

## Book Reviews

### Southeast Asia

*Weathering the Storm: The Economies of Southeast Asia in the 1930s Depression*

Edited by PETER BOOMGAARD and IAN BROWN.

Leiden and Singapore: KITLV and Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2000. Pp xiv, 332.

Tables, Figures, Notes, Index.

This collection of essays is a welcome addition to the scholarly literature about the Great Depression of the 1930s in Southeast Asia. It evolved principally from a panel discussion during the First Conference of the European Association of Southeast Asian Studies (EASAS) in 1995, and was eventually put together during a three-day workshop held at the School of African and Oriental Studies in London in 1998 with some refinements made later that year during the Second Conference of the EASAS in Hamburg. The extensive consultation process has benefited this book greatly. The result is an elegant work that has been thoughtfully arranged and well-provisioned with tables and figures that make pouring through the quantitative data easier. Furthermore, the excellent references provided at the end of each chapter are a boon to researchers working in this field.

Following an introduction by the editors, the book is divided into four parts. The first part deals with material conditions in the particular Southeast Asian economies of Java, the Philippines and Burma. Chapter 2 by Peter Boomgaard focuses on the developments in real income in the Dutch East Indies during the Great Depression, mainly on Java. Beginning with a historiographical assessment of the literature available on the Depression in Southeast Asia, Boomgaard sets out for the reader what he terms the 'optimist' and 'pessimist' schools of thought (pp. 23-4). In effect, he suggests that this work operates in the middle ground between these two opposing poles, arguing that the impact of the Depression differed greatly across regional systems and across different segments of society. Whereas in some areas the Depression struck home with great force, many other areas only suffered slight declines; the same outcome could also be observed for different societal segments in Southeast Asia.

Chapters 3 and 4 deal with conditions in the Philippines and are both thought provoking in terms of methodology. Daniel Doepper's essay, 'The Philippines in the Great Depression: The Geography of Pain', is particularly good. Using 'historical geography', Doepper provides the reader with a very interesting framework for analysing the regional impact of the Depression in the Philippines using the 'common metric' of the *cedula* (poll tax), which in turn provides a fascinating map of the impact of the Depression over space and time. The subsequent chapter by W. G. Wolters raises the importance of agro-climatological factors in understanding the uneven impact of the economic downturn as well as regional responses within the Philippines. Ian Brown's work in the final chapter of this section demonstrates through an analysis of cotton textile import figures that material conditions in Lower Burma only deteriorated slightly during the Depression and that people devised survival strategies to deal with the new and difficult circumstances.

Part II of the book explores the agricultural strategies adopted to stave off the effects of the Depression, and this provides an interesting discussion about the levels of state intervention in the colonies as well as the responses of the indigenous population such as smallholders, merchants and even creditors in creating survival strategies. The emphasis in this section is the Dutch Indies, with a chapter dedicated to understanding the structural origins of the Depression in the colony by J. Thomas Lindblad (Chapter 6), Jeroen Touwen's piece on entrepreneurial strategies in indigenous export culture in the outer islands (Chapter 7), and S. Nawiyanto's micro-study of the situation in the Besuki Residency in terms of the plantation and peasant economies. One aspect of Touwen's chapter that makes for interesting reading is the role of middleman creditors. He disabuses us of the notion that the middleman creditor was synonymous with the 'usurious moneylender who profited from an inadequate banking system by giving large loans' (p. 155). In many instances, the middleman creditor was in almost the same debt-default position as the smallholder because of the way the credit arrangement was structured. The final two chapters of this section focus on rice as an export commodity: Sompop Manarungsan writes on the rice economy of Thailand while Irene Nørlund examines rice and the colonial lobby in French Indochina.

One of the more fascinating chapters of the book, which is the sole essay of Part III, on trading communities, is William Gervase Clarence-Smith's essay on Hadhrami Arab entrepreneurs in the Indies and Malaya. Using the activities of key Arab business concerns operating in those colonies, Clarence-Smith provides an absorbing record of the complex interactions between these Hadhrami traders and other actors like the Japanese. Although the chapter leans heavily towards traders based in the Indies, it also provides a fair amount of detail about Arab concerns in Singapore and Malaya.

The three chapters of Part Four are dedicated to understanding the state's response to the economic crisis that engulfed the region. In this section Pierre Brocheux details how the state in French Indochina dealt with the Depression, and Paul Kratoska's essay analyses the imperial dynamic and the tension with local interests in Malaya through his chapter on 'Imperial Unity Versus Local Autonomy'. The final chapter, 'Crisis and Response: A Study in Foreign Trade and Exchange Rate Policies in Three Southeast Asian Colonies in the 1930s' by Anne Booth, provides a very readable account of the experience of local economies in the larger context of colonial policy.

The outstanding contribution of this book is its handling of the complexities of the Great Depression. It sweeps away vague generalisations about the impact of the Depression and replaces them with quantitative evidence, which disproves some commonly held misconceptions. One such misconception has been that the entire region of Southeast Asia suffered terribly under the strain of economic downturn. If anything, this book goes out of its way to repeat its mantra that the Depression was not an unmitigated disaster for all colonial economies and the indigenous population. In fact, some sub-national systems and different occupational groups survived better than others because of their own particular circumstances.

There are few shortcomings in this work, but one of them is the lack of a paper on rubber as an export commodity in Malaya. There is also little discussion of the tin trade in Malaya or petroleum in the Netherlands East Indies but in fairness to the editors, neither of these commodities would sit well in any of the sections as they are currently

set out. It is also a pity that contributors could not be found to work on other trading communities that played an important role in Southeast Asia, because the third section would have been much richer for it.

Although the book leans heavily towards Indonesia and is largely constructed for economic historians, with its economic methodology and vast amounts of quantitative data, it is well worth a read for those interested in understanding the complexities of the Great Depression in Southeast Asia.

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*Ideology and Revolution in Southeast Asia, 1900-1980: Political Ideas  
in the Anti-Colonial Era*

By CLIVE J. CHRISTIE.

Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2001. Pp. xi, 236. Maps, Bibliography, Index.

This welcome contribution to writing on modern Southeast Asian history is the first book-length, region-wide, comparative historical analysis of modern indigenous political ideas. The work is most readily described as a survey or an overview, and indeed covers a great deal of territory in little more than 200 pages, but it is in fact more robust than either term suggests. The analysis is economical but often has real depth, and the descriptions of sources on which the analysis is based are frequently more detailed than might ordinarily be expected. The organisation is well defined chronologically and thematically, which guards effectively against the breathless quality one sometimes detects in surveys. Most importantly, the book takes Southeast Asians' perspectives seriously and accords them a fuller account than is easily available elsewhere. It reviews a wide variety of Southeast Asians' writings, a number of them poorly known outside specialists' circles, and presents both evidence and arguments about them in a way that is accessible to a broadly educated readership. Although this is not really a book for beginners, some knowledge of the events of Southeast Asian history in the twentieth century being more or less a prerequisite, relative newcomers and old hands alike will find something of interest, and those teaching or doing advanced studies in the field of modern Southeast Asian history or politics will certainly want to have a copy on their shelves for reference. (Given all this, it is regrettable that the publisher – thus far, at least – has issued only a hardbound edition which is probably too expensive for widespread use in university courses.)

Clive Christie has two main points of departure. The first is that in today's post-most-everything world, historical insight tends to the myopic and we are, for example, increasingly likely to forget the importance of ideologies, especially 'dead' ones like Communism. Further, where we may not have had a secure understanding of the ideologies in the first place, as might arguably be said about twentieth-century Southeast Asia, the misunderstandings could be especially serious. For this reason, 'retrieval of the ideological perspective has become . . . a vital task' (p. xi). The second point is that

virtually all twentieth-century Southeast Asian political thinking was dominated by or intertwined with anti-colonialism. The period, Christie argues, is best seen not in the polarised light of the clash between pro- and anti-colonial views, but in a spectrum of intensities in the anti-colonial range. This is especially helpful in breaking with past confining dichotomies such as 'cooperator' versus 'non-cooperator', 'traditional' versus 'modern', 'traitor' versus 'patriot', and even 'left' versus 'right'. The companion suggestion that an ideological scrim (generally but not always Marxist-Leninist) has frequently obscured a clear view of anti-colonialism, revolution, and nationalism is well worth emphasising.

As is inevitable with such a work, specialists will find holes and quibbling points. Nguyễn An Ninh is missing, as are the post-1945 Tan Malaka, the 'New Society' Marcos, and a number of other personalities with significant ideas and impact. The official Party view of Vietnam's August Revolution is given too much credence, and other forms of Vietnamese nationalism – the Constitutionals and the VNQDD, for example – are left unmentioned; the ideological entanglements in and responses to the social crises of the 1930s receive not even indirect attention; religious forms of ideological anti-colonialism and nationalism (such as Sarekat Islam), though mentioned, are given undeservedly short shrift. Some of these and other omissions might justifiably be ascribed to the limitations within which Christie chose or was forced to work, most significantly 'clearly defined ideologies rather than mere agendas' (p. 2) and primary sources (speeches, pamphlets, and larger works) translated into English (of which, incidentally, a very useful reference bibliography is provided). Some, however, are more difficult to account for.

Additional shortcomings are more complex. One certainly is that such a heavy concentration on Marxist-Leninist contributions to anti-colonialism and revolution leaves other contributions too much in the shadows. The all-too-familiar, simplistic formula equating Communism with 'Real Revolution', and its corollary, are thus – perhaps not entirely wittingly – validated; the process returns us unfortunately to a rather dichotomous view of things. Another important shortcoming is that the analytical scheme built on ideological strands gives the mistaken impression that these were in practice quite separate (when in fact, to take but one example, Communism and Islam found themselves more than once tightly braided), and also that Communists didn't have serious ideological conflicts among themselves (when of course they did, particularly in Indonesia and Vietnam). We are given no exegesis of such 'complications' in Southeast Asian political thought. Finally, readers may feel that Christie ought to have pursued further some larger questions peering out from behind much of the book's analysis: Why did some ideologies succeed in some areas and not in others? Why was Marxism-Leninism in the end largely a failure in Southeast Asia? Is nationalism an ideology, and if not what are its relations with ideologies? When is non- or even anti-Communist thought revolutionary and when is it merely radical . . . or neither? Is it possible to reject the idea of class conflict and still be revolutionary? And so on.

Still, such probing should be seen in a context of raising significant and freshly posed questions rather than failing to answer obvious ones. And it should be emphasised that Christie seems to see his work not so much as offering a new paradigm as contributing in a number of ways to broader discussions of, for example, the debates over globalisation and 'Asian Values' and 'a time when, not just the economic systems, but the

world-views of the West *and* Asia would be genuinely post-colonial, in the sense of being “post anti-colonial” (p. 216). This book has started us down a still remarkably unfamiliar road, and beckons others to follow – with more translations, more appreciation of analytical nuance, more attention to the blurred and uncertain, and more examination of the social context of ideas – as we head towards an intellectual history of contemporary Southeast Asia and its place in today’s world.

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*Ethnic Minorities and Nationalism in Southeast Asia: Festschrift dedicated to Hans Dieter Kubitscheck*

Edited by THOMAS ENGLEBERT and ANDREAS SCHNEIDER  
Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2000. Pp 194. Notes.

This collection of essays from Germany’s community of Southeast Asian scholars is a *festschrift* dedicated to Hans Dieter Kubitscheck, a scholar who has written extensively on both Sumatra in particular and the *Nationalitätenpolitik* (ethnic policies) of Southeast Asia as a whole. At the end of ten chapters, contributed by colleagues and former students of Professor Kubitscheck, the book contains a biographical sketch and a bibliography of Kubitscheck’s work. The volume is evenly split between chapters on Indonesia and mainland Southeast Asia (five apiece) – although only selected topics are covered as it is not intended to be a comprehensive sweep.

