Poole resists a broad-brush approach. Her sheer erudition, which essentially sums up three decades of study, is at times daunting to a lesser mortal like this reviewer. Put a different way, the book's brilliance will without a doubt make it core reading for Koreanists, but others may find themselves unsatisfied: those concerned with geopolitics will expect more detail about political groups and alignments, those who explore colonialism will wonder about the lack of discussion on censorship and enforcement of policies designed to serve Tokyo, and the focus on the abstractions of literature will challenge historians who expect historical events to be foregrounded.

After an introduction, Ch'oe Myŏngik is the first writer on whom Poole focuses, chosen to illustrate the narrative fragmentation characteristic of the late 1930s. In his stories, Ch'oe describes objects in intricate detail, shifting understandings of utility to the urban everyday in ways that challenge the received wisdom from previous generations.

That Japan had colonized Korea to many implied a failure of tradition, and the second writer Poole features is Sŏ Insik, who uses philosophy – Japanese philosophy – to imagine a future. Retrospectively, we see hints of the illusive utopia that justifies the continued existence of North Korea today. Nostalgia features in the writings of Yi T'aejun, revealing the attraction of antiquarian objects collected, exhibited and enjoyed in the silence after his wife retires to bed. Nostalgia, though, has less place in the stories of Pak T'aewŏn, in which the new urban suburbs of Seoul demand a modernist narrative. Then comes Ch'oe Chaesŏ, responding to the colonial government's closure of the journal that he edited, a journal that published commentaries on local and European literature, by championing the imperial campaign itself in a collection of essays.

Each writer provides the focus for one chapter, with Ch'oe bridging from the fifth to the sixth, where he is responsible for publishing a narration, in Japanese, by the former communist leader Kim Namch'ŏn, on the birth of his son. The child becomes a metaphor for the future of Koreans and the Korean nation. And so we move onwards, for "when the future disappears time does not come to an end", but enters "the entangled realm of an everyday life lived under colonial fascism" (p. 16). What Poole's book avoids doing, then, is to reduce these entanglements to a single timeline, or to fuse the constructions of colonialism into a shared memory that can account for the emergence of one or the other of the rival states that have, for the last seventy years, divided the Korean peninsula.

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SOUTH-EAST ASIA

PHILIP TAYLOR:
The Khmer Lands of Vietnam: Environment, Cosmology, and Sovereignty.
(Asian Studies Assocation of Australia.) 316 pp. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014. £19.43. ISBN 0 824 84673 7.
doi:10.1017/S0041977X1500141X

In *The Khmer Lands of Vietnam*, Philip Taylor has crafted a careful account of the Kampuchea Krom, "Lower Cambodia" and the Khmer Krom, who live in what is now southern Vietnam. His deep familiarity with the Khmer, Vietnamese and

French languages has allowed him to make use of scholarship in those languages and conduct extensive fieldwork.

Little scholarship has focused on Kampuchea Krom. Historiography of the region often treats the Khmer populations of Vietnam as a relict of the great Khmer empires. From a Khmer nationalist perspective, it is territory that the Vietnamese have taken over. From a Vietnamese nationalist perspective, they move into an underpopulated area as part of their *nam tiến* or "southern expansion". Official Vietnamese discourse tends to portray the Khmer Krom as a primitive, undeveloped people who resist modernization. During the late 1950s, the government made efforts to draw them more securely into Vietnam, by closing down the Khmer-medium schools the French had established, giving the Khmer Krom citizenship, requiring children to study Vietnamese in state schools, and perform military service.

Taylor sees the Khmer Krom in their own right, rather than as an extension of Cambodians, or as some kind of Vietnamese ethnic minority. He argues that expressions of Kampuchea Krom culture and identity have shifted over space and time in relation to the ecological niche in which they live. They live in an area consisting of several ecological zones, each permitting certain livelihoods, and an area of ethnic diversity, with significant numbers of Chams, overseas Chinese and Kinh. In some places, they have lived in greater isolation, while in others, they have been in extensive long-term contact with outside communities and the rest of the world. Experiences of war and of the modernization schemes the Vietnamese state has imposed are also central to the experience of the Khmer Krom. These forces have done much to dispossess many and permanently alter, if not destroy, the ecological conditions on which they have depended for their livelihoods. Great numbers of the Khmer in some regions have given up trying to regain their lost lands, which outside groups have taken over.

