offered to destitute women to help them pass the matriculation exam. She supported herself through writing, and braved further troubles ahead—her separation from both her children and their untimely deaths. A life well-fought, indeed.

Koteswaramma's memoir is a valuable addition to twentieth-century life-writing by women in radical politics in India, in particular because it is the first unmediated voice among leftist women activists from the Andhra-Telangana region. Earlier work, such as Stree Shakti Sanghatana's remarkable *We were making history* (Kali for Women, 1986) were mediated by feminists. This work confirms and extends those narratives of courage, sacrifice, and pain.

My only quibble with the translation is that the original title, 'A bridge abandoned', should have been retained. This text is suffused with the pain of abandonment and loneliness. True, the instrument that produced the memoir, Koteswaramma's memory, is a sharp knife. But the title of the translation should have reflected what it unearthed—a life of pain. Indeed, the lesson of her life is precisely that pain, in the long run, makes the self stronger.

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Asia

Spirits and ships: Cultural transfers in early Monsoon Asia
Edited by ANDREA ACRI, ROGER BLENCH and ALEXANDRA LANDMANN
Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2017. Pp. ix + 577. Maps, Plates, Bibliographies, Index.
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This multi-author collected volume consequent to a 2013 Singapore conference is a significant revisionist addressing of prevailing understandings of early cultural transfers in early Monsoon Asia, based on 'borderless' South, Southeast, and East Asian littoral encounters among primary Indian Ocean civilisations. Mixtures of Sanskrit, Sinitic, Islamic, and local/indigenous cultures were foundational to expansive and cosmopolitan Indian Ocean societies. Early Monsoon Asia was a vast geographic, historical, and environmental space, from the eastern shores of the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia to the wider maritime west that included Madagascar and the eastern African coastline. This revisionist history focuses on Southeast Asia as the primary centre of significant Indian Ocean societal transition from the sixth century (chapters 1–9: Reconstructing histories across the Indo-Pacific; Insular South Asian religious tropes; Tantrism as seen from the East; Malayo-Javanese law; Mainland Southeast Asian languages; Early settlements and 'industries'; looms, woven textiles and Austronesian expansion; Insular Southeast Asia seafaring; Indian prakrit etymologies in maritime Southeast Asia).

This vast area was interconnected by the seasonal Indian Ocean to South China Sea tradewinds and networked integrations of littoral and upstream crops, goods, ideas, cosmologies, and ritual practices. The simple boats and large outriggers

depicted on the walls of the eighth- and ninth-century central Javanese Buddhist temple complex of Borobudur were consistent with the early interactions between the Indo-Aryan, Austroasiatic, and Austronesian language speaking populations in South and Southeast Asia. The Malagasy language split off from other Austronesian languages; to this day it is spoken in Madagascar (off the coast of southeast Africa) with loanwords from Austronesian languages close to a southern Borneo homeland (Alexander Adelaar, chapter 10). Loan words from Southern Sulawesi languages (Malay, Javanese, and Sanskrit influenced by Indic culture) were transitioned by journeying Malagasy sojourners who migrated to Madagascar and East Africa from the seventh century, if not earlier. This Malagasy migration was linked to the rise of the intermediary southeastern Sumatran realm of Srivijaya in the Straits of Melaka (though there is no material evidence for this prior to the seventh century); Buddhist correspondence from India was particularly strong in sixth- to eighth-century Sumatra (Srivijaya) and Java (Imran bin Tajudeen, chapter 11). Recently recovered Java documents (*c.*478–508) are focused on initially to demonstrate 'authochthonous–Indic syncretism in architecture and ornament' as a negation of American scholar Sheldon Pollock's prior assertions promoting the Indic legacy in Southeast Asia, in contrast to revisionist evidence of early seventh-century Old Malay inscriptions using Sanskrit recovered in Sumatra (Srivijaya) and the legacy of Old Javanese in the ninth-century *Ramayana kakawin*. There was also a mix of historical Indic and Javanese architecture.