Bernhard Dahm begins the book with a solid overview of nationalism *vis-à-vis* Sumatra, and concludes that Aceh is the only territory that might fit Hobsbawm’s notion of statehood (pp. 20-2). Dahm concludes that the idea of Indonesia was never strong in Aceh, but then fails to explain (or even mention) the province’s strong involvement in the Independence struggle from 1945-9 or the long periods of peace (and relative satisfaction) with the state of Indonesia. Other scholars have concluded that Aceh’s modern secessionist struggle is not the automatic outcome of a separate history and ethnicity, but it is precisely this otherness that Dahm concentrates on. Vincent Houben gives an equally useful overview of the Ambon problem. In a potted modern history of the horizontal conflict, however, it might have been helpful to give more weight to the twin (and related) problems of transmigration and shifting control of the provincial administration and bureaucracy. Mary Somers Heidhues provides another account of the plight of the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia, with the bulk of this chapter as an extended analytical book review. In ‘Religion and Identity’, Sri Kuhnt-Saptodewo examines the problem of the Ngaju-Dayak of Kalimantan, many of whom have faced discrimination because of their lack of formal religion. While some converted to Islam (and joined the Malay race: *masuk Melayu*), and others to Christianity, elders of the community aligned the traditional beliefs (*Kaharingan*) with Hinduism for the purpose of slotting into Indonesia’s legal proscription for *agama* (religion) over and above atheism or folk beliefs (*kepercayaan*). Wilfried Wagner’s chapter on the interaction of early German

missionaries with the Toba Batak people demonstrates the clear belief amongst the proselytisers that the Christianisation of the Toba Batak would also lead away from tribalism to a collective consciousness as a *Volksgemeinschaft* (national community).

While the contributors on Indonesia are somewhat negative about the prospects for ethnic minorities (indigenous or settler) considered here, surprisingly the following chapters on the authoritarian polities of Myanmar, Vietnam and Laos are less critical. Annemarie Esche's overview of Myanmar tries hard to convince the reader that the country has improved greatly since 1988, that the West has treated Myanmar badly, that 'Myanmar' is the true name of the country and Western insistence on 'Burma' is 'astonishing' (p. 89), and that the dangerous spectre of separatism is 'hidden behind the battle-cry [of] "federalism"' (p. 90). At the very least, Esche's chapter eschews references that might show Yangon's failed policies – not least of all its indiscriminate victimisation of the Arakanese – and thus provide a more even picture. Chapters by Wilfried Lulei and Thomas Engelbert look at Vietnam, with Lulei drawing the conclusion that without the support of Vietnam's ethnic minorities the Democratic Republic probably could not have survived the anti-colonial war against the French (p. 97). The next two chapters consider Laos. Laohoua Cheutching focuses on the Hmong – made famous through their involvement in America's war in Indochina – and Andreas Schneider gives an overview of the Lao PDR's nationalism: 'Laos is a multi-ethnic state par excellence' (p. 157). Both chapters demonstrate the sheer scale of ethnic diversity in Laos, and, as Laohoua notes, the official count of ethnic groups in Laos over the years has oscillated wildly (p. 143, n. 1). This underlines the fact that much conclusive ethnographic work is still to be done there.

The transition from German to English has obviously not been without its difficulties, although on the whole the translator has made good work of what must have been a challenging assignment. Nonetheless there are some awkward sentences, and a few mistakes in translation, grammatical construction and spellings (including the use of contractions). Vincent Houben's chapter on Ambon has a number of names spelt wrongly, although this, to a lesser extent, is also found elsewhere. These little foibles can be forgiven and forgotten, but a conscious decision by some authors to leave sentences or even entire paragraphs in their original language detracts from the project. Two chapters in particular are liberally peppered with both phrases and long quotations in French (mostly in the notes), while elsewhere Dutch and German appear. It would seem odd to take the trouble of translating a book into English and then assume that the reader can make sense of a second language – particularly French in this case.

Overall, however, this book has a lot to recommend it, and if nothing else is a clear demonstration that Southeast Asian studies in Germany are not only healthy, but quite robust. The initiators of this project are to be commended for bringing this work into the English language where it will enjoy a far greater audience – not just in the Anglo-American world, but in Southeast Asia itself. Unfortunately the same cannot be said of much of Kubitscheck's important works on ethnic minorities and *Nationalitätenpolitik* in Southeast Asia, which have not yet made it into English. It is hoped by this reviewer that it is just a matter of time before that happens.

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*Bitter Flowers, Sweet Flowers: East Timor, Indonesia, and the World Community*

Edited by RICHARD TANTER, MARK SELDEN and STEPHEN R. SHALOM.

Lanham, Md. : Rowan and Littlefield, 2001. Pp. xviii, 291. Maps, Notes, Table, Illustrations, Index.

This particular edited volume on East Timor is truly a montage. The sixteen chapters of *Bitter Flowers, Sweet Flowers* offer quite different angles and insights on East Timor, including one interview and one testimony to Congress, all of which are interspersed with poems (one of which inspires the book title itself) and photos with informative captions. The effect is worthwhile, and all the contributions have something to offer – although some are stronger and more convincing than others.

Some of the chapters are very welcome in that they will engage (but not be limited to) specialists, especially those interested in the run-up to the ballot and the general history of the territory. Geoffrey C. Gunn provides a fascinating historical setting in his chapter ‘The Five-Hundred-Year Timorese *Funu*’ (*Funu* means ‘resistance’ or ‘war’). Sarah Niner pens a highly useful account of the emergence of the National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT) and the evolution of the movements (including Fretilin and Falintil) that were part of the umbrella grouping formed for the 1999 ballot. Arnold S. Kohen writes on the Catholic Church and its role in East Timor, providing good insights into an institution of substantial, and ongoing, importance. Peter Bartu presents the gallery of unlovable rogues (like Guilherme Dos Santos, the self-proclaimed ‘Muhammad Ali of all Bupatis’ (p. 83)) that make up the militias, and some interesting details emerge here about their *modus operandi*. Richard Tanter’s chapter on the role of intelligence in East Timor, although tending often to focus on issues beyond the territory, also adds to the picture. Tanter pulls no punches, accusing Major General Zacky Anwar Makarim (head of the Indonesian Task Force in East Timor) of being the ‘principal coordinator’ of terror surrounding the ballot (p. 192). This conclusion, given the weight of evidential material, is justified, although one may wonder at the claim that ‘East Timor brought down the New Order’ (p. 200) – which for Tanter extends to the Habibie regime. Gerry van Klinken draws on his extensive experience of covering Indonesia to give a very well-crafted overview of East Timor and other cases of secessionism and communal violence within the archipelago.

There are also accounts from contributors who were part of the 1999 referendum process. Geoffrey Robinson’s account is particularly welcome, given his role as an official in the Political Affairs Office in the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) headquarters in Dili. Robinson reveals the negotiations that went on within the UN and the international community and the moral dilemmas faced by UNAMET staff on the ground. While UNAMET actually advised the UN not to proceed with the ballot in 1999, the UN and an interested element of the international community – including Australia, the US and later Portugal, called the ‘Core Group’ – insisted that it go ahead. Robinson, like his head of mission at the time, Ian Martin (*Self-Determination in East Timor: The United Nations, the Ballot, and International Intervention* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001)), concludes with hindsight that under the circumstances pushing ahead was the right option despite the costs. This chapter draws the irresistible conclusion that calling off the referendum would have handed victory to the militias.

Helene van Klinken, as UNAMET's political officer in Ermera, writes a highly interesting account of being on the ground – although her bias against the pro-autonomy side clearly shows through (in light of what happened in East Timor she can surely be forgiven).

For an NGO perspective, Charles Scheiner of the International Federation for East Timor (IFET), which provided the largest number of observers to the referendum, both illuminates and frustrates. Scheiner's five-page historical introduction to his chapter returns to ground already trodden in this volume, but is not as solid. While he (quite rightly) launches a broadside at the UN – 'The U.N. mission was also limited by diplomatic compromises, institutional goals, insufficient political will, and its hierarchical structure' (p. 114) – he not only fails to give flesh to this statement, but neglects to put the role of the NGO observers under the same microscope. Coordination of the observers for the referendum was a weakness of the balloting process – blame for which should rest partly with the UN for not doing the organising and partly with the NGO groups whose leaders failed to reach any kind of accord on the distribution of observers around East Timor. One wonders if it is indicative of that rivalry that of all the groups in East Timor at the time, this chapter makes passing mention of only one other NGO besides IFET itself – the Carter Center. Scheiner also forgets to mention the important point that observing the ballot, as part of the legal provisions, was done by local and foreign NGOs, who were tasked with observing not only the vote, but the conduct of the UN itself.

This book gives considerable space to the role of the world community, as the title indicates. Here there are slightly different nuances that come through from different authors. Most are rightly critical of the historical role of the West in the betrayal of East Timor in 1975 – a line from Emanuel Braz's poem spits out, 'Turn a blind eye, Yes you – blue eyed leader' (p. 77) – but chapters by Robinson and Richard Falk demonstrate a more sophisticated understanding of the global environment and its realities in 1999 than some of the others. Scheiner, for one, saves his venom for the 'hypocritical' nature of US diplomacy (p. 118) – but fails to either give credit to the Clinton administration for the humanitarian intervention or to take to task the substantial portion of the world community who, if it was left to them, would have allowed East Timor to suffer its fate as a chattel of the militias and its TNI backers.

A contribution by Noam Chomsky – who, it must be said, did a tremendous amount to highlight the East Timor problem for many years – places the reader in his world where Washington plays puppet master. The United States is not only guilty for its past role (and that is beyond dispute), but continues to be guilty of more recent iniquities. Amongst his claims is that: 'The [US] administration also took no meaningful action to rescue the several hundred thousand captives held by paramilitaries in Indonesian West Timor' when it was 'within Washington's power' to bring this to an end (pp. 128-9). This seriously overestimates Washington's reach into this environment at a time when not even the Indonesian civilian leadership, nor the military's high command, seem to have had much control over the handling of the refugee camps in West Timor (both then and now). And what is Chomsky suggesting? That military intervention in West Timor was needed? Such an event would have meant war with Indonesia. Or is it that Washington should have used its ability to control Indonesia through financial power? Even after



considerable pressure from the US State Department over the death of a US citizen at Atambua at the hands of Timorese militia, an entirely unsatisfactory verdict was handed down (the charge being incitement to violence and carrying a very light penalty). The US is also taken to task for failing to fund Interfet. US taxpayers could rightly ask why they should be expected to bail out every peacekeeping/making operation when there are others (albeit very few in the hardheaded world of states) who can (and should) take the responsibility. Chomsky also ignores America's rather substantial contribution to the sealift capability of Interfet.

A similarly themed chapter by Wade Huntley and Peter Hayes is guilty of some very loose wording and some very bold claims. The inference that Australia's John Howard, while in opposition, supported using 'irredentist issues' to pressure Indonesia is ludicrous (p. 179). Huntley and Hayes also fall into the trap – which has claimed so many Australian academics and journalists – of stressing sharp partisan differences between the Howard government and its Laborite predecessors on foreign policy. Howard's 'pro-western vision' (p. 181) is hardly a break from the past, nor is it mutually exclusive with Australia's engagement with Asia (being the complex and diverse region that it is). These contributors also tend to describe the interest of foreign governments in the issue of East Timor and humanitarian intervention in Mahathir-esque terms: namely, it involved 'western interests' with Australia playing 'deputy' to the American 'sheriff' (p. 181) – although Howard never actually used these words, being misquoted by an Australian newspaper. This all completely overlooks the fact that there was no objective national interest involved in East Timor for any Western country (regional stability was not at stake either); public pressure to act was enormous and thus subjectively turned the issue into a national one for Australia, New Zealand and others.

