siam's balancing of competing colonial interests through a nuanced understanding of European culture and politics developed over centuries of exchange, through official and unofficial channels and warrants equal academic attention.

Moreover, while the editors admit that an overreliance on European sources by the contributors is justifiable given the dearth of indigenous sources, the Euro-centric nature of the work is difficult to avoid no matter what novel interpretations are employed to “read between the lines”. The unequal distribution of literacy and written records between foreign agents and indigenous populations significantly influenced every intercultural exchange during the period. Islamic, Indian, Chinese and European literati held a sizable advantage during such exchanges, regardless of any immediate economic or political gains by the exercise of native agency. Thus, the *longue durée* demonstrates that this domination of knowledge, and the corresponding ability to intellectually alter the expectations of later foreign echelons, restructured the very parameters of such interactions and allowed the literate “other” to reduce native agency by imagining indigenous societies outside the intercultural “contact zone”.

The clash of various cultural traditions within the cauldron of early modern Southeast Asia exemplifies the dichotomy of knowledge and power in an era of relatively commensurate political and economic strength between the East and West. Although this balance shifted dramatically in favour of Europe by the nineteenth century, forcing indigenous groups to explore more nuanced methods of influencing the Occidental “other”, the early modern period was not simply a narrative of oppressor and oppressed. Identities which were relatively fixed prior to the arrival of Europeans, were renegotiated through vibrant processes of “othering”. Thus Thomas Forrest's musical performance of his “Malay song” for the Sultan of Aceh in 1784, which combined Corelli's tones with Malay lyrics, earned him the coveted Order of the Golden Sword in an intriguingly similar manner to the royal patronages which existed in Europe. Such exchanges synthesised knowledge in a form which benefitted the power relations of both parties.

Ultimately, the work illuminates the global role of intercultural exchange at the periphery of empire and provides an innovative framework for subsequent research on similar trans-regional interchanges throughout the early modern period. Moreover, the expanding scholarly access to indigenous sources in Southeast Asia, and throughout the greater Asia-Pacific more broadly, will certainly build upon the creative methodology employed by the authors. As the editors of this volume portend, the future historiography of colonialism in the early modern world will increasingly acknowledge the vibrant agency of local power brokers in shaping and facilitating the globalised exchange of peoples, goods and ideas. vs385@cam.ac.uk

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