Each chapter explores how the Khmer Krom have adapted to a geographic-ecological area. This areal focus throws into relief the variation in ecology and therefore livelihoods that the people the Khmer Krom have come into contact with, and their experiences of the outside world. The region around the mouth of the Mekong, for example, is one of the oldest and densest sites of settlement, long predating the Vietnamese, with over half of the Khmer temples in Vietnam. Both Khmers and Vietnamese see this region as an area of cultural conservation, although they attach different meanings to that: while the Khmers take pride in the high levels of language and cultural maintenance, seeing these as a resistance to state interventions, Vietnamese officialdom view the region as recalcitrant and backwards.

Other regions may not be as vibrant. The Khmer Krom themselves see the coastal river-dune complex Taylor describes in chapter 2 as an area of cultural disintegration because of the gambling, drinking and over-spending. Here there are few markers of Khmer community or culture. Khmer literacy is low and the study of Buddhism is weak. Yet the strong connections with the outside world and economy and the frequent inter-ethnic exchanges of the region belie a simple characterization of being insular or autarchic.

Taylor spends the rest of the book going through various configurations of place, ecology and contact. In the final chapter, he considers Saigon, a metropolis embodying modern Vietnam, and a site of extended contact. Young Khmer Krom go to "Prey Nokor" (the Khmer name for Saigon) to be educated or to work. Many young men can take advantage of the Vietnamese fetish for Khmer Theravāda Buddhism, which they see as ancient and pure. Khmer monks are in great demand in Vietnam, and can put their ritual knowledge to use to finance their educations.

Taylor's work is also of interest to anyone grappling with how to deal with the past of traumatized peoples. He has made extensive use of myth to understand Khmer Krom cosmology. In doing so, Taylor has drawn out much about the past, less in terms of historically verifiable events, but more of how people understand their own pasts and their relationship with the land and surrounding peoples. Having suffered the traumas of war and multiple dislocations, dispossession, and destruction of the natural environment, the Khmer Krom may find discussing history dangerous or even forbidden. Out of the stories of place which Taylor elicited emerge the themes of disintegration, disappearance and reappearance, which connect the Khmer Krom with a distance past or comment on current conditions. We hear of a royal Khmer barge that sank centuries ago, but whose power periodically resurfaces to claim into the waters disrespectful passers-by. The barge marks the ancient, pre-Vietnamese lineage of the Khmer in the region. From the land itself, the prestige of Khmer tradition periodically resurfaces in places like Saigon through the power of Khmer Theravāda Buddhism.

Taylor has been successful in tapping the richness of the physical, social, and historical landscapes of Kampuchea Krom in a way that will appeal to anthropologists, religious scholars, historians and South-East Asianists more broadly. He has written in intelligent, accessible prose and provided numerous photographs and drawings to illustrate local geography. My only regret is that he has not shown greater sensitivity to language and transliteration – I found the Khmer transliteration inconsistent. While at just over 300 pages the book may not be quite the ideal length for undergraduates to read in its entirety, it could nevertheless serve as a focus for courses on Vietnam or modern South-East Asia.

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AFRICA

JEGGAN SENGHOR:
The Very Reverend J.C. Faye: His Life Times. A Biography.
380 pp. Bloomington, IN: Author House Publishers, 2014. ISBN 978 149186953 6.
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In the past decade Gambian historical studies has been enriched by works on political history by Gambianists such as Arnold Hughes and David Perfect; on The Gambia's role in Atlantic trade by Toby Green; and on electoral politics after the 1994 coup by Abdoulaye Saine and Ebrima Ceesay. However, there had been no attempt to use what Michel Doormont calls the "historical biography" genre to elucidate any aspect of Gambian history. Senghor's book is therefore a seminal departure point in Gambian studies as it situates the life story of a prominent member of the Gambian colonial elite in the political and social evolution of the country.

This is a scholarly work by The Gambia's leading historian, Jeggan C. Senghor, senior research fellow at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London. The book has all the trappings of an academic text, including very detailed notes and references, the index and above all, its balance.

The balance lies in the ability of the author to give a dispassionate account of the life and times of the man *West Africa* magazine once called "The Gambia's amiable example". This is not a hagiography. The author maintains the historian's balanced