There are also some minor hiccoughs that occur in the volume. UNAMET is rendered wrongly throughout as the 'United Nations Assistance Mission in East Timor', when it is the 'United Nations Mission in East Timor'. The term 'Timor', although seemingly in popular usage (including in East Timor itself), should not be used as a synonym for the political entity named East Timor. At least some of these chapters have appeared elsewhere in slightly different form; in these cases the earlier incarnation probably should have been acknowledged. Still, these are all excellent studies and deserve wider circulation.

The overall effect of *Bitter Flowers, Sweet Flowers* is worthwhile and thought-provoking. This volume is to be highly recommended as a reader on East Timor (and not all the chapters have been mentioned here). Even though one may not necessarily see eye-to-eye with all of the chapters – and one suspects the contributors could say the same of each other – this volume is to be recommended. The 'montage', which finishes with a solid and comprehensive concluding section by the editors, works well and will inform future discussion and research on East Timor.

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## Indonesia

### *Between the Folds: Stories of Cloth, Lives, and Travels from Sumba*

By JILL FORSHEE

Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001. Pp. xiv, 265. Maps, Illustrations, Plates, Notes, Bibliography, Index.

The cloths of Sumba are among the most familiar of Indonesian textiles to people outside Indonesia, whether they have encountered them as tourists, through the art market, in popular publications and exhibitions or through anthropological monographs. Scholarly accounts have in the past provided detailed technical information, structural interpretations of designs and analyses of the role of textiles in the broader context of cosmological beliefs, perceptions of gender, space and time and the social organisation of the people of the island.<sup>1</sup> Attention has also been paid to some of the effects of the modernising world on this aspect of what has tended to be regarded as a 'traditional' culture. What more has this book to offer?

Jill Forshee has based her book on experiences in several village environments in Sumba, presenting through 'vignettes' a series of episodes from the life histories of individuals whose stories together provide a view in cross-section of the social scope of East Sumbanese cloth. Her analysis reveals, perhaps not unsurprisingly, that changes in the market for cloth and in opportunities for travel have affected social patterns, in turn influencing the forms of the textiles. The degree to which individuals have chosen or been able to respond to these opportunities, and the varied and contradictory results which have ensued, form the subject of the book.

The volume is divided into three parts. In the first part Forshee sketches some of the social and historical context of the island, drawing on previous studies in order to summarise the elements which will play a part in her analysis. She touches on changing perceptions of ethnicity, cosmological ideas and religious affiliations. Developments in patterns of trade are also described, particularly in relation to notions of gender and mobility and how gender roles are perceived and acted out. An account of the uses, manufacturing techniques and iconography of the textiles follows, presumably intended for those readers unfamiliar with existing and more rigorous accounts. Some space is also given to the tensions between the way status was achieved in the past and how new opportunities for travel and trade in textiles have disrupted this. The section ends with some comments on the effects of increased demand for the cloth from beyond its traditional sphere.

The second part contains case studies of individuals of both sexes from three different village communities. The individual stories are engaging and revealing, though this is sometimes less for what they tell us about the social life of textiles than for the way they reveal some other aspect of life in a Sumbanese village. Towards the end of each

1 Marie Jeanne Adams, 'Structural Aspects of East Sumbanese Art', in *The Flow of Life: Essays on Eastern Indonesia*, ed. James J. Fox (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1980), pp. 208-20; Janet Hoskins, 'Why Do Ladies Sing the Blues? Indigo Dyeing, Cloth Production, and Gender Symbolism in Kodi', in *Cloth and Human Experience*, ed. Annette B. Weiner and Jane Scheider (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989), pp. 141-73; Danielle Geirnaert-Martin, *The Woven Land of Laboya: Socio-Cosmic Ideas and Values in West Sumba, Eastern Indonesia* (Leiden: Centre of Non-Western Studies, Leiden University, 1992).

individual's narrative, Forshee makes connections between her own observations and the ideas of other scholars in relation to such matters as gendered discourse, economic innovation, the social life of commodities and so on. These comments, linking aspects of the stories to a range of theoretical insights, are sometimes useful, though occasionally they seem to have been artificially engineered so that every section can be structured in the same way.

The third part of the book is also divided into three chapters, this time dealing with textile-related encounters between some of the characters we have already met and various Westerners in a variety of contexts: an exhibition set up in a village visited by tour groups, a series of episodes during visits to villages by independent travellers, and finally some excursions away from the island itself. These events are evocatively described and the misunderstandings, unease, confusion, hilarity or – in one instance – fear occasioned by the intercultural confrontations are set out. The anecdotes become compelling as the reader learns to recognise the personalities involved, rather like a soap opera in which the academic interpolations become, like advertisements, a slightly irritating interruption.

Forshee's conclusions are brief and carefully composed. She admits to 'avoiding casting people's lives within analytical rubrics', her intention being to allow these to 'emerge through the chapters'. In recognising the 'overlapping complexities' of her study, she refuses to draw definitive lines, preferring an 'open-ended ethnographic vision' (p. 195). She does reveal how individuals' relationships to the textiles which they design, produce or sell in the marketplace and the journeys which they take differ in relation to each person's own social position and understanding of the world. In this way, her study is less an account of cloth than of people, with the textiles forming the framework and defining the pathways of her analysis rather than providing its focus.

The allusive and at times awkward style of writing means that parts of this book are not an easy read and there are occasions where the meaning is obscured by infelicitous choices of vocabulary or syntax. There are a few inaccuracies both in the text itself and in the referencing, regrettable in an academic volume. Nevertheless, Forshee has taken on board a great many recent developments in anthropological thought, balancing reflexivity, diachronicity, gender awareness, inclusion of informants' voices and so on to produce a study which answers all the demands made of contemporary researchers. The resulting book may lose some degree of depth in accepting so diligently such an all-inclusive brief, but it has merit in the freshness of the stories which it presents to its readers and in helping to extend the scope of the analysis of material culture in South-East Asia.

FIONA KERLOGUE

*The Horniman Museum, London*

*His Word Is the Truth: Haji Ibrahim's Letters and Other Writings*

By JAN VAN DER PUTTEN

Leiden: Research School of Asian, African and Amerindian Studies, 2001. Pp. xi, 286. Maps. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index.

Many years ago John Bastin complained that Malay history lacked 'a personality base' because existing sources do not allow for an exploration of the character and emotions of so many key players. Admittedly it is not easy for those using court chronicles and early European documents to depict historical actors as knowable people or to attain what Bastin called 'an internal point of orientation'.<sup>1</sup> However, one possible means of accessing the private domain may be through personal correspondence, and we are fortunate to have some important sources from the nineteenth-century Malay world. In 1995 Jan van der Putten and Al Azhar published a collection of over a hundred letters from the respected Riau author, Raja Ali Haji, to the European linguist Hermann von de Wall (1807-73), who was at that time compiling a Malay dictionary. In this work, entitled *Di dalam Berkelalan Persahabatan; In Everlasting Friendship: Letters from Raja Ali Haji* (Leiden: Leiden University Department of Southeast Asian Literatures and Culture), the reader encounters frequent mention of Haji Ibrahim, whom von de Wall also employed as a Malay language informant. The present volume, bringing together as yet untapped letters and other writings by Haji Ibrahim, shows that he, like Raja Ali Haji, became von de Wall's friend as well as colleague. In many ways, therefore, *His Word is the Truth* can be regarded as a sequel to *Di dalam Berkelalan Persahabatan*, albeit more mature and sophisticated. Not only does van der Putten deepen our understanding of the ways in which technology and monetisation increasingly affected Malay literary life, but by allowing a previously shadowy figure to assume a degree of individuality, this book also provides some entry into the mental world of an educated Malay man in the mid-nineteenth century.

Nonetheless, despite van der Putten's informed and insightful discussion, Haji Ibrahim remains something of an enigma, since biographical information is limited and even his date of birth (around 1809 or 1810?) remains uncertain. His father, the Riau *Syahbandar* (harbourmaster), was of Bugis descent, and Malay sources indicate that the family maintained close connections with the Bugis-descended hierarchy on the island of Penyengat, where Ibrahim acquired much of his knowledge of Riau court traditions. As a young man Ibrahim made the pilgrimage to Mecca, thus earning the title of Haji. By the 1830s his name appears in both Dutch and Malay sources in connection with joint efforts to stamp out piracy; as *Orang Kaya Muda* (a member of the elite), he was also in charge of the *orang laut*, or sea peoples. In 1842 he was appointed Superintendent of the Riau islands, and subsequently became a trusted point of liaison between the Dutch administration and the Bugis leaders, and occasionally the Malay court on Lingga. His role in settling disputes among Chinese groups in 1856 was particularly influential. In 1868 Haji Ibrahim's contribution to the functioning of the Riau administration was recognised when he succeeded to his father's title of *Syahbandar*. His death cannot be dated precisely, but occurred sometime between 1873 and 1876.

1 John Bastin, 'Problems of Personality in the Reinterpretation of Modern Malayan History,' in *Malayan and Indonesian Studies: Essays Presented to Sir Richard Winstedt on his Eighty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. John Bastin and R. Roolvink (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), p. 152.

As this book shows, however, Haji Ibrahim had another 'career' as a researcher, an authority on Malay language and culture, an informant for colonial linguists and a compiler of Malay teaching materials in his own right. In some cases, Haji Ibrahim's input can be tracked in the individual entries in von de Wall's Malay–Dutch dictionary, and it was his name that was put forward when the publication of a series of Malay dialogues for the training of Dutch officials was proposed. An analysis of the content and style of Haji Ibrahim's letters and other writings could easily have deteriorated into a dry textual exegesis, but van der Putten has avoided this by consistently working to infuse his discussion with a sense of 'personality'. The tone is set at the beginning of the study, when van der Putten transforms the usual formulaic preface into a 'letter' that explains how he came to the topic and provides an engaging overview of the book as a whole. Making full use of libraries and recently published material, the first chapter treats the Malay tradition of letter-writing, noting that from at least the late eighteenth century there is evidence of increasing personal correspondence, a reflection of an expanding literacy in the population at large. As a result, some Malays began to question the necessity to follow the accepted formulae which had long governed 'institutional' letters and which were considered an integral part of the Malay epistolary heritage. For example, Abdullah Munsyi, the scribe of Stamford Raffles, was highly critical of the persistent use of set phrases and greetings, which he felt lacked the sincerity of individualised expressions. By contrast, Raja Ali Haji seems to have been more concerned to maintain established conventions, although his choice of style was contingent on context and his own relationship to the person to whom he was writing. Notes to a close friend such as von de Wall were likely to be more relaxed than a formal letter sent to a court dignitary. The fact that he, like Haji Ibrahim, began to sign letters is also indicative of a shift towards more personalised correspondence.