Early Malagasy speakers in southern Borneo spoke a specific dialect on the Barito River in central and southern Kalimantan (previously Borneo). Indonesian Borneo was historically linked to Java by political, cultural, and linguistic ties during the early Hindu kingdom of Banjarmasin/Banjar. Maritime migrations from southeast Borneo via the Indian Oceans to Madagascar began in *c.*700 AD; contemporary Malay and Javanese contributed Sanskrit vocabulary spoken by mixed Malagasy populations before the Malagasy migrations to East Africa, consequent to the continuing profitable pepper trade contact. Malay loanwords used by ancestors of the Malagasy indicate that they were not only in touch with Malays in Borneo, but also with Malays from Sumatra—until Portuguese ships appeared in the Indian Ocean in the sixteenth century. Some Malay words in Eastern Madagascar to this day have a Muslim signature—indicating that Islam may have been introduced from Island Southeast Asia as spoken South Sulawesi languages were consequent to oceanic networking by the migrating Malagasy.

Indic and Austronesian temple and iconographic forms are demonstrated in early central Javanese religious architecture that are independent revisions of Indic and indigenous material culture at formal and conceptual levels. Surviving Old Javanese *sima* (ritual) grants record concepts of temple construction in Java based on an indigenous religious system. The *sima* also document Indic religious sanctuaries as early Javanese structures of authority, socio-spatial organisation, and mechanisms of economic redistribution. In other words, Indic religious structures enmeshed with Javanese architectural configurations of authority, sociopolitical organisation, and mechanisms of economic redistribution centred in temples.

Central Java's Borobudur and Mendut are primary examples of such temples. Borobudur's reliefs extended and reworked Indic art beyond that of contemporary

India. Indic cosmography in the pre-Sailendra dynasty eighth century Saiva temples in the Dieng Plateau in central Java displayed unique Javanese iconography that remained consistent into the thirteenth century. The narrative reliefs on central Java 'Sailendra-era' *candis* ('temples') also depict animals and animal tales, local narratives, and independent sculptural and architectural features. The temples also have perforated stupas containing life-sized Buddha statues based on Indian art and architecture. These combined and reinvented forms were unprecedented, as were independent sculptural or architectural features in early Javanese gardens. *Sugata,* the 'ten-fold Buddha', took the place of common *bodhisattva.* Borobudur's stepped profile assumed the form of Austronesian ancestral mounds known in Java as *punden.* The Prambanan complex nearby also contains a series of rising stepped terraces, with 24 directional deities depicted in Candi Siva. Local rejection of the indigenous–Indic historical dichotomy implies that Austronesian–Indian cultural encounters and outcomes in architecture and art are at the base of a long-term regional identity shaped by simultaneous interactions and mutual transformations of the local and the Indic.

The concluding chapter 12, 'The Lord of the Land relationship in Southeast Asia' by Robert Wessing, is notable in addressing the land rather than the sea, in a study of secular societal authority over local land guarded—most notably by community 'founders' and ancestors—and used for or against spirit-forces in the earth and sky. Above all, the chapter points out the mutually bonded obligations of a founder, the community, and partially socialised long-term resident spirits.

As a whole, *Spirits and ships* is a very important revisionist collected work which provides an updated multi- and counter-vision approach that will lead to a better understanding of early Monsoon Asia for its readers.

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Asia

Fluid jurisdictions: Colonial law and Arabs in Southeast Asia

By NURFADZILAH YAHAYA
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Nurfadzilah Yahaya, Assistant Professor in History at the National University of Singapore, speaks to a wider audience than just legal historians. As she explores manifestations of and dynamics related to legal pluralism in the colonised Malay world with an emphasis on the role of the Arabs, in *Fluid jurisdictions* Yahaya addresses questions of bureaucratisation as much as identity; race and gender relations; secularisation and Islamisation; resistance to and embrace of colonialism and imperialism.