In his second chapter, van der Putten draws his readers into the intellectual world of Tanjung Pinang and the island of Penyengat in the mid-nineteenth century. The chapter also explains the motivations behind the colonial government's Malay–Dutch dictionary project, the reasons for the selection of Riau as a base, and the basis of the collaboration among Raja Ali Haji, Haji Ibrahim and von de Wall. In order to evoke the atmosphere of nineteenth-century Riau, and as a solution to the problem of inserting 'personality' into his textual discussion, van der Putten has employed an intriguing methodological device. From a range of fragments – newspaper clippings, Dutch and Malay letters, Malay poetry, official reports and the occasional individual memoir – he has composed a number of fictional but still plausible diary entries that could conceivably have been written by Malay and Dutch figures at the time. While some readers might consider this a bold move, particularly in regard to projecting Malay attitudes, I think most would agree that the evidence has been used judiciously and that the strategy is ultimately successful in imparting a sense of engagement with 'real people'.

Chapter 3, the heart of the book, presents a transliteration and an English summary of the 89 letters from Haji Ibrahim found in the von de Wall files, now housed in the National Library of Indonesia. Certainly the subtleties of language and the nuances of detail will be appreciated only by those who can read the Malay original, but even a cursory glance through the abstracts will make evident the dedication with which Haji Ibrahim approached his assigned tasks. His diligence in compiling lists of little-used

terms and his alertness to the distinctiveness of Malay dialects speak to the high standards he set for his own work and his anxiety to meet von de Wall's expectations. At the same time, the letters provide glimpses into Haji Ibrahim's other life, such as the tensions in court circles among the younger generation and his relationship with his social superior, Raja Ali Haji. Above all, however, they reveal the intimacy that developed between himself and von de Wall, touchingly demonstrated in Haji Ibrahim's care to seek out the kinds of delicacies his friend desired – shrimp paste, durian conserves, pastry and biscuits. Yet the exchange of such gifts was not purely one-way; Haji Ibrahim's request for butter and cheese and his expression of thanks for two bottles of 'European fruit' raise interesting questions regarding the role of food in cross-cultural reciprocities.

As Chapter 4 shows, Haji Ibrahim's career demonstrates that he was emblematic of a new kind of Malay official who could work effectively with the colonial regime while never forgetting his responsibilities as an official of the local court. This is not to say, of course, that he operated without self-interest, for in affirming his links with the most influential groups in Riau society he was also trying to survive financially, to support his family and to provide for the future of his sons. Yet Haji Ibrahim's anxiety that his own reputation and that of Riau should remain unsullied reflects his larger concern with the maintenance of Malay linguistic standards as the printing press and spread of vernacular education steadily increased the pool of literate Malays. These changes (themselves just one facet of a range of developments associated with the colonial presence) form a backdrop to the final chapter, which discusses Haji Ibrahim's other writings, particularly the Malay dialogues he developed (originally published as *Tjakap<sup>2</sup> Rampai<sup>2</sup>*). Sadly, only 32 of the original 126 conversations have been preserved, but they remain a valuable source of information regarding many aspects of Malay life during the period. Several, for instance, deal with practical subjects like the employment of workmen and the sale of vegetables. However, there are also other conversations, less 'practical' in nature; in the context of Riau-Johor history it is significant that the first dialogue concerns the division of the Malay world in the 1820s. Another, in which Haji Ibrahim obviously took much pride and which eventually amounted to 55 pages, concerned the ceremony of *berlenggang perut*, rocking the stomach during the seventh month of pregnancy. Haji Ibrahim's desire for accuracy in this and other conversations concerned with birth rituals is once again evident, this time in his careful consultations with midwives.

Nevertheless, we cannot assume that these pieces are innocent reflections of Haji Ibrahim's own preoccupations. For instance, although the insertion of dates in one conversation may have been intended to convey an impression of verisimilitude, that they round off neatly in Christian terms probably reflects von de Wall's editorial hand. As van der Putten points out, colonial officials also decided to omit two 'immoral' dialogues that treated miraculous births, arguing that these not only promoted Islam but would also be unsuitable should the published conversations be used for instruction in vernacular schools. The evidence of European oversight and intervention raises questions as to whether the criticism of Malay rulers (here put into the mouths of ordinary people) expresses Haji Ibrahim's personal convictions or whether he was incorporating opinions he attributed to a potential European audience.

The time that van der Putten has invested in archival research, his careful reading of secondary sources, and the thought he has given to organising his material are apparent

on virtually every page of this book. Inevitably, perhaps, some queries arise. Supporting the actual discussion of Haji Ibrahim's letters by providing a full English translation in Chapter 5 is useful, since only abstracts are given in Chapter 3, but it seems hardly necessary to repeat some of the Malay transcriptions (e.g. pp. 95, 187 [letter 5]; 98, 198 [letter 9]; 105, 190 [letter 15]; and elsewhere). The computer-generated index is disappointing (how does one deal with 36 undifferentiated citations under 'manuscript' or 54 under 'Encik Abdullah?'), and the decision to omit properly organised entries for von de Wall, Raja Ali Haji and Haji Ibrahim himself is difficult to defend, especially since personal information about the latter is scattered throughout the text. In some cases the integration of sections that seem to have been written separately is uneasy; for example, the transition from discussions of opium and gambling to representation of the self in letters (pp. 239-44) is strained to say the least.

While the most historically questionable tactic is van der Putten's inclusion of fictive diaries, he indicates in his closing chapter (again a return to the 'Malay-style' letter) that he was fully aware of the risks incurred. He justifies his reconstructions on the grounds that the Malay epistolary tradition meant that the personal letters he used, while providing far more access to the 'interior mind' than official correspondence, still left so much unstated. We have no sense, for instance, of Haji Ibrahim's reactions to the death of his new-born daughter, a tragedy imparted to von de Wall as a simple piece of information followed by a request for young pineapple plants (p. 144). From this vantage point, it could be argued, the final result vindicates an approach in which the historical imagination is an important scholarly tool. Although we can only guess at Haji Ibrahim's physical appearance (possibly one of the individuals in a rare photograph of the sultan's entourage in Batavia?), he emerges in *His Word is the Truth* as appealingly human. Providing a 'personality' base to pre-twentieth-century Malay history may remain an elusive goal, but this kind of scholarly research encourages the belief that attaining Bastin's 'internal point of orientation' may not be completely impossible. As in his earlier work, van der Putten has also shown how intellectual affinities and shared interests can forge strong links between individuals who come from very different cultures. Appropriately, the final letter in this collection, written three months before von de Wall's death and towards the end of his own life, contains an assurance from Haji Ibrahim that he is still searching for the fish preserve and the shrimp relish his Dutch friend has requested.

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*Representing the Japanese Occupation of Indonesia: Personal Testimonies and Public Images in Indonesia, Japan, and the Netherlands*

Edited by REMCO RABEN

Zwolle: Waanders Publishers; and Amsterdam: Netherlands Institute for War Documentation, 1999. Pp. 239. Photographs, Illustrations, Notes.

Historical scholarship of the past decade has made us familiar with the multiple and mutable nature of social memory and its uneasy, when not outright oppositional, relationship to institutionalised versions of the national past. A number of recent studies in particular deal with the plural memories and contested historical narratives of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and the Nanjing massacre;<sup>1</sup> as for the issue of the 'comfort women', there exists a separate body of literature. The 1994 controversy around the eventually cancelled Smithsonian Institution's National Air Space Museum *Enola Gay* exhibition is a potent demonstration of how contentious the attempt at representing the Pacific War across national, ethnic and gender boundaries can be.<sup>2</sup> It also provides a significant contrast to the exhibition *Nederlanders-Japanners-Indonesiërs. De Japanse bezetting van Nederlands-Indië herinnerd*, held at Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum in the latter half of 1999 and brought to Japan the following year (notably as part of the celebrations for the 400th anniversary of Dutch–Japanese relations), in conjunction with which the volume under review was published.

While featuring the production hallmarks of an exhibition catalogue – the album format, the coated paper, and of course the rich iconographic apparatus (including reproductions of archival and contemporary photographs, film stills, posters, comics and drawings) – *Representing the Japanese Occupation of Indonesia* represents, in fact, a valuable piece of scholarship on its own. The twelve essays in the volume explore issues that lie at the intersection of personal memories, national memory and public representations of history from the viewpoints of Indonesia, Japan and the Netherlands – the three countries that, in the editor's words, 'were involved in the Japanese occupation of the Indonesian archipelago ... [and] experienced and interpreted the war in [their] own way' (p. 7). Accordingly, the volume is structured in two parts preceded by the editor's introduction. Part I, 'Memory and Nation', is comprised of three illuminating essays on the collective memory of the occupation in Indonesia (by W. H. Frederick), Japan (by Haruko T. Cook), and the Netherlands (by Elsbeth Locher-Scholten). Part II, 'Testimonies and Representations', is also tripartite along national lines. The section on Indonesia contains essays on oral memories and both literary and filmic representations of the occupation along with brief descriptions of individual war witnesses; the section on Japan, essays on the internment camps and filmic representations of Japanese imperialism in Southeast Asia, as well as 'snapshots' of Japanese veterans, history textbooks and films; and the section on the Netherlands, essays about internees' diaries, literature on captivity, and films and documentaries plus brief analyses of memorial ceremonies, a 1960s TV documentary and a 1997 feature film.

The essays show how, in the immediate post-war period, the Japanese occupation of the

1 *Hiroshima in History and Memory*, ed. M. J. Hogan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); *The Nanjing Massacre in History and Historiography*, ed. J. A. Fogel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

2 See *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past*, ed. Edward T. Linenthal and Tom Engelhardt (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1996).



Indonesian archipelago during 1942-5 was accorded a marginal place in both Japanese and Dutch national memories, albeit for different reasons. In Japan, it was regarded as just one facet of the war that had brought about the atomic conflagration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, while in the Netherlands it was overshadowed by the memory of the Nazi occupation of the motherland and pushed further to the margins by the end of Dutch colonial rule in Indonesia. In later years, the ceremonial remembrance of fallen Japanese soldiers (with its nationalistic undertone that the post-war climate prevented from being articulated elsewhere) was mirrored by the silencing of the survivors who might have disrupted the official national memory of the war, while in the Netherlands the social remembrance of the war followed a fluctuating pattern of highs and lows, with peaks at the time of Emperor Hirohito's visits in 1971 and again in the late 1980s, which saw an unprecedented surge of activism by organisations of war veterans and internees. In newly independent Indonesia, on the other hand, memory of the Japanese occupation (initially welcomed by Sukarno and the nationalist movement) was first subsumed ambiguously under the memory of the liberation struggle and then given iconic status, and thus neutralised, in the New Order's narrative of nation-building. Specifically, Ethan Mark argues in his essay that the oral history project conducted between 1973 and 1993 by Indonesian academics, who recorded some 800 interviews, was co-opted by the state and failed to open up a space of public representation, with the voices of ethnic minorities and the working class being notably absent. And, indeed, only since the late 1990s has the demand for compensation by Indonesian men forced into labour and military service and women forced into sexual slavery grown louder.

It is not surprising that representations in literature, comics and films provide even more telling indications as to the differences not only in the memorialisation of the Japanese occupation in each of the three countries, but also in the various artistic expressions themselves. Thus, if Indonesian novels oscillate between the official representation of the Japanese period as a prelude to the independence struggle and a more problematic rendition that takes into account the reality of collaborationism, films more simplistically emphasise oppression by foreign soldiers – be they Japanese or the returning Dutch in 1945 – as the period's dominant experience. Japanese films, on the other hand, already deployed as propaganda tools during the war period, have tended to emphasise the exotic as well as erotic nature of the people of Indonesia, thus contributing to the notorious collective amnesia regarding war crimes. As for the Dutch public images, the traumatic memory of dislocation, internment (for women and children) and forced labour (for men) articulated in published camp diaries and memoirs has had increasingly to confront the inequity of colonialism and their own racist attitudes, which have made the stereotypical representation of Japanese cruelty more problematic.

While refraining from judgemental pronouncements, all the essays in the volume scrutinise insightfully the ambiguities and contradictions underlying the social practices of remembering and memorialising the Japanese occupation of Indonesia. Its lavish production aside, this volume marks an important contribution to both the cultural history of imperialism and conflict in Southeast Asia and the larger scholarship on memory and historical representations.

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*Colonial 'Reformation' in the Highlands of Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, 1892-1995*

By ALBERT SCHRAUWERS

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000. Pp. xii, 279. Maps, Photographs, Notes, Bibliography, Index.

Central Sulawesi for a long time remained peripheral to Dutch interests in the Netherlands East Indies; little was known about the peoples living there, who were left to their own devices. The close of the nineteenth century, however, brought a sudden change in this state of affairs. In the 1890s, a gold rush in Northern Sulawesi prompted widespread prospecting in parts of Central Sulawesi not yet under Dutch control, and Dutch concerns mounted about the possibility of other colonial claims being made in the area. By 1895, a *controleur* and ten-man garrison had been established at Poso – a tenuous and ineffective beginning to Dutch administrative control. Subsequently, in 1905, the Dutch found sufficient reason to mount military expeditions against the South Sulawesi kingdoms of Bone and Luwu, and after this the whole of Sulawesi was soon incorporated under their control.

Central Sulawesi occupies a somewhat unusual position in Indonesian ethnography. In 1892 the Netherlands Missionary Society appointed two men, Albert C. Kruyt and Nicholaüs Adriani, to open a mission post at Poso. Kruyt and Adriani, both notable scholars, exemplified a radically new approach to missionisation, one that relied heavily on the ethnographic study of the society to be converted. Although they failed to make a single convert for fifteen years, they compiled some of the most massive ethnographies ever written, as well as dictionaries and grammars. It was they who classified the peoples of Central Sulawesi as 'Toraja' (a label that was later to be rejected by all except the Sa'dan Toraja of South Sulawesi). Their three volumes about the 'East (or Bare'e) Toraja', who today call themselves To Pamona, form the subject of Albert Schrauwers' book, while four volumes on the 'West Toraja' (comprising a number of groups who now prefer to be separately named, principally the To Kaili, To Kulawi, and To Lore) made these two of the most thoroughly documented areas of the outer islands at the time.

Ironically, after this initial explosion of ethnographic inquiry almost the entire century was to elapse before any new studies appeared to document the enormous transformations that Central Sulawesi societies had by that time undergone. Schrauwers' work is based on thorough archival research in the Netherlands, as well as two years of fieldwork with the To Pamona – much of it inescapably spent in attendance at church services and prayer meetings. This book is thus to be welcomed warmly as one of the most detailed analyses so far, both of how these transformations were wrought, and of the sometimes surprising continuities of social organisation and values that, in spite of such radical change, can still be discerned in To Pamona society today. Schrauwers begins with an examination of the Dutch 'tribe' at the close of the nineteenth century, which sheds light on the very particular combination of political and religious ideas that the missionaries brought with them to Central Sulawesi. He then goes on to provide a close analysis of the colonial incorporation of the region, the problems experienced by the mission, and the pressures to which local 'culture' and 'religion' have more recently been obliged to conform under the politics of Suharto's New Order era.

Kruyt and Adriani's aim was to find a way of integrating Christianity into local

social structures, in order eventually to transform them. The influence of the new colonial administration was to aid them considerably in this endeavour. Several features of indigenous social arrangements – notably, longhouse residence, headhunting, and the exhumation of the bones of the dead for the celebration of secondary funerals – appeared especially objectionable to the colonial authorities, and their prohibition by the Dutch government was bound to lead to profound social dislocation. As in many other parts of the archipelago, the inhabitants were quickly obliged to move from their original villages, located on defensible mountain tops, to more easily supervised sites on the valley floor, where they were at the same time made to give up swidden farming and receive instruction in wet rice agriculture. Furthermore, a vital feature of the To Pamona's indigenous religion, one which was hardly likely to find favour with the patriarchal outlook of their Dutch Calvinist mentors, was the importance of female shamans, who undertook soul journeys in trance in order to cure illness. Within Kruyt's evolutionist theories of religion, this aspect of To Pamona practice was condemned as its most 'primitive' and superstitious manifestation, and women were to be systematically excluded by him from positions of authority in the church.

The central section of the book gives an ethnographically rich picture of contemporary kinship relations within and between households, the distribution of land, and patterns of 'shared poverty'. These, Schrauwens argues – far from being evidence of a residual 'peasant' mentality standing in the way of capitalist penetration – have evolved in conjunction with economic transformations, specifically the Dutch-engineered switch from swidden to wet rice cultivation. Nor does shared poverty preclude the creation and maintenance of hierarchical relations between elder and younger kin. A wide variety of strategies are used to move members of the extended kin group between households in a way that creates patron–client relations between wealthier senior members and the children of more marginal households, who are frequently taken in as dependants. The persistence of tradition is partly revealed in the continued importance of exchange networks based upon the extended kin group.

One major context for the functioning of these networks is in the arrangement of marriage ceremonies, which become a means by which older and wealthier 'patrons' demonstrate generosity while 'investing' in their younger dependants, over whose loyalties they can then claim greater control. Whereas in precolonial society secondary funerals were the most important rituals, weddings have now taken their place as the most spectacular social occasions, as among the Bugis of South Sulawesi. They provide key opportunities for sponsors to build their social reputations as feast-givers. Within the overarching ideology of generosity, which prohibits any appearance of calculation, the actual necessity for a judicious balancing of one's giving and receiving is nicely revealed through the book's case studies. At the same time, Schrauwens shows how the system tends toward inflation over time – much like the feasting economy of the Sa'dan Toraja, which has retained its original focus on funerals. The embedding of individuals in these exchange networks remains as inescapable for the To Pamona as it is for the Toraja, even though their social duties may be felt as burdensome. Rather than defining these relations as wholly traditional, however, Schrauwens points out the extent to which in fact they represent a commodification of relationships, as well as a form of 'insurance' of subsistence needs.

The final section of the book describes the ritual and religious transformations of To Pamona society. Kruyt, having realised the hopelessness of waiting for individual religious conversions, increasingly sought ways to involve the society as a whole. A major means of imposing church discipline (as happened over a long period in the history of the early church in Europe) was to lay claim to the authorisation of marriages. No marriages were to be recognised as valid unless they took place in church. An important means by which the superior status of elders was inscribed in traditional To Pamona society was their right to give 'advice' to the rest of the community, in many contexts including something as ordinary as the daily conclusion of the family mealtime. This fitted well with the importance ascribed to the 'Word' in Calvinist doctrine; the preaching of ministers and church elders has in a sense been grafted on to this already existing pattern, but in a way that has rendered the authority relationships involved more one-sided than they used to be.

Finally, the incorporation of feasting as an integral feature of numerous religious rituals today stands as one of the most intriguing aspects of social continuity in To Pamona society. Feasting, as Schrauwens points out, does not in itself carry a religious meaning, but its attachment to any occasion privileges that occasion as important, while requiring an acting-out of social relationships of hierarchy and cooperation. 'The church has grown and prospered', he concludes, 'because its incorporation of To Pamona "religion" simultaneously captured a kin-ordered social process' (p.187). As a result, To Pamona ethnic identity, as well as images of 'tradition', have been reconstrued in a distinctly modernist idiom – a process which Schrauwens rightly suggests has parallels in other regions and religions of Indonesia. The book thus makes an important contribution not only to Sulawesi studies, but to our understandings of colonial and post-colonial social and religious transformations generally.

A concluding chapter points out the violent ups and downs of historical events over the past century that belie the idea of Central Sulawesi as an isolated backwater; as the author points out, 'almost every adult in Tentena had experienced personal loss through the ongoing eruptions of larger social movements into the highlands' (p. 227). The author had time, before the book went to press, to comment on the closure of the Suharto era, but not on the recent disastrous eruption of ethnic violence in and around Poso. Tentena, the focus of Schrauwens' fieldwork, is the origin-village of the now overwhelmingly Protestant To Pamona. This no doubt explains the ethnically unitary picture presented in the book. The author also discusses the troubled times of the 1950s when guerrillas of first the Darul Islam movement and then Permesta invaded the area. The newly independent Christian Church of Central Sulawesi consolidated itself, being the only organisation capable of fulfilling many administrative, political and social functions in this chaotic period. Arguably, we could still use a fuller exploration of historical relations with nearby Muslim populations. As Schrauwens points out, an explicit aim of Dutch policy in encouraging missionisation, here as in other highland areas of the archipelago, was to provide a bulwark against the spread of Islamic influence. But to what extent have To Pamona themselves constructed an identity in opposition to a neighbouring Islamic Other? Brief mention is also made of the expropriation of To Pamona lands for New Order transmigration projects; in neighbouring areas of Central Sulawesi (perhaps here also?) voluntary migrations, too, have contributed to the

development of a complex and fragmented ethnic distribution, leading to heightened competition over land and resources. Perhaps in future work the author will extend his insightful analyses to contribute to our understanding of recent ethnic polarisation in the Poso region.

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*Keren! Indonesian 1*

By IAN J. WHITE

Sydney: Longman, 2002. *Indonesian Course Book 1*. Pp. ix, 214. Colour illustrations and photographs. *Indonesian Activity Book 1*. Pp. iv, 139. Illustrations and photographs. *Indonesian Teacher's Book 1*. Pp. xx, 124. Maps, illustrations and photographs. *Keren 1 on CD*.

Despite the new title, *Keren* is actually a revision of the best-selling Indonesian textbook *Bahasa Tetanggaku* by the same author. With 190,000 copies sold since its first appearance in 1994, *Bahasa Tetanggaku* has successfully established itself as the standard Indonesian textbook in Australian high schools. *Keren* too is mainly designed for the Australian market, as the material was written to meet local curriculum requirements and features Australian and Indonesian characters.

Both course and activity books are arranged in seven topics featuring a young Australian girl named Nicky, her family, her friends in her Indonesian class in Australia, and people in Indonesia with whom she has developed friendships. Nicky's parents live in Jakarta, where her father works for a mining company. Nicky is in boarding school in Australia, but travels to Indonesia to be with her family for part of each year. Each topic of this course begins with a cartoon comic strip dialogue featuring Nicky, her friends and family. This approach is especially appealing to the younger learner, but even more mature students will appreciate the colourful look of the book.

Although very similar to its predecessor, *Keren* is certainly the better product offering a range of improvements. It is accompanied by a very useful Teacher's Book containing excellent resources, suggestions of teaching strategies, supplementary activities, teaching plans and even a Listening Test CD. The topics of both course and activity book are also available on CD-ROM, thus enabling students to conveniently jump with the click of a button from the course book to the matching page in the activity book. From this Adobe Acrobat file the student can launch separate applications to activate the sound for the dialogues, as well as another new feature called the Interactive Indonesian extension activities. The latter is a valuable improvement providing many activities ranging from traditional multiple-choice questions to drag-and-drop activities, games, quizzes and even a facility to record one's own voice and compare it with that of a native speaker. Another improvement is the excellent interactive Website that is far more appealing and comprehensive than any other Indonesian language Internet site.

However, there are some problems with the series. It is a bit disturbing that the range of possible answers in the interactive exercises on both CD and Internet is often very

limited. When the student is prompted to ask an Indonesian woman for the location of her house, the programme will only accept one answer. It can be frustrating for the student who has just learned that the position of subject and predicate in Indonesian can often be swapped to have that the perfectly correct sentence ‘*Rumah Ibu Elli di mana?*’ (‘Where is Mrs. Elli’s house?’) dismissed as wrong. The only answer accepted by the program is ‘*Di mana rumah Ibu Elli?*’, and even the common variant ‘*Di mana rumahnya Ibu Elli?*’ is not accepted.

Every topic contains well-balanced speaking, reading, listening and writing activities, but for the older learner in particular it does not provide enough information on grammar. Students are constantly confronted with structures that are not explained, and when explanations are given, they are often oversimplified. An example is the author’s explanation of the plural: ‘When it comes to making nouns plural, Indonesian must be the easiest language in the world. There’s no need to think about adding “s” or dropping “y” and adding “ies”. Just say the word twice!’ (Course Book 1, p. 73) The student is further reminded that obvious plurals are not indicated by reduplication (‘I brush my teeth’ – ‘*Saya gosok gigi?*’), and that the reduplication should also be dropped when a plural indicator such as *banyak* (much, many) is added. The example given – namely that *anak-anak* is the plural of *anak* (child), and that one must use *banyak anak* and not *banyak anak-anak* – not only is wrong but also shows how superficially grammar is treated. The student is further confused when the structure that has just been presented as incorrect is used only two chapters later, with ‘*banyak toko-toko*’ used for ‘many shops’ (Activity Book 1, p. 87).

While the author emphasises authenticity, which is laudable, many of the voice recordings are ‘authentic’ in that the voices of the Australian characters are spoken by Australians who have the tendency to pronounce mid-vowels as diphthongs; ‘*kota*’ (city), for instance, is time and again pronounced as ‘*kouta*’. More care could have been used in teaching young Australians how to correctly pronounce words before they were recorded. I also found it rather unconvincing that ‘*Michelle dari Perancis*’ (Michelle from France) speaks Indonesian with a heavy Australian accent.

It is also all too obvious that the author of *Keren* is not only not a native speaker, but not even a near-native speaker. The language of the dialogues is sort of a hybrid between formal and informal style, which does not help students to distinguish clearly between the two modes of speech. Some colloquialisms are used in the dialogues including *keren* (cool) – which, however, almost always appears in inappropriate contexts. The most essential words, such as *ndak* and *nggak* (the colloquial variants of *tidak*, ‘no’, ‘not’), are completely missing and only the formal form is used. Also, at least a few of the many particles that pepper the speech of Indonesians such as *sih*, *lho*, *nih*, *tuh*, *toh*, *deh*, and *dong* could have been introduced in the dialogues.

There are only a few obvious mistakes in *Keren 1*, but it is disturbing that these mistakes were not corrected in the transition from *Bahasa Tetanggaku*. It is annoying to see that, after so many years of wrong use in *Bahasa Tetanggaku*, a mistake as blatant as the translation of *gagah* (sturdily built) as ‘handsome’ (which is always *ganteng*) has not been corrected. ‘*Saya kurang pasti?*’ is still used when they actually want to say ‘*saya kurang yakin?*’ (‘I’m not quite sure’). *Pandai* and *pintar* (‘bright’ or ‘capable’ versus ‘skilled’) are confused, a doctor’s praxis becomes *kantor dokter* (doctor’s office), ‘sour’ is translated as

*pahit* (bitter), and the subtle difference between *tolong* and *bantu* ('help' versus 'assist') is ignored, to mention only a few of the far too numerous examples. Although it must be acknowledged that the language of *Keren* has slightly improved when compared to *Bahasa Tetanggaku*, the persistence of a large number of cases in which the speech just doesn't sound native but more like an Australian's Indonesian is one of the text's weakest points, along with the lack of attention to structures.

On the other hand, *Keren* has improved what was already a well laid-out and fun-to-use textbook for the Indonesian language with stimulating visual presentations and a true multimedia approach. It can only be hoped that the author and the publisher will have a better look at the text before launching Stages 2 and 3, which are scheduled for publication in September 2002 and in September 2003.

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### Malaysia

*Emergency Propaganda: The Winning of Hearts and Minds, 1948-1958*

By KUMAR RAMAKRISHNA

Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2001. Pp. xii, 306. Map, Notes, Bibliography, Index.

This painstakingly researched study of propaganda in the Malayan Emergency (1948-60) should be of interest to historians of insurgency in general as well as of propaganda. It is admirable not only for its range, and its richly textured use of sources, but also for its conceptualisation of propaganda. The author, Kumar Ramakrishna, emphasises that propaganda consists of both propaganda by word and propaganda by deed. Written propaganda early in the Emergency (1948-50) therefore tended to be ineffective, as almost random arrests and reprisals and an official emphasis on repatriating Chinese detainees negated the message that the government was the people's protector. That message only began to resonate as resettlement put most Chinese squatters within government administration by 1951, and allowed the delivery of protection and services – perimeter lighting, running water, schools and village halls – from 1952. Even better, from 1953 some areas were declared 'white' (with all restrictions removed) as an incentive for good behaviour elsewhere, and then surrender policies were refined. The government also directly addressed its own attitudes with, for instance, the police force's 'Operation Service'. Word and deed increasingly converged; before 1951, however, the two diverged. Still worse, by advertising insurgent atrocities, government leaflets sometimes did the insurgents' work for them.

In addition, and despite the 'Hearts and Minds' in the book's title, there is a strong message that propaganda was not about winning hearts *per se*. It was more about creating confidence, even amongst people who remained lukewarm or pro-communist. Here Kumar builds on the insights of Lucien Pye's *Guerrilla Communism in Malaya* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956) and Loh Kok Wah's *Beyond the Tin Mines*

(Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1988), which noted that insurgents and their supporters were motivated more by personal advancement and socio-economic matters than by ideology or nationalism. Building on this, and on Surrendered Enemy Personnel (SEP) statements, Kumar argues that practical deeds, such as rewards and providing land were more important than abstract political rights.

For Kumar 'confidence' in the government as protector, provider and eventual victor was crucial. He argues the turning point came when Gerald Templer arrived in 1952 as general *supremo*, electrifying the administration. Here there is a slight tension, as he appears to base this mainly on evidence of rising British confidence in 1952-53. Yet other parts of the book (especially Chapter 2) detail how communist self-confidence was sapped by their own propaganda mistakes (notably reliance on inadequately selective terror) and British control (notably resettlement), so that in October 1951 they changed policy to place greater emphasis on mass work, and in 1952 the Central Committee began a retreat to southern Thailand. These contrasting chronologies for changing confidence – both British and communist – are fascinating, though perhaps not as well inter-related in the main argument as one might wish.

The book also makes some contributions which are more implicit than explicit. For instance, it seems to assume four very different phases of counter-insurgency: one of high-level insurgency and chaotic propaganda to 1950; improvements to 1952; a turning point between 1952 and 1954; and a final end-game thereafter, when the problem was increasingly how to extract the few insurgents remaining in Malaya's vast tracts of jungle. These were very different though overlapping phases, with contrasting foundations for propaganda and so very different possibilities, from minimal intelligence and disorganisation at the beginning to detailed knowledge of individual adversaries at the end. As for the last phase, the ending of a reduced-scale conflict, Kumar emphasises the refinement of propaganda targeted at groups or even individuals, the use of devices such as Good Citizen's Committees and, ultimately, generous amnesty terms.

In between all this, the book is packed with detail on themes such as film units, rewards, radio propaganda, and changing organisation. It is valuable not just for the many topics it does cover, but also for the areas which it opens up for further development. For instance, it covers critical developments in using people like C. C. Too as analysts, turned communists such as Lam Swee as writers, and SEP for tours of villages. This development of a British (and later Malaysian and Singaporean) 'integrationist' approach – emphasising the rehabilitation, turning and use of enemy personnel at all levels – was to remain vital beyond the wars of decolonisation and into the post-colonial period. Arguably, it remains relevant in present-day Singapore and Malaysia, given the recent events surrounding *Jemaah Islamiyah*.

Ideally, the book should be read alongside classics such as Pye's *Guerrilla Communism*, and works which came out too late for integration, such as Lim Cheng Leng's *The Story of a Psy-Warrior: Tan Sri Dr. C.C. Too* (Selangor: Lim Cheng Leng, 2001). Since Kumar also locates its specialist story within a more general school, one which emphasises Templer's transformative role, non-Malayan specialists might also place it in the context of other historiographical trends. These can be gleaned from Richard Stubbs' *Hearts and Minds in Guerrilla Warfare* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1988), and the reviewer's "Iron Claws on Malaya": The Historiography of the Malayan Emergency'



(*JSEAS* 30, 1 (1999): 99-125).

In summary, this addition to counter-insurgency writing, and pioneering publication on British propaganda in Malaya, is useful for its intensive detail, its ideas and the new questions it brings to the fore. It will be important reading for researchers and academics interested in insurgency, propaganda and intelligence, and will be useful for graduate students as well. Undergraduates might find its forensic approach overwhelming, but could benefit from the use of carefully selected sections. The only real disappointment, an understandable one, is that there is relatively limited direct reproduction of the words and images of propaganda documents, which would have allowed the reader to engage their texture and discourses directly.

Unfortunately, this must be one of the very last Southeast Asian history books issued by Curzon as an independent publisher. It can only be hoped that the new RoutledgeCurzon imprint will take up the essential job of publishing such groundbreaking, research-driven historical research on Southeast Asia, perhaps with a series dedicated to the region's history.

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## Myanmar

*Burmese Manuscripts: Part 4: Catalogue Numbers 736-900*

Compiled by ANNE PETERS. Edited by HEINZ BECHERT.

Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2000. Pp. xxvii, 274. Index.

This is the fourth volume of Burmese manuscripts to appear in the series 'List of Oriental Manuscripts in Germany'. It starts with an amended list of abbreviations of the reference works used, and three pages of addenda and corrigenda to the previous volumes. The present catalogue describes 165 manuscripts mostly on palm leaf (except two *parabaiks* and one copy on white paper) and all from the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek at Munich (erroneously transplanted to Berlin on p. 181). The presentation of the manuscripts follows the manner of the earlier volumes. First comes a formal description of the manuscript, followed by transcriptions of the text on the first page and the colophon. Finally, cross references to printed editions of the text, other works by the same author and the like are supplied. It may be of interest for scholars of the Pali language and Buddhism that one text, the *Somanassavinichaya* (no. 849), could not be traced in any of the reference works so far.

I have indicated in my review of volume 3 that the editor's command of language has not prevented her from making many sometimes inexplicable mistakes. Unfortunately, this assessment has to be repeated here, though it must be admitted that the standard in general has improved. Still, some mistakes reveal remarkable deficiencies in the area of Burmese language which also escaped the notice of the proofreader. If, as in no. 751 (p. 20), the Pali text reads *sabbe*, the Burmese *nissaya*

translation must be *khap-sim* and not *kham-sim*. Or in the line giving the date of the manuscript, the reading *pâh rak* has no meaning and should read *nâh rak*, 'fifth day', i.e. Thursday (no. 882, p. 223). This list of examples could be continued for a while. The text most mutilated is the colophon of no. 738, right at the beginning of the book. It seems possible that some of the mistakes already occur in the manuscript (the editors have given up their former method of ear-marking obvious mistakes in the manuscript with an exclamation mark), though most of them seem to have been caused by careless reading. There are three mistakes in the seven introductory lines (the worst one is the reading *Ku-saṅ-krîḥ* for the town Ku-khan-krîḥ, which is modern Pakhangyi), and more than twenty follow in the subsequent *nissaya* which runs up to p. 6. Just to pick out the obvious ones: There are two omissions (after *uddarivâ*, perhaps *reḥ rve*, and the part *dhajamahâ* in the repetition of the title, the spelling (line 3) *Kûḥ -kan-prî* is odd and may read either *praññ* ('city') or *krî* ('big'). Finally, the phrase *bhum chuṃ chai* gives the meaning 'thirty worlds' instead of the three that are mentioned in the Pali version (*ti bhummike*) and must therefore be corrected to *bhum chuṃ chañ* (*chañ* being a numeral classifier). To do justice to the book, it should however be noted that these mistakes have but little impact upon the main purpose of the volume (and the series as a whole), which is to provide a complete descriptive catalogue of Burmese manuscripts kept in German archives. Scholars who are interested in a certain manuscript will anyway have to read it on their own again. The catalogue is a welcome research tool which helps to identify any manuscript with ease, and to give a first impression of its contents.

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### Thailand

*Democracy, Development and Decentralization in Provincial Thailand*

By DANIEL ARGHIROS

Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2001

Pp. ix, 308. Figures, Plates, Notes, Bibliography, Index.

'There's got to be some vote buying: you can't go and just ask people for their votes because it's not their [voters'] habit (*pen nisay khaw laew*): it's now a custom (*prapheni*). In the current system, you've got to use money to some extent. To put it bluntly, it's the money system (*rabob ngoen*)' (p.195). It is seldom that one picks up a book on contemporary Thailand written with as clear and holistic an examination of a topic as timely and pertinent as this. To read the book is to find oneself literally shaking one's head in tragi-comedic disbelief at the supremacy of money and clientelism in provincial Thailand; yet, thankfully, at other stages one cannot but chuckle, particularly at the various key characters in the book; and finally, when one puts the book down, one's mind keeps returning to its central theme. This is quite simply, a well-timed anthropological

micro-study of a contemporary story. The underlying theme of the book is rather straightforward: the 1980s and 1990s saw the creation of new structures of political clientelism in rural Thailand that now bind village leaders to provincial and national politicians. The *leitmotif* of the new structures is the emergence (and dominance) of local political office by a new stratum of rural economic elite, who through an intricate deployment of their wealth to villagers and rural clergy have chipped away at the traditional dominance of state officials in local affairs.

In exploring this theme, Daniel Arghiros takes his readers on a detailed tour of society and democratic politics of 'Ban Thung' and 'Klang' districts of central Thailand during the 1990s – a period in which Thailand was undergoing particularly rapid political, social and economic transition. During the decade-long period of the author's research, Thailand literally moved from an era of dictatorship (*phadetkan*) to one of democracy (*prachathipatai*). Whereas the once-dominant bureaucracy gradually lost control of the state to Parliament, the transition to democracy was anything but smooth. Provincial 'godfathers' (*chao pho*) and business interests emerged as powerful new forces on the democratic stage and the transfer of power from bureaucrats to elected representatives proceeded at different rates at the central and local levels.

Earlier observers tended to analyse Thai politics from rather narrow urban-based perspectives, and rarely looked beyond general elections for insight into the way politics has changed. Even studies which examined rural Thai society in some depth paid only scant attention to national electoral politics (see, for example, Clark Neher, *Modern Thai Politics: From Village to Nation* (Cambridge, MA: Schenkman, 1979)). Indeed, the few links between the political centre and the rural areas were through the provincial administrative system. It is thus unsurprising that there is both little documentation and a lack of understanding about how the shift from 'dictatorship' to 'democracy' has unfolded at the local level or of how rural communities are operating within the new regime.

*Democracy, Development and Decentralization in Provincial Thailand* fills a vacuum by introducing us to Thailand's democratic politics and the development of local government from a rural perspective and examines political participation in various levels of elections in the context of local socio-economic transformation. Arghiros is successful in providing insight on the perspectives of people from across the spectrum of Thai provincial society, and weaves a multi-layered chronicle of election case studies into a thoughtful discussion of political development. His examination of the creation of networks binding local and national politicians, the rise to power of new local business elites, and the pervasive practice of vote-buying is one of the book's major contributions. Likewise, his emphasis on both the political engagement of the poor and the previously unexplored roles of the Buddhist clergy in provincial elections is both suggestive and useful.

However, it is only natural with a book covering a period packed with so much change – even in just two provincial districts – that not all issues are spelt out in detail. The meticulousness of the micro-studies of the various elections in the book is thus no excuse for some interpretative weaknesses. One such flaw is the almost complete exclusion of a discussion of existing civil and military bureaucratic institutions in the provinces as well as an examination of the various characters that run them, giving the

impression that recent socio-political transformation in Thailand has rendered provincial bureaucrats irrelevant, be they governors (*phu wa ratchakan*) or district administrators (*nai amphoe*). That of course, is far from the case. Inasmuch as elected local and national politicians' clientelist and money-based networks have become so entrenched in recent years, the tenacity of the old civil and military bureaucratic institutions in local politics should be neither downplayed nor ignored.

Another weak point of the book – a weakness few empirical social scientists will miss – is the author's repeated use of single- (or for that matter, two-) case evidence to generalise about the rest of provincial Thailand (pp. 226, 276). Strictly speaking, generalisations from evidence from just a few cases are suspect not only because of their small sample sizes, but also because of the numerous possible explanations for any observed effects. Yet, such criticism would only be kosher if one used, say, a political scientist's lens (or a sociologist's) to examine an anthropologist's treatise – an academic no-no. In fact, there is probably no other researcher, save an anthropologist, who would have been better equipped to explore – at such close quarters and for that long – the various intricate relationships during a period of such social, economic and political transformation. The author's contribution would still be as great, perhaps even more so, had he kept his conclusions to the two districts he studied.

Finally, some readers unfamiliar with provincial Thailand could be forgiven for wishing either that the author had reworked some of the chapters to be more accessible to them, or that the various chapters between the introduction and conclusion had sought more to accomplish this on their behalf. Though *Democracy, Development and Decentralization in Provincial Thailand* could use some more revision and extension, it should nonetheless stand out as a pioneering contribution to the social anthropology of provincial Thai electoral politics in the late twentieth century.

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*Tribes of the North Thailand Frontier*

By JANE RICHARDSON HANKS and LUCIEN MASON HANKS with a foreword by  
NICOLA TANNENBAUM

New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies Program, Monograph 51, 2001. Pp. xlviii,  
319. Maps, Tables, Appendixes, Notes, Bibliography, Index.

This work stands out among the anthropological works on Northern Thailand for its multi-ethnic scope, its historical depth and its ability to include highland peoples' complex dealings with lowland authorities, missionaries and various armies, as well as the impact of ecological change. It also has a longer history than much ethnography on this area and its peoples. Lucien and Jane Hanks started their research in 1963 and ended in 1979. They studied a region in northern Chiangrai Province for six to eight months at a time during 1963-4, 1968-9, 1973-4 and 1979, during which the region grew from 151 to 320 villages. They were proficient in Thai, having already done considerable work in

the village of Bang Chan outside of Bangkok in the 1950s, but because of linguistic complexity, they also relied on interpreters in their work.

The nuanced understanding and analytical clarity that characterises their work is well known from Lucien Hanks's *Rice and Man* (Chicago: Aldine, 1972) and Jane Hanks's *Maternity and its Rituals in Bang Chan* (Ithaca: Cornell University Southeast Asia Program, 1963). Still earlier, Jane and Lucien collaborated on a study among the Siksika (Northern Blackfoot) in Alberta, Canada between 1938 and 1941 (*Tribe Under Trust: A Study of the Blackfoot Reserve in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950). When Lucien Hanks passed away in 1988, he already had attempted two angles to bring the manuscript together, and *Tribes of the North Thailand Frontier* is Jane's reworking of their long effort.

The first chapter covers historical background on ethnic complexity in South China's borderlands with Southeast Asia, and the long history of Chinese policies and actions towards 'barbarians'. It also relates upland-lowland relations in colonial-era Burma and Laos, and how northern Thailand's principalities then were organised and how they related to trade and the politics of national integration. Chapter 2 provides an ethnographic background to the tribal peoples in the region they call Muang Kham: Lahu, Akha, Karen, Miao, Yao, Lisu, as well as Shan, Thai and Chinese. These introductions are interspersed with ethnographic vignettes. One of the characters is a Lisu leader who received a title (*Samphaya*) from a lowland district officer and made himself a chief over a number of upland settlements through tax collection for the lowland authorities. At the time, highlanders generally stood outside the reach of lowland taxation.

The complexity of the multi-ethnic reality of this region contrasts with the authors' statement 'that each one of the six ethnic traditions gave a given village its distinctive architectural style, layout, costume, and language' (p. 101). In organisation, the research assumed a match between ethnicity and village. In their surveys, the authors assigned an ethnic label to a village, usually based on the identity of the headman. Meanwhile, ethnically mixed villages were rather common, including those of Chinese men and their tribal wives (p. 95). Further, one of the peoples of the hills was 'Lahu-Lisu' (pp. 79-84).

The authors' humanistic approach to their topic is evident in many segments of the book. Their concerns may be informed by previous experiences with the Siksika. In concluding their background discussion on the peoples of Muang Kham, they state that 'the new tribal arrivals in Thailand were capable people with a history of achievement, a thrust for autonomy under their own leaders, and an expectation that they would in time be recognised by the new government' (p. 120). In their approach, the authors are distinctly different from other anthropologists in the hills, who have focused on a single ethnic group and have tended to view national integration as a threat to the cultural integrity and social coherence of their chosen peoples.

The attempt to comprehend a multi-ethnic region over time does more than balance out the survey emphasis on ethnicity; it turns various outside influences into the proper subject of ethnography. Thus Chapter 3 describes various Thai governmental agencies with presence in the area, as well as the Thai royal family and the United Nations, and the missionary activity of Western Catholics and Protestants and Thai Buddhists. Layers of Thai prejudices against highland peoples are evident in these accounts, as well as national

anxieties regarding migratory peoples whose loyalty to the nation was questioned. Chapter 4 describes the Chinese Nationalist Armies (KMT) that moved to Chiangrai from Burma and were supported financially by Taiwan. It also discusses a unit of the Shan National Army, and a messianic Lahu leader who was 'old by day, young by night' (p. 177).

Subsequent chapters describe turbulent times in the hills, where lowland authorities had in general little tolerance for ethnic difference and employed the military against what they viewed as subversive behaviour. The expansion of road networks brought increased governmental surveillance, and changes in the opium trade brought Khun Sa on the scene. During 1972-4, drought caused widespread crop failures. These events are grounded in the changing fortunes of individual leaders and settlements, and in the changing forms of leadership in the hills, in the context of a growing refugee population from adjacent Burma.

Nicola Tannenbaum's Foreword contextualises the book and the Hanks' research. Discussing the entanglements of governmental and anthropological interest in the Thai hills, providing an account of the Hanks' other anthropological work, and placing it in the changing history of anthropological approaches, she adds dimensions to the ethnography. The book succeeds admirably in conveying 'the picture of an entire countryside' (p. xl): a complex setting in changing political, ecological and cultural circumstances. The relevance of the many players on this scene is repeatedly grounded in compelling accounts of particular people and settlements. The book manages to present a big picture of a region in repeatedly changing times while being rooted in ethnographic particulars; this is a rare achievement. In its comprehensive account of historical and social complexity, *Tribes of the North Thailand Frontier* sets a new standard for ethnography about this region.

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## Vietnam

*The Colonial Bastille: A History of Imprisonment in Vietnam, 1862-1940*

By PETER ZINOMAN

Berkeley: University of California Press. 2001. Pp. xix, 351. Maps, Tables, Notes, Bibliography, Index.

In this exceedingly well-written and well-argued book, which is both empirically satisfying and theoretically assured, Peter Zinoman examines the relationship between French Indochina's colonial prisons and the growth of the Vietnamese anticolonial movement, especially as represented by the communists. Zinoman argues that the colonial prison system provided a 'curiously stable environment' (p. 2) for the development of the Indochina Communist Party (ICP). Important party cells were

formed in provincial prisons. The general experience of mass imprisonment both strengthened the ICP's Leninist fondness for centralisation, secrecy and hierarchy, and helped create an organisation whose leadership was, for a long time, unusually cohesive because of its leaders' prison ties to each other. Zinoman's sources include the colonial archives; newspapers and journalistic exposures of prison conditions; and a remarkable large and rich body of prison memoirs written by ex-prisoners.

Theoretically, Zinoman wishes to break with the dominant tendency in postcolonial studies that focuses primarily on colonial 'discourse' analysis, strongly preferring to look at institutional practices. Foucault, with his assumption that European prisons after 1800 embodied modern disciplinary technologies, is of little help in understanding colonial prisons: what little modernity they had was combined with a host of antiquated premodern features, and it was their very heterogeneity that undermined colonial rule. The great differences between French metropolitan prisons, when they upheld modern penological beliefs in reform and rehabilitation, and their Indochina counterparts, which showed little trace of such ambitions, are to be explained by the origins of the colonial prisons as prisoners-of-war camps; by colonial racialism, which distinguished between 'white' and 'yellow' criminality and doubted that the 'yellow' variety could be redeemed by post-enlightenment disciplinary techniques; and by the surviving influence of Sino-Vietnamese carceral traditions, which more rarely used prisons as places of punishment, preferring informal sanctions within the lineage or village. (For Vietnam, this last point could be stressed. In 1834 the Vietnamese ruler Minh-Mạng had insisted that all crimes except 'heavy' ones be dealt with by village elders and chiefs; he pointedly contrasted his benign de-bureaucratisation of justice with the torture and floggings he alleged were widespread in Chinese prisons.)

In effect, what Zinoman suggests is reminiscent of J. S. Furnivall's famous proposition of 60 years ago that capitalism was more brutal in Southeast Asia than in Europe because there were fewer modern moral and legal restrictions on it. But the proposition is turned inside out with the claim that the Indochina prisons' historical 'hybridity' (substituting for Furnivall's pluralism) weakened European control rather than strengthening it, as in Furnivall's capitalism. Building on David Marr's insight that prison friendships were the closest of any in the revolutionary movement, Zinoman goes much further, showing how the prison experience revealed to its elite prisoners the artificiality and contingency of the culture they had inhabited outside prison. The Thái Nguyên prison rebellion of 1917 gives him a particularly revealing case study. It featured an alliance between lower class Vietnamese prison guards and the mandarin revolutionary Lương Ngọc Quyến, who had been incarcerated there; the rebels involved came from over thirty provinces and represented 'every stratum of Indochinese society', meaning that for the first time Vietnamese anticolonialism could escape the social and geographical parochialisms that had previously limited it (pp. 158-9).

As for French Indochina's communist prisoners later on, they too were part of a prison subculture that created its own social hierarchies, its own prison language, its own games of cards and chess, and even its own plays and playwrights (communist prisoners on Poulo Condore, dealing with Corsican jailers, ingratiated themselves by putting on a play about the life of Napoleon). The congestion of the prisons and the unreliability of their Vietnamese guards were perfect for ICP purposes. The party's prison organisations

sponsored hunger strikes and work stoppages, produced handwritten clandestine newspapers, punished spies and collaborators, and tried to indoctrinate guards and other prisoners; celebrated prison teachers like Trần Văn Giàu could transfer the Leninism they imbibed in Moscow directly to their fellow inmates.

For anyone interested in modern Vietnam, this book makes compulsive as well as compulsory reading. Of course, Zinoman is analysing what Karl Mannheim would have called the spiritual fermentation behind the Vietnamese revolution, rather than that revolution's formal ideas. At the level of ideas themselves, the products of the prison experience – the communist leaders – nonetheless remained notably faithful to an exceedingly rationalistic and scientific view of revolution that they got, ultimately, from the Enlightenment Europe that so concerned Foucault. Their immunity to the disordered 'hybridity' of the prisons they were in is surely as striking as the political and emotional ties they forged in them. Zinoman alludes briefly to this on his very last page (p. 302), concluding that the colonial prisons also served as a 'negative example' of institutional development for such men. But this paragraph sits awkwardly in a book that stresses how much they positively owed to their prison experience, and surely invites more explanation. Then there is the question of just how unique French Indochina's 'colonial Bastille' was in the history of Southeast Asia as a whole. Comparisons and contrasts with the prisons, and indeed the prison and exile literature of colonial and postcolonial Indonesia (Sjahrir, Tan Malaka, Pramoedya Ananta Toer, etc.), not attempted here but well worth doing, would undoubtedly clarify the broader significance of much of what Zinoman is discussing. Even so, his illuminating book is a major contribution to our knowledge of the Vietnamese revolution.

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### General

*Tussen Oriëntalisme en Wetenschap. Het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde in Historisch Verband 1851-2001 [Between Orientalism and Science. The Royal Institute of Linguistics and Anthropology in its Historic Context 1851-2001]*

By MAARTEN KUITENBROUWER

Leiden: KITLV Press, 2001. Pp. xi, 362. Photos, Notes, Appendices, Index.

The *Koninklijk Instituut* or KITLV was founded in 1851 on the initiative of J. C. Baud, then a former minister for colonies. Baud was a 'conservative' who wanted colonial rule to directly benefit the state rather than private entrepreneurs. He conceived of the KITLV as a way to promote scholarly inquiry about the colonies with the aim of a 'just, enlightened, and benevolent government' (p. 31). Accordingly, the KITLV was to become not an independent research institute, but an integral part of the colonial establishment.

From the start the KITLV published a journal, *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en*



*Volkenkunde* [Contributions to the Linguistics, Geography and Ethnology (of the colonies)] – *BKI* for short – and occasional publications entitled *Werken* [Works]. The *BKI* commemorated its 150th volume in 1994 – volumes have not always coincided with calendar years – and the *Werken* have proliferated into a number of series and, recently, occasional publications once again, such as the one under review. Of the three disciplines mentioned in the Dutch name of the institute, geography has received the least attention, due to the establishment of the Royal Dutch Geographical Society in 1873. An impressive amount of work was done in linguistics by both *taalambtenaren*, linguists employed by the colonial administration, and missionaries. In addition, the KITLV has furthered the study of disciplines such as archaeology, history and law.

An institute as influential for our understanding of Indonesia as the KITLV deserves an analytical history, and this has been provided in this book marking the 150th anniversary of the institution. Marteen Kuitenbrouwer, whose previous work has focused on Dutch imperialism and the expansion of Dutch colonial rule in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and with what he has called ‘The Discovery of the Third World’ in the second half of the twentieth century, is knowledgeable about the context in which the KITLV operated. According to Kuitenbrouwer’s account, the KITLV remained part of the colonial establishment until 1942. From at least 1870 to 1966 it was housed in The Hague, the centre of government. Its collections – books, documents and photographs – grew in size and importance, thus facilitating research while also providing an outlet for publication. Among the board members were prominent politicians, colonial and metropolitan administrators and businessmen. For example, J. W. IJzerman, a railway builder in Java and Sumatra, raised a substantial amount of capital from among his business relations to see the KITLV through financial setbacks. That capital, which has since multiplied many times over, is still among the KITLV’s assets. Academics, particularly those from Leiden, have also been prominent in running the KITLV during the course of the twentieth century. These academics were usually progressive in colonial matters, advocating ethical policies and accommodation with the Indonesian nationalist movement. Hence the institute and its board members included people with widely divergent views.

In the post-colonial era, Kuitenbrouwer argues, the KITLV was revitalised on the initiative of E. M. Uhlenbeck, in close cooperation with A. J. Piekaar and A. Teeuw. Uhlenbeck was a professor of Javanese and of theoretical linguistics at Leiden University, and also a leading administrator of that university. Piekaar was a former colonial administrator who continued to work for the government after his return to the Netherlands following World War Two. From 1956 he was in charge of Higher Education and Sciences, where he secured the government subsidy that became the KITLV’s main source of income. Piekaar also managed to retain Indonesian Studies at Leiden University, although student numbers had dropped severely, while Teeuw was a professor of Indonesian language and literature in Leiden beginning in 1957. The three held prominent positions within the institute, and they rotated the chairmanship among them from 1962 to 1983, except for one year. From the 1950s onward, Uhlenbeck and Teeuw were editors of the *BKI* and/or the expanding series of monographs.

Uhlenbeck, Teeuw and Piekaar pushed for internationalisation, for turning KITLV into a research institute, and for a shift to Leiden, where the university offered

accommodation in one of its buildings. This transition took place in 1966 (p. 226n). Around that time the institute expanded dramatically, notwithstanding decolonisation: 1,098 members and 35 staff in 1975, as against 380 members and three staff in 1940. Of the 1,098 members 496 lived in the Netherlands, 324 in Indonesia, five in the Caribbean and 273 elsewhere. Income rose from 17,000 to almost 2 million guilders, with over 90 per cent consisting of a state subsidy (p. 219). Academics took over the KITLV board and Leiden's dominance receded. For the last twenty years, board members have been drawn from numerous Dutch universities with departments of anthropology and/or comparative sociology.

This expansion of staff and resources in the Netherlands resulted in attempts to improve relations with Indonesian authorities at the beginning of the Suharto era, which resulted in the Program of Indonesian Studies (PRIS), a joint venture with LIPI, the *Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia*. The KITLV also opened an Indonesian branch in Jakarta, which Kuitenbrouwer does not discuss in detail. During the PRIS period the KITLV acted primarily as a facilitating organisation. Its own research programme remained modest, although Peter Boomgaard, who was head of the institute's staff for much of the 1990s, formulated the ambitious EDEN (Ecology, Demography, and Economy in *Nusantara*) project, which is still ongoing. Thus, the KITLV's major role has remained in publishing and in managing its vast library and documentation centres. Currently, it acquires more titles on insular Southeast Asia, the Pacific and the Caribbean than the Library of Congress (p. 246).

As mentioned in the book's title, the master analytical concept Kuitenbrouwer uses is Said's Orientalism, combined with what he terms 'universalism' and 'relativism'. Whereas Orientalists perceive fundamental differences between the 'East' and the 'West', coupled with a Western attitude of superiority and a wish for domination, for Kuitenbrouwer 'universalism' assumes that such differences are gradual and that 'East' and 'West' follow a similar course of development but that the 'East' lags behind. Relativism, finally, holds that human cultures are fundamentally different, but rejects Western superiority. In this view the East–West dichotomy has dissolved. Kuitenbrouwer concludes that in the early stages the KITLV members held Orientalist views, but that they gradually receded, disappearing shortly after World War Two, and were superseded by relativism mixed with universalist conceptions. Such a conclusion seems innocuous, but may yet be controversial given the fierce debates in the 1990s over 'modern Orientalism' among Dutch scholars. The author's account is intriguing because it presents part of the scholarly component of Dutch colonialism. The KITLV appears to have been an organisation where persons holding widely different views nevertheless were and remained members. Another intriguing aspect is that the institute started out as part of the colonial project in its consecutive stages, but survived decolonisation and now flourishes in the post-colonial era